



Initial Steps to Take After a Fire

When you suffer fire damage there are many things that you will be dealing with. Sometimes it is hard to know what to do next. Whether it is a small kitchen fire or a large fire damaging most of your home or business you will have lots of questions and probably will be going through a very emotional time. It is perfectly normal to be confused about what to do next or where to turn for help and assistance. ATP Restoration has a combined 75 years of assisting those that have suffered fire damage and working in unison with the homeowner and the insurance company to make the experience flow as smooth as possible. Based on our experience, below is a list of initial steps that we feel is important for you to take immediately after you have had a fire loss.

1. **Check on your family.** A fire can be very traumatic to you and your family. Be sure to check and make sure everyone is ok. Contact family members that were not home at the time of the fire and let them know about the fire.
2. **Contact your insurance company.** Do not assume that someone else will do this for you. This is a very important step to take to begin the documentation process. Your agent will be experienced in dealing with this situation and can assist you with your concerns such as temporary lodging and living concerns. They can also assist in getting you in touch with restoration companies that specialize in securing your home and assist you with the restoration and re-construction process. Also, get a copy of the fire report from your fire department. This will be helpful in providing information to your insurance company.
3. **Determine if your home is safe for entry.** Do not enter your home until the fire department has determined that it is safe for entry. Fires can reignite and there can be hidden damage to floors and ceilings. It is also possible, depending on the circumstances of the fire that your insurance company may want to have a "Cause and Origin" investigation performed by an expert to determine the cause of the fire. There may be certain areas or rooms of the home that they may not want you to enter until cleared. Once you are cleared to enter the home be sure to focus only on valuables and important documents (birth certificates, passports, etc.) Do not remove or ingest any medicine or food as high heat and smoke can contaminate these items.
4. **Your Possessions.** Once your home has been cleared for entry you will want to take some time to safely inspect the contents of your home. This is not something that you have to do alone! An IICRC Certified restoration company will assist you in determining if an item can be restored back to its pre-loss condition or if it needs to be replaced. They can also document these items by taking photographs and making lists of items that will be cleaned or replaced and provide this list to your insurance company. This is especially important in dealing with sentimental items such as photos, wedding dresses, heirlooms, etc. Your contractor should also be able to expedite the cleaning of items that you will need for everyday life moving forward such as clothing, electronics, and any other personal items that you will need during the restoration and reconstruction process of your home.
5. **Temporary Housing.** Again, depending on the severity of the fire it may be necessary to secure temporary housing for your family. Most homeowner's insurance policies will pay for food, clothing, and shelter that you may need for a specified amount of time until your home is brought back to pre-loss condition. Your insurance company can assist you with these arrangements.

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