



# **AFTER THE FIRE...**

## ***RETURNING TO NORMAL***

***IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO HELP  
YOU BEGIN THE RECOVERY PROCESS:***

**THE FIRST 24 HOURS**

**SALVAGE HINTS**

**REPLACEMENT OF DOCUMENTS**

**EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**



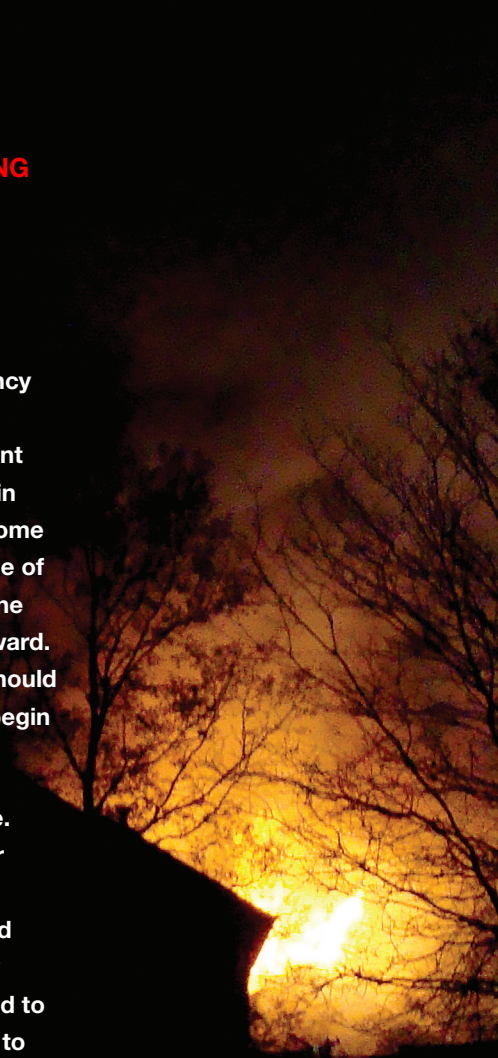
## **RECOVERING FROM A FIRE CAN BE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY DRAINING**

When a fire strikes, it turns lives around. Often, the hardest part for a homeowner is knowing where to begin the recovery and restoration process.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), United States Fire Administration (USFA) and the Mt. Lebanon Fire Department have gathered the information to help you in this time of need. You will need to act on some of the recommendations immediately. Some of the other actions are important to take in the future, as the recovery process moves forward. Here are some suggestions for what you should do and whom you should contact, as you begin rebuilding your life.

A fire in a home can cause serious damage. The building and many of the things in your home may have been badly damaged by flames, heat, smoke and water. You will find that things the fire did not burn up are now ruined by smoke and soggy with water used to put out the flames. Anything that you want to save or reuse will need to be carefully cleaned. The firefighters may have cut holes in the walls of the building to look for any hidden flames. They may even have cut holes in the roof to let out the heat and smoke. Cleanup will take time and patience.

If your home had a home fire sprinkler system, you will find little damage from flames, heat, smoke and water. If you plan to rebuild your home, now is the time to think about installing sprinklers. You can find more information at the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition's website: [www.hfsc.org](http://www.hfsc.org).



# **MT. LEBANON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

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# THE FIRST **24** HOURS

## SECURING YOURSELF AND THE SITE

- Contact local disaster relief services, such as the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army, to help with your immediate needs, such as:

Temporary housing

Food

Medicine

Eyeglasses

Clothing

Other essential items

- Contact your insurance agent/company.

## CAUTIONS

- Do not enter the damaged site. Fires can rekindle from hidden, smoldering remains.
- Normally, the fire department will see that utilities (water, electricity and natural gas) are either safe to use or are disconnected before they leave the site. Do not attempt to turn on utilities yourself.
- Be watchful for structural damage caused by the fire. Roofs and floors may be damaged and subject to collapse.
- Food, beverages and medicine exposed to heat, smoke, soot and water should not be consumed.

## LEAVING YOUR HOME

- Contact the Mt. Lebanon Police Department to let them know the site will be unoccupied.
- In some cases it may be necessary to board up openings to discourage trespassers.
- Beginning immediately, save receipts for any expenditures related to fire loss. These receipts are important in showing the insurance company what you have spent and also for verifying losses claimed on your income tax.





- If it is safe to do so, try to locate the following items:
  - Identification, such as driver's licenses and Social Security cards
  - Insurance information
  - Medication information
  - Eyeglasses, hearing aids or other prosthetic devices
  - Valuables, such as credit cards, bank books, cash and jewelry
- There are many people/entities that should be notified of your relocation, including:
  - Insurance agent/company
  - Landlord or mortgage company (also inform them of the fire)
  - Family and friends
  - Employer
  - Children's school/schools
  - Post office
  - Delivery services
  - Fire and police departments
  - Utility companies
- Do not throw away any damaged goods until after an inventory is made. All damages are taken into consideration in developing your insurance claim.
- If you are considering contracting for inventory or repair services, discuss your plans with your insurance agent/company first.
- Contact your credit card company to report credit cards that were lost in the fire and request replacements.

## **IF YOU ARE INSURED**

Give notice of the loss to the insurance company or the insurer's agent/company.

Ask the insurance company what to do about the immediate needs of the dwelling, such as covering doors, windows, and other exposed areas, and pumping out water.

Ask your insurance agent/company what actions are required of you. Some policyholders may be required to make an inventory of damaged personal property showing in detail the quantity, description and how much you paid for the items.

## **6 IF YOU ARE NOT INSURED**

Your recovery from a fire loss may be based upon your own resources and help from your community.

Private organizations that may be sources of aid or information:

- > American Red Cross
- > Salvation Army
- > religious organizations
- > department of social services
- > civic organizations
- > state or municipal emergency services office
- > non-profit crisis counseling centers



## **EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

### **AMERICAN RED CROSS**

Pittsburgh-Allegheny Chapter  
225 Boulevard of the Allies  
PO Box 1769  
Pittsburgh, PA 15230  
888-217-9599

Red Cross disaster relief focuses on meeting people's immediate emergency disaster-caused needs. When a disaster threatens or strikes, the Red Cross provides shelter, food, and health and mental health services to address basic human needs. In addition to these services, the core of Red Cross disaster relief is the assistance given to individuals and families affected by disaster to enable them to resume their normal daily activities independently.

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### **HELP YOUR PETS**

If you have pets, find and comfort them. Scared animals often react by biting or scratching. Handle them carefully, calmly and gently. Try to leave pets with a family member, friend or veterinarian if you are visiting or cleaning your damaged home. Keep your pets out of the house until the cleanup is complete to keep them safe. The Mt. Lebanon Fire Department can help with finding housing for your pets.

- Use toys, a blanket or favorite human's unsoiled clothing to comfort pets.
- Make sure pets are fed their usual diet, and have plenty of water.
- Visit your pets regularly, speak calmly and take some time out to play with them. Doing so can also help you in your recovery, as well.



# REPLACEMENT OF DOCUMENTS & RECORDS

## ITEM

## CONTACT

Driver's license, Auto registration

Department of motor vehicles

Bank books (checking, savings, etc.)

Your bank, as soon as possible

Insurance policies

Your insurance agent

Military discharge papers

Department of Veterans Affairs

Passports

Passport service

Birth, death and marriage certificates

Division of Vital Records

Divorce papers

Prothonotary Office

Social Security or Medicare cards

Local Social Security office

Credit cards

The issuing companies

Titles to deeds

Records department of the locality

Stocks and bonds

Issuing company or your broker

Wills

Your lawyer, registrar of wills

Medical records

Your doctor

Warranties

Issuing company

Income tax records

The IRS Center or your accountant

Citizenship papers

U.S. Immigration/Naturalization

Prepaid burial contract

Issuing company

Mortgage papers

Lending institution

Animal registration papers

Your veterinarian and/or breeder

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## **DOCUMENTATION**

For information on damaged or destroyed military/civilian discharge papers

### **Veterans Administration**

100 Liberty Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
1-800-827-1000

### **National Personnel Records Center**

9700 Page Boulevard  
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100  
1-866-272-6272

For information on damaged or destroyed Social Security cards and Medicare Cards

### **Social Security Administration**

650 Washington Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15228  
800-772-1213

For information on damaged or destroyed birth and death certificates

### **Division of Vital Records**

Birth and Death Records Office  
512 State Office Building  
300 Liberty Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
[www.health.state.pa.us/vitalrecords](http://www.health.state.pa.us/vitalrecords)  
412-565-5113  
412-565-5114  
412-565-5115

For information on damaged or destroyed marriage certificates

### **Registrar of Wills**

City County Building  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
414 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
412-350-4180

For information on damaged or destroyed divorce decrees

### **Prothonotary Office**

City County Building  
Room 504  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
412-350-4203









## **RESTORATION SERVICES**

There are companies that specialize in the restoration of fire damaged structures. Whether you or your insurer hires this type of service, be clear on who will pay. Be sure to request an estimate of cost for the work. Before any company is hired, check their references. These companies provide a range of services that may include some or all of the following:

- securing the site against further damage
- estimating structural damage
- repairing structural damage
- estimating the cost to repair or renew items of personal property
- packing, transportation, and storage of household items
- securing appropriate cleaning or repair subcontractors
- storing repaired items until needed

## **LOCAL RESTORATION FIRMS**

### **BELFOR USA GROUP**

1-800-421-4108

### **DISASTER RESTORATION SERVICES OF GREATER PITTSBURGH**

1-800-878-3770

### **FIREDEX OF PITTSBURGH**

412-487-3332

### **G.S. JONES & SONS, INC.**

(1-800-BOARD UP)

412-766-6886

### **MADOR'S FIRE REPAIR, INC.**

412-682-0600

### **SERVICEMASTER**

412-833-8111

## **LOCAL RESTORATION COMPANIES**

1-800 BOARDUP

1-800-262-7387

## **USE CAUTION**

It is important to understand the risk to your safety and health even after the fire is out. The soot and dirty water left behind may contain things that could make you sick. Be very careful if you go into your home and if you touch any fire damaged items. Ask the advice of the fire department, your insurance agent, and restoration specialists before starting to clean or make repairs.

Do not eat, drink or breathe in anything that has been near the flames, smoke, soot, or water used to put the fire out.

## **SALVAGE HINTS**

### **CLOTHING/FABRIC**

Professional fire and water damage restoration businesses may be the best source of cleaning and restoring your personal belongings. A list of local companies is on page 11.

A word of caution: Test garments before using any treatment, and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Several of the cleaning mixtures described in this section contain the substance Tri-Sodium Phosphate (TSP). TSP is a caustic substance used commonly as a cleaning agent. Use it with care, and store it out of reach of children and pets. Wear rubber gloves when using TSP if you have sensitive skin. Read the label for further information.

Smoke odor and soot can sometimes be washed from clothing. The following formula may work for fabric that can be bleached:

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- 4 to 6 tbsps. Tri-Sodium Phosphate
- 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach
- 1 gallon warm water

Mix well; add clothes; rinse with clear water. Dry thoroughly.

To remove mildew from clothing, wash the fresh stain with soap and warm water, rinse and then dry in the sun. If the stain does not disappear, use lemon juice mixed with salt or a diluted solution of household chlorine bleach.

### **COOKING UTENSILS**

Wash pots, pans, flatware, etc., with soapy water; then rinse and polish with a fine-powdered cleaner. You can clean and shine copper and brass with polish, salt sprinkled on a piece of lemon, or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated with vinegar.

### **ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES**

Don't use appliances that have been exposed to water or steam until you have a service representative check them. In addition, steam can remove the lubricant from some moving parts.

If the fire department turned off your gas or power during the fire, call the electric or gas company to restore these services - do not try to do it yourself.

### **FOOD**

Wash canned goods and foods in jars in detergent and water. If labels come off, be sure you mark the contents on the can or jar with a grease pencil. Do not use canned goods, when the cans have bulged or rusted. Do not refreeze frozen food that has thawed.

To remove odor from your refrigerator or freezer, wash the inside with a solution of baking soda and water, or use one cup of vinegar or household ammonia to one gallon of water. Baking soda in an open container or a piece of charcoal will also help absorb refrigerator/freezer odor.





### **RUGS AND CARPETS**

Allow rugs and carpets to dry thoroughly. Clean throw rugs by beating, sweeping, or vacuuming, and then shampooing. Dry the rugs as quickly as possible by laying them flat and exposing them to a circulation of warm, dry air. A fan turned on the rugs will speed drying. Make sure the rugs are thoroughly dry; moisture remaining at the base of the tufts can quickly cause the rug to rot. For information on cleaning and preserving carpets, call your carpet dealer or installer or a qualified carpet cleaning professional.

### **LEATHER AND BOOKS**

Wipe leather goods with a damp cloth, then a dry cloth. Stuff purses and shoes with newspaper to retain their shape. Leave suitcases open. Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry them away from heat and sun. Then clean leather with saddle soap.

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Take care of wet books as soon as possible. The best way to save wet books is to freeze them in a special vacuum freezer, which will remove the moisture without damaging the pages. If you can't readily locate such a freezer, then place your books them in a regular freezer until you can locate a vacuum freezer. The library is a good resource for help with damaged books.

### **LOCKS AND HINGES**

Take apart locks (especially iron locks) and wipe them with oil. If you can't remove the locks, squirt machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole, and work the knob to distribute the oil. Clean and oil all hinges thoroughly.

### **WALLS, FLOORS AND FURNITURE**

To remove soot and smoke from walls, furniture and floors, use a mild soap or detergent or mix together the following solution:

- 4 to 6 tbsp. Tri-Sodium Phosphate
- 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach
- 1 gallon warm water

Wear rubber gloves when cleaning with this solution. Be sure to rinse your walls and furniture with clear warm water and dry thoroughly after washing them with this solution.



Wash small areas at a time, working from the floor up. Then rinse the wall with clear water immediately. Ceilings should be washed last.

Do not repaint until walls and ceilings are completely dry.

Your wallpaper can also be repaired. Use a commercial paste to re-paste a loose edge or section. Contact your wallpaper dealer or installer for information on wallpaper cleaners. Washable wallpaper can be cleansed like any ordinary wall, but care must be taken not to soak the paper. Work from bottom to top to prevent streaking.

## **WOOD FURNITURE**

- Do not dry your furniture in the sun. The wood will warp.
- Clear off mud and dirt.
- Remove drawers. Let them dry thoroughly, so there will be no sticking when you replace them.
- Scrub wood furniture or fixtures with a stiff brush and a cleaning solution.
- Wet wood can decay and mold, so dry thoroughly. Open doors and windows for good ventilation. Turn on your furnace or air conditioner, if necessary.
- If mold forms, wipe the wood with a cloth soaked in a mixture of borax dissolved in hot water.
- To remove white spots or film, rub the wood surface with a cloth soaked in a solution of 1/2 cup household ammonia and 1/2 cup water. Then wipe the surface dry and polish with wax or rub the surface with a cloth soaked in a solution of 1/2 cup turpentine and 1/2 cup linseed oil. Be careful—turpentine and linseed oil are combustible.

You can also rub the wood surface with a fine grade steel wool pad dipped in liquid polishing wax. Clean the area with a soft cloth and then buff.

## **RESTORATION SERVICES**

There are companies that specialize in the restoration of fire damaged structures. Whether you or your insurer hires this type of service, be clear on who will pay. Be sure to request an estimate of cost for the work. Before any company is hired, check their references. These companies provide a range of services that may include some or all of the following:

- > securing the site against further damage
- > estimating structural damage
- > repairing structural damage
- > estimating the cost to repair or renew items of personal



## **MONEY REPLACEMENT & TAX INFORMATION**

Handle burned money as little as possible. Try to encase each bill or portion of a bill in plastic wrap for preservation. If half or more of a bill is still intact, you can take it to your regional Federal Reserve Bank for replacement. Ask your bank for the nearest one. Or you can mail the burned or torn money by “registered mail, return receipt requested” to:

### **DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY**

Bureau of Engraving and Printing  
Office of Currency Standards  
P.O. Box 37048  
Washington, DC 20013  
1-866-575-2361

### **FEDERAL RESERVE BANK**

717 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
412-261-7800

Mutilated or melted coins may be taken to your regional Federal Reserve Bank or mailed by “registered mail, return receipt requested” to:

### **SUPERINTENDENT**

U.S. Mint  
P.O. Box 400  
Philadelphia, PA 19105

If your U.S. Savings Bonds have been destroyed or mutilated, you must obtain Department of Treasury Form PD F 1048 (I) from your bank or [www.ustreas.gov](http://www.ustreas.gov) and mail to:

### **DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY**

Bureau of Public Debt  
Saving Bonds Operations  
P.O. Box 1328 Parkersburg, WV 26106-1328

### **TAX INFORMATION**

Check with an accountant, tax consultant or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) about special benefits for people with limited financial needs after a fire loss as well as for information about tax rules governing casualty loss.

### **INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE**

Eastern Area Distribution Center  
4300 Carolina Avenue



## REBUILDING

- Make sure that the contractor rebuilding your home obtains a building permit and follows the current building, fire and electrical codes.

- Ask a professional about having automatic residential fire sprinklers installed during the reconstruction process. It is much less expensive to have

sprinklers installed during reconstruction instead of after the construction is complete.

- Make sure that smoke alarms are installed following your local fire protection codes.

We recommend having smoke alarms installed inside each bedroom, hallway outside sleeping areas, and at least one on every floor of your home. The smoke alarms should be interconnected so that if one alarm sounds, all will sound. The alarms should be operated by both household power and batteries in case the household power is out.

- It is a good idea to make sure that you have updated your Family Disaster Plan and replenished essential disaster supplies just in case a disaster happens again.

You will always feel better knowing that you are prepared and ready for anything. The Mt. Lebanon Fire Dept. encourages taking five key disaster preparedness steps: make a plan, build a kit, get trained, volunteer and give blood. For more information about preparedness, [www.FEMA.gov](http://www.FEMA.gov)

- Consider purchasing homeowner's or renter's insurance.

- Make copies of important documents, such as birth and marriage certificates and insurance policies, and store these in a safe place.







# **ABOUT FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS**

## **COMMON QUESTIONS**

### **Why are windows broken or holes cut in the roof?**

As a fire burns, it moves upward then outward. Breaking the windows and/or cutting holes in the roof (called ventilation) slows the damaging outward movement, helps remove blinding smoke that obscures the actual fire, and enables firefighters to fight the fire more efficiently. The result of this action is less damage to the structure in the long run.

### **Why are holes cut in walls?**

This is done so that the fire department is absolutely sure the fire is completely out and that there is no fire inside the walls or other hidden places.

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### **Is it possible to obtain a copy of the fire report?**

A fire report is a public document and is available at the fire department.

## **FIRST NIGHT OF FIRE**

In cooperation with Springhill Suites of Mt. Lebanon and Crowne Plaza—Pittsburgh South, the Mt. Lebanon Fire Department has arranged for you to spend your first night at the Crowne Plaza Pittsburgh South location for free. Crowne Plaza will work with your insurance agent to ensure that you have a home away from home in your time of distress. Where you and your family are staying should be the last thing on your mind.



**SPRINGHILL SUITES OF MT. LEBANON**  
611 Washington Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15228  
412-563-6300



**CROWNE PLAZA—PITTSBURGH SOUTH**  
164 Fort Couch Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15241  
412-347-0352 or 412-347-0350

Ken Lager

## VITAL INFORMATION

Date of fire: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of fire: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle identification number for cars, trucks, and motorcycles destroyed \_\_\_\_\_

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Responding fire department: Mt. Lebanon Fire Department,  
555 Washington Rd. Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Nonemergency telephone number of Mt. Lebanon  
Fire Department: 412-531-5366

Fire Incident Report number issued by the Mt. Lebanon Fire  
Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance company name: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance company telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance policy number: \_\_\_\_\_



### RECOVERING EMOTIONALLY

You and your family's emotional care and recovery are just as important as rebuilding a home and healing physical injuries.

You may be surprised at how you and others may feel after a disaster. Disasters can stir up many different feelings and thoughts. People may experience fear concerning their safety or that of a loved one, shock, disbelief, grief, anger and guilt. Memory problems, anxiety and/or depression are also possible after experiencing a disaster.

Disasters are upsetting experiences for everyone involved. Children, senior citizens, people with disabilities and people for whom English is not their first language are especially at risk. Children may become afraid and some elderly people may seem disoriented at first. People with disabilities may require additional assistance. It is important to let children and elderly people know that they are safe and that you will help them find a safe place to stay. It is also important that you try to talk with them in a calm way.

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When disaster strikes, a child's view of the world as a safe and predictable place is temporarily lost. Children become afraid that the event will happen again and that they or their family may be injured or killed. The damage, injuries and deaths that can result from an unexpected or uncontrollable event are difficult for most children to understand.

How a parent or other adult reacts to a child following any traumatic event can help children recover more quickly and more completely. Children of different ages react in different ways to trauma. The Mt. Lebanon Fire Department can provide a variety of materials to help children cope with disaster.

Some basic steps you can take to meet physical and emotional needs—

- Try to return to as many of your personal and family routines as possible.
- Get rest and drink plenty of water.
- Limit your exposure to the sights and sounds of the fire, especially on television, the radio and in the newspapers.
- Focus on the positive.
- Recognize your own feelings.
- Reach out and accept help from others.
- Do something you enjoy. Do something as a family that you have all enjoyed in the past.
- Stay connected with your family and/or other support systems.
- Realize that, sometimes, recovery can take time.

If you have more questions or observe unusual behavior in your children, which you think may be caused by a reaction to the fire, contact your local Red Cross chapter, child's counselor or community professional for additional information and help.

The Red Cross can also arrange for you to talk with a member of its disaster staff who has special expertise in dealing with disaster stress for more information.



## **MT. LEBANON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

555 Washington Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

412.531.5366  
[www.mlfd.org](http://www.mlfd.org)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

### **FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

United States Fire Administration  
16825 South Seton Avenue  
Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727

1.800.561.3356  
[www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)