

After the Fire... We Continue To Serve



This is a booklet developed to answer some questions,
and aid you in adjustment and recovery.



143 North Broad Street • Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601
(541) 885-2056 • www.kcfd1.com

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After the Fire

Recovering from a fire can be a physically and mentally draining process. When fire strikes, lives are suddenly turned around. Often, the hardest part is knowing where to begin and who to contact.

Contact your local disaster relief service, such as the American Red Cross at (541) 884-4125 or the Salvation Army at (541) 884-7778, to help with your immediate needs, such as :

- Temporary housing
- Food
- Medicine
- Eyeglasses
- Clothing
- Other essential items

Counseling Support

After a fire, you may experience any range of emotions. It is normal to feel unsettled during times of extreme loss. Some common signs of traumatic stress are being anxious, feeling depressed, or finding it difficult to concentrate. You may also feel sadness or even anger, fight constant fatigue, or develop unfounded or irrational fears or experience nightmares. All of these are common responses to a traumatic event.

If you or your family members need support, there are many resources available. You may contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided by your employer or you might discuss this matter with your clergy. Klamath County has a mental health division that offers assistance, you could also call the American Red Cross or check your Yellow Pages of your phone directory, under Counselors.



Leaving Your Home

If you cannot safely live in your home, and if you are without the aid of family or friends, consult with your insurance company. Your policy may cover additional living expenses such as hotel and or food. The Red Cross may also be able to provide temporary shelter until you can arrange for a place to stay.

TAKE VALUABLES WITH YOU

If you must abandon your home, even temporarily, attempt to locate a few important items that you may need, such as:

- Important legal documents
- Your identification
- Vial medicines
- Eyeglasses
- Hearing aids
- Credit cards
- Checkbooks
- Insurance policy or policies
- Money
- Jewelry
- Family photos
- Fire Safe (You may need to let your fire safe cool down before attempting to open it.)



IF YOU MOVE

If the damage to your home is such that you must relocate your primary residence, remember to notify the following organizations regarding your change of address:

- Post office
- Credit card companies
- Bank(s)
- Cable Television
- Newspaper, etc.
- Telephone

If You Are Insured

One of the first things you may wish to do after the fire is to contact your insurance company or insurance agent as soon as possible. If you are renting or leasing your home, you should also contact the owner. Your insurance company will send an insurance adjuster to evaluate the damage to your home. The adjuster may be able to offer assistance in securing your home and making repairs.

If you are unable to contact your agent and need professional assistance in boarding up your home, you should contact any general contractor or fire damage restoration firm.



Refer to the Yellow Pages of your phone directory under: **Contractors – General or Fire & Water Damage Restoration.**

If You Are Not Insured

If your property is not insured, or if your insurance will not cover all your losses, contact your family lawyer or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for directions. If your loss meets specific standards, you may be eligible for casualty loss. For this information, refer to:

Publication 547; Tax information on Disasters, Casualty Losses and Thefts,

This publication is available from you local IRS office.

If you are not insured and need immediate assistance, the American Red Cross is available to assist families who have been displaced from their homes through any type of disaster. They are available around the clock, every day of the year, with food, clothing, and housing.

Replacement of Cash or Negotiables

If cash or negotiables are burned, handle with extreme care. You should first attempt to encase each crisp sheet in a plastic wrap in order to salvage as much as possible. Take pictures of damaged cash or negotiables and place in hard packing boxes or crates to avoid crushing. Take your damaged notes to your local bank for advice regarding replacement.



Salvaging Hints

MEDICINE OR FOOD

Any medicines exposed to heat or smoke should not be consumed. Medicines can change strength by exposure to heat. Please check with your doctor about replacing these medicines.

If your food was stored in tightly closed containers or package, and the containers or packaging weren't damaged, the food may still be damaged. Smoke can permeate the plastic covering and contaminate the food. You will notice an unpleasant smoky flavor to the food if it is affected. Do not eat this affected food as there may be a literal "witch's brew" of chemicals carried by the smoke. If food was stored in an airtight refrigerator or freezer, the food may be salvageable, but follow the same rule as above. Do not use canned goods when cans are bulging, dented or rusted. Remember, it is cheaper to replace the material than to jeopardize your health by taking a chance.

If in doubt, throw it out!

WHAT ABOUT ODORS?

Smoke is an odorant and may have traveled throughout your home. Sometimes this residual smoke odor can be annoying and can linger in your home or clothes. Start eliminating the odor by performing a good cleaning of everything in the house. If structural wood is charred but still deemed structurally sound, paint the timber with a paint primer similar to Kilz. Do this prior to recovering the wood with drywall as the smell may permeate the new walls.

To further deodorize your home, try placing small saucers of household vanilla, vinegar, or activated charcoal about your home. These items can mask and will actually help absorb odors.

You should change heating / air conditioner filters. Also, the smoke odor may be inside the heating and cooling ductwork of your home. If so, you may get an increase of smoke odor every time the air circulates through your system. Most mechanical contractors that service the heating units can clean these ducts. If you are insured, consult your heating and air conditioning company for assistance.

If the odor in your home does not go away or diminish dramatically in about a week, you may wish to call a janitorial service. Many of these services specialize in restoration of fire-damaged property. Refer to the Yellow Pages of your phone directory, under Fire & Water Damage Restoration.

General Cleaning/Salvaging Hints

When you take a hot shower, the suspended droplets will cling to the cooler surfaces in the bathroom, this is called condensation. Because of this condensation, the mirror always gets fogged up. Think of smoke as the steam you see in the bathroom. It is warmer than its surroundings, therefore the smoke will stick to a cooler surface. You may see round spots where the nail heads are in the walls.

Painted Walls – To remove soot and smoke from walls, mix together tri-sodium phosphate sometimes referred to as TSP, and water. Refer to the instructions on the package for mixing instructions TSP can be purchased in paint stores or hardware store. We suggest that you use rubber gloves and goggles while working with this solution.



WARNING – Keep mixture away from Children and Pets!

Cloth or woven surfaces – Vacuum all cloth or woven surfaces. Think beyond just the carpet and consider furniture and drapery. You may wish to invest in a Heppa Filter vacuum cleaner. If you are using an older vacuum, you may wish to seal off the room you are working in with plastic wrap or tape to keep soot from moving from one room to another.

Mattresses and Bedding – Reconditioning an innerspring mattress at home is very difficult if not impossible. A company that builds or repairs mattresses can probably renovate your mattress. If you must use your mattress temporarily, put it out into the sun. The heat from the sun can vaporize some of the smoke and odor trapped in the fibers. When you must use your mattress, cover it with plastic sheeting to avoid breathing the vapors while you sleep. Feathers and foam used in bedding retain odors so much that it is almost impossible to remove the smoke odor.

Locks and Hinges – Locks (especially iron locks) should be taken apart, wiped with kerosene and then oiled. If locks cannot be removed, squirt light machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole and work the knob to distribute the oil. Do this several times until the oil that flows from the locking mechanism flows clean. Hinges should be thoroughly cleaned and oiled.



WARNING – Do Not Use Gasoline for Cleaning!

Mildew – Water used for suppression efforts may cause mildew if left long enough. To remove mildew, wash the stain with soap and water. Rinse well and dry. If stain remains, use lemon juice and salt or a solution of household chlorine bleach and warm water. If you suspect the mildew is black mold, consult with a professional regarding its removal as it can be an airborne health hazard.

Clothes – To remove smoke odor or soot from clothes that can be bleached, add ½ cup of ammonia to 2 gallons of water, then rinse in vinegar (use rubber gloves). Should you have any questions about the cleaning or preparation of clothing, it is wise to contact a cleaning service. Take wool, silk, rayon garments to the dry cleaners as soon as possible.

WARNING – To avoid creating a hazardous gas, Do Not Mix Ammonia with Bleach!

Electrical Appliances – Do not run wet appliances until a service technician has checked them. Electronic equipment that has been exposed to water but not extreme heat may still work. Do not power on the equipment until the component is allowed to dry completely as even small amounts of water can short out the inner workings and ruin the component.



Cooking Utensils – Your pots, pans, flatware, etc... are made to withstand high heat environment. If the handles are still in place, they are still serviceable. They should be washed with soapy water and a powder cleanser, then rinsed similar to clean-up after cooking.

You may not want to use cleanser on your copper or brass cookware. You can polish copper and brass with polish made for special metals. If you don't have brass or copper polish, use salt sprinkled on a piece of lemon or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated in vinegar as your scrubbing pad.

VEHICLE FIRES

If insured: Contact your insurance agent. They can explain your coverage and assist you with your claim. If your vehicle is damaged in a structure fire, you may want to contact both your home insurance and vehicle insurance agents.

If uninsured: If vehicle is repairable, a list of repair facilities can be obtained in the Yellow Pages of your phone directory, under Automobile Repairing and Service.

If towing is required, refer the Yellow Pages of your phone directory, under Automobile Road Service. Perhaps your vehicle was towed from the location of the fire and you don't know where your car is now. Most tow companies have storage yards. Contact the local tow companies. They may have possession of your vehicle.

If your uninsured vehicle is a total loss or considered beyond repair, it may be of value to a salvage yard. A list of vehicle salvage companies can be obtained in the Yellow Pages of your phone directory, under Automobile Salvage.

Temporary transportation may be necessary. Bus schedules are available through the Basin Transit System at (541) 883-2877. Look in the Yellow Pages of your phone directory under Taxicabs for a listing of taxi services.

FIRE DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES

Occasionally, fire crews will have to force entry into the vehicle's engine, passenger compartment or even the trunk. This is done to check for fire extension and to extinguish the fire.

To ensure that the fire is completely extinguished, the fire crews may have:

- Cut and/or disconnect battery cables to prevent electrical shorting of wires where insulation of wiring has been damaged.
- Complete removal of padding from seats, especially where cotton padding is used.
- Force entry into the passenger compartment, engine compartment and trunk of vehicle to extinguish, check for fire extension and gain access to battery cables.
- Cut members of the dash away to remove insulation.

Frequently Asked Questions

After the fire you might notice some damage to your home caused by the suppression efforts. Here are a list of frequently asked questions that may help.



How do I get my utility service restored?

Often during the fire attack, Fire District No. 1 will have the utility services shut off or disconnected. This is done as a Firefighter safety precaution and to prevent further damage to the home or belongings.

To have your utilities restored, you may need to make some repairs to your home. The utility companies cannot restore utilities until the fire damage repairs are approved, and the Klamath County Fire District No. 1 has issued clearance. Request inspections from the Fire Prevention Division. They can be contacted during normal business hours at the administration offices at 143 North Broad Street, Klamath Falls, Oregon or by phone at (541) 885-2056.

Why are my windows broken?"



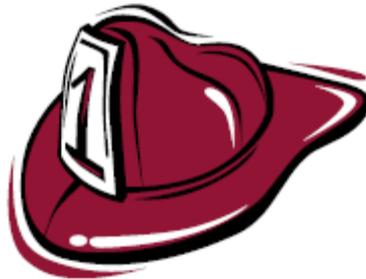
Fires produce temperatures well over 1200 degrees °F, and that is almost six times hotter than boiling water. Along with smoke and fire gases, this intense heat must be ventilated quickly to reduce the fire spread and minimize the damage to your structure and belongings. After the heat is reduced, the firefighters are able to make entry into your home to attack the base of the fire.

Why are there holes in the walls or in the ceiling?

Often, a wall or ceiling must be opened to find “hidden” fire or to find fire that has extended into hidden spaces (also know as fire extension). Firefighters may open walls and ceilings to look for fire extension to ensure complete extinguishment. Without the use of this firefighting techniques, the building could suffer total destruction by fire several hours after the firefighting forces have left the scene.

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

You, or your insurance agent, may receive a copy of the official fire report by contacting Klamath County Fire District No. 1’s Administrative Office. You may request a copy in person at 143 North Broad Street, Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601 or by phoning 541/885-2056 during normal business hours. There is a minimum \$10.00 charge for a fire report.



Important Phone Numbers

To Report an Emergency

911

Klamath County Fire District No. 1

143 North Broad Street, Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601

(541) 885-2056 Fax: (541) 884-6920

Klamath County Building Department

(541) 883-4209

Avista Utilities

1-800-227-9187

Pacific Power

1-888-221-7070

Qwest

1-800-491-0118

American Red Cross

(541) 884-4125

Humane Society

(541) 882-1119

Other Important Numbers or Notes
