

Fire Damage Do's and Don'ts:

Do:

- ❑ Safely remove yourself, other people and pets from the affected area.
- ❑ Depending on the severity of the fire and water damage, consider turning off electricity at the breaker.
- ❑ Remain nearby until the property has been secured.
- ❑ Open doors and windows to facilitate cross-ventilation.
- ❑ Contact a professional restoration firm to prevent additional damage.
- ❑ Save all receipts for any temporary repairs or damage mitigation.
- ❑ Videotape and photograph as much of the damage as possible.
- ❑ Contact your insurance company and/or agent to file a claim.
- ❑ Remove valuable items such as vital records, paintings, irreplaceable photos, family heirlooms, jewelry, fire arms, and important documents to a dry, safe place. Place water-logged vital records and important documents in a freezer to retard mildew growth until professional drying is possible.
- ❑ Wipe both sides of plant leaves with a clean, damp cloth.
- ❑ Place clean towels or old linens on rug and carpet traffic areas to prevent additional soiling.
- ❑ If electricity is shut off, remove contents from refrigerators and freezers and prop open doors to allow circulation. For safety reasons, make sure the doors cannot close.
- ❑ If the heat is off during freezing season, turn off the main water supply to avoid pipe breaks. Pour anti-freeze in sinks, toilet bowls and tubs. Make sure that children and pets do not have access to the anti-freeze.
- ❑ Place aluminum foil, china saucers, or un-stained wood blocks between furniture legs and wet carpeting.
- ❑ Remove as many items as possible from affected areas, placing undamaged contents in a secure, dry place.
- ❑ If a water-damaged ceiling is sagging, punch small holes to relieve trapped water and let it drain into a bucket.
- ❑ Remove as much excess water as possible by mopping and blotting.
- ❑ Remove tabletop lamps and other items; wipe excess water from wood furniture.
- ❑ Remove and prop up wet upholstery cushions for even drying.
- ❑ Remove saturated area rugs and other removable floor coverings. Place outside and away from your home. Warning: Wet rugs can be extremely heavy and may require more than one person to lift.
- ❑ Survey curtains and draperies throughout the affected areas. If they're skimming any wet floors, lift them and either tack them up or place them over a coat hanger hooked onto the curtain rod.
- ❑ If you own a dehumidifier, turn it on if the outside temperature is 65 degrees or higher.
- ❑ Open doors throughout the house, including bedroom doors and closet doors, to speed the drying process. A good rule of thumb is to open anything that can be opened -- drawer, cupboard, window or interior door -- to maintain air circulation.
- ❑ Open furniture drawers and cabinet doors to facilitate drying.
- ❑ Open suitcases and luggage to dry, in sunlight, if possible.
- ❑ Once electricity has been safely restored, use box fans and oscillating fans throughout the house to aid in the drying process. If ceiling is dry, turn on ceiling fans. In summer months, where possible, turn on air conditioning and set to coolest temperature possible. In winter months, alternate the heating system and opened windows.
- ❑ Carefully blow off or brush-vacuum loose soot particles from upholstery, drapes, and carpets.
- ❑ Contact your pharmacy to replace medication that may have been stored near fire or heat; their composition may have changed.



Don't:

- Don't attempt to wash any walls or painted surfaces.
- Don't attempt to shampoo carpet or upholstered furniture.
- Don't turn on any electrical equipment that may have been damaged.
- Don't attempt to clean any electrical appliances, TV sets, radios, etc. that may have been close to fire, heat or water.
- Don't use any canned or packaged food or beverages that may have been stored close to fire, heat or water; they may be contaminated.
- Don't turn on ceiling fixtures if ceiling is wet. Wiring may be wet or damaged.
- Don't send garments to ordinary dry cleaning. Improper cleaning may set smoke odor.
- Don't enter a room with standing water unless you have turned off the electricity.
- Don't turn on ceiling fixtures if ceiling is wet; keep out of rooms where ceilings are sagging from retained water.
- Don't leave wet fabrics in place; hang furs and leather goods to dry separately at room temperature. Materials such as leather are particularly sensitive to outside weather variables; it's best to keep them indoors at room temperature.
- Don't leave books, magazines or other colored items on wet carpets or floors.
- Don't use your household vacuum to remove water.
- Don't remove damaged goods or other property until you have documented (photos or video) the damage.
- Don't make any permanent repairs until after the insurance adjuster has inspected the damage.
- Don't use any medication that may have been stored close to fire, heat or water; their composition may have changed and could cause more harm than good.