

Checklist to Use After a Fire Strikes

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The following checklist serves as a quick reference and guide for you to follow after a fire strikes.

1. Contact your local disaster relief service, such as the Red Cross, if you need temporary housing, food and medicines.
2. If you are insured, contact your insurance company for detailed instructions on protecting the property, conducting inventory and contacting fire damage restoration companies. If you are not insured, try contacting private organizations for aid and assistance.
3. Check with the fire department to make sure your residence is safe to enter. Be watchful of any structural damage caused by the fire.
4. The fire department should see that utilities are either safe to use or are disconnected before they leave the site. **DO NOT** attempt to reconnect utilities yourself.
5. Conduct an inventory of damaged property and items. Do not throw away any damaged goods until after an inventory is made.
6. Try to locate valuable documents and records.
7. If you leave your home, contact the local police department to let them know the site will be unoccupied.
8. Begin saving receipts for any money you spend related to fire loss. The receipts may be needed later by the insurance company and for verifying losses claimed on income tax.
9. Notify your mortgage company of the fire.
10. Check with an accountant or the Internal Revenue Service about special benefits for people recovering from fire loss.