

CITY OF MIAMISBURG
FIRE DEPARTMENT

THE FIRST

24

HOURS

A GUIDE FOR ASSISTANCE AFTER A FIRE WITH
PROPERTY CLEAN UP AND CONSERVATION HINTS FOR
OWNERS OF FIRE DAMAGED PROPERTY.

PROVIDED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

We have extinguished the fire, but that's only a part of the task that lies ahead. We have made sure that the fire is out, and we have done some basic clean up work. It is now up to you to start repair of the fire damage and seek replacement of damaged items.

First, we should answer some questions you might have about our operation:

1. **WHY ARE THE WINDOWS OPEN, OR HOLES IN THE ROOF?**

- ☒ As a fire burns, it moves upward, then outward. The fire department, in most fires, has to remove window glass and sometimes cut holes in the roof. In firefighter terms, this is called ventilation, which stops the damaging outward movement and enables us to fight the fire more efficiently. This produces less damage in the long run.

2. **WHY THE HOLES IN THE WALL?**

- ☒ We have to be absolutely sure that all the fire is out, and that there is no hidden fire in the wall partitions.

3. In some cases, the area immediately surrounding the fire will be "ROPED OFF" and secured, the Fire Chief is charged by law to investigate the cause and origin of every fire. When these signs are posted, Do Not enter the premises without permission from the Officer-In-Charge.

4. Most serious fires will require that some or all utilities (gas, electric, water) will need to be shut off. This is done to prevent further damage, and to protect firefighters. If present, you will be advised which utilities have been turned off.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS / THE FIRST 24 HOURS

STEP 1: SECURING THE SITE

The site of the fire needs to be protected from further damage by weather, theft, or vandalism. The Miamisburg Fire Department will attempt to provide temporary measures to secure your property. If the owner or tenant is not present, the fire department will contact the police department.

We will also remove as much water and debris as possible, and protect lightly damaged or undamaged property. We will also do our best to cover broken windows and roof openings (ventilation) with plastic. **IF YOU HAVE INSURANCE, YOU NEED TO CONTACT YOUR INSURANCE CARRIER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** Normally, your insurance company will see that the windows, doors, ventilation openings are boarded up.

- ☒ **IF YOU ARE THE OWNER.** It is your responsibility to see that holes are covered against the rain and entry, and that the outside doors to your home can be locked or secured.
- ☒ **CONTACT YOUR INSURANCE AGENT IMMEDIATELY.** He or she must be notified of the fire, and may also be able to help you in making immediate repairs. If you cannot reach your agent or need professional assistance in boarding up your home, a general contractor, fire damage restoration firm or a fire service firm can help.

If you plan to leave the fire site, try to remove any valuables in the building. Try not to leave until the sight has been secured.

- ☒ **IF YOU ARE A TENANT**, Contact the resident manager, the owner, or the owner's insurance agent. It is the owner's responsibility to prevent further damage to the site.

CONTACT YOUR OWN INSURANCE COMPANY IMMEDIATELY TO REPORT YOUR OWN LOSSES.

See that your personal belongings are secured; either within the building or moved to another location, such as the home of a relative or friend.

STEP 2: CAUTIONS

- ☒ Fire can rekindle from hidden or smoldering remains. Be watchful for signs of heat or smoke.
- ☒ Household wiring, which may have been water damage should be checked by an electrician before current is turned back on.
- ☒ Be watchful for structural damage caused by the fire. Roofs and floors may be weakened. **IF YOU ENTER THE STRUCTURE, MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE THICK SOLED SHOES ON, AS THE FLOORS MAY CONTAIN BROKEN GLASS, NAILS & OTHER SHARP OBJECTS. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT IF POSSIBLE, PUT ON OLD CLOTHING THAT WILL BE SEVERELY SOILED OR EVEN RUINED AFTER AN INSPECTION OF THE PROPERTY.**
- ☒ Food, beverages and medicines that are exposed to heat, smoke or soot should be discarded.
- ☒ Refrigerators or freezers left unopened will hold their temperature for a short time (3 to 4 hours approximately). However, do not attempt to refreeze thawed items. The fire department is required by law to notify the Health Department of fires involving commercial businesses that handle food and beverage items.
- ☒ The fire department will attempt to see that the utilities are either safe to use or turned off before they leave the site. If a utility is disconnected, contact the utility company or the Building Inspection Department to have equipment and utilities checked for proper working order or necessary permits for repairs.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RECONNECT UTILITIES YOURSELF!

Beginning now, get receipts for any money that you spend. These receipts are important in showing the insurance company what money you have spent related to your fire loss, and also verifying losses claimed on your federal income tax.

STEP 3: LEAVING YOUR HOME

This may be your decision or one based on the Building Inspector's and Fire Chief's Judgment that the structure is safe. The Fire Department notifies the Building Inspection Department in the event of any serious structure fires.

CONTACT THE MIAMISBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT. They will try to keep an eye on the property during your absence.

Temporary housing. Local relief services, such as **AMERICAN RED CROSS, 222-6711, & THE SALVATION ARMY, 228-8241,** should be able to help you if you need temporary housing, food, eye glasses, or medicines destroyed in the fire.

Check with your insurance about coverage that may pay for your extra costs of temporary housing, such as a hotel stay.

TRY TO LOCATE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO TAKE WITH YOU

- Identification
- Vital medicines
- Eye glasses, hearing aids, prosthetic devices or other personal aids.
- Valuables such as credit cards, check books, insurance policies, bank account books, money, jewelry, special collectibles, pictures, etc.
- DO NOT AT THIS TIME ATTEMPT TO OPEN YOUR SAFE.** A safe involved in a fire may hold intense heat for several hours, if the safe is opened too soon, the entering air, combined with the high temperature, may cause the contents to burst into flames.

Notify the following parties of your fire and temporary location.

-  Your insurance agent or adjuster
-  Family and friends
-  Your employer
-  Utility companies. These include telephone, gas, electric, water, trash collection, and cable T V.
-  Your mortgage company
-  Your post office
-  Any daily delivery services such as paper, milk, diapers.

STEP 4: ASKING FURTHER QUESTIONS

Your disaster relief services, insurance agent or the Miamisburg Fire Department will help you with the many questions you may have in the coming days. In the meantime:

-  After the day of the fire, you will need to think about preparing an inventory of the areas of your home or business that have been fire damaged. This is a very difficult task and needs to be done as soon as possible, preferably within the first week or two. If insured, the inventory is necessary in order to complete the claim process. Do not throw away any damaged goods until an inventory is made or the insurance agent has given approval. All damages are taken into consideration in developing your insurance claim.
-  Clothing that was stored in closed drawers or closets and not heavily smoke damaged can be salvaged if removed and washed immediately. Clothing left in the fire structure overnight or a few days will require professional cleaning, or may have to be thrown away.

FORWARD

Recovering from a fire may take a long time, and many things you have to do will be new to you. This guide has been prepared with the hope that this information will help bring your life back to normal as quickly as possible. Each fire and The circumstance affecting the fire victims are different and may present situations not entirely covered by this guide. If you have any additional questions or circumstances not covered by this guide, please feel free to contact the Miamisburg Fire Department as we are here to assist you in your time of need. Please ask for “AFTER THE FIRE, RETURNING TO NORMAL” brochure.

MIAMISBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT	847-6663
MIAMISBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT	847-6623 {NON- EMERGENCY}
MIAMISBURG BUILDING INSPECTION	847-6532 {M/F 8:00-5:00}