

BOISE FIRE DEPARTMENT AFTER THE FIRE

GETTING BACK TO NORMAL



BOISE FIRE DEPARTMENT

333 N. Mark Stall Place Boise, Idaho 83704

208-570-6500 | TTY: 711 | CITYOFBOISE.ORG/FIRE





MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

I want to extend my heartfelt thoughts to you as you face the challenges of recovering from a recent fire in your home or business. A fire can be a life-changing event, bringing with it many difficult and overwhelming emotions. Please know that you are not alone in this journey. Our community stands with you, and we are here to provide the support and resources you need to begin rebuilding and healing.

In this packet, you will find important information to guide you through the days and weeks ahead. We have included contacts for local services, tips for cleaning up safely, and guidance on addressing health and emotional concerns after a fire. Please contact our team if you have any questions or need additional assistance—we're here to help in any way we can.

Remember, you're not alone in this. Our community is here for you, and our team is always ready to assist you. Take care, stay safe, and know that we're just a call away.

Aaron Hummel
BOISE FIRE CHIEF

WHAT TO EXPECT



A FIRE IN YOUR HOME CAN CAUSE SERIOUS DAMAGE. YOUR HOME AND CONTENTS MAY BE BADLY DAMAGED BY FLAMES, HEAT, SMOKE, AND WATER.

You will find things not damaged by the fire may still be ruined by smoke and may be soggy with water used to put out the fire. Anything you want to save or reuse will need to be carefully cleaned.

To fight the fire, firefighters may have broken windows and cut holes in the roof. This slows the fire's growth and gets rid of dark smoke that makes it hard for firefighters to see. They may have cut holes in your walls to ensure the fire is completely out and not hidden in the walls.

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, local building official, your insurance agent, and restoration specialists before starting to clean or make repairs.

REMINDERS

1. Do not enter the site unless deemed safe.
2. Do not attempt to turn on utilities yourself. The fire department will determine what is and isn't safe to turn on and off.
3. Food, beverages, and medicine exposed to heat, smoke, soot, and water should never be consumed.
4. Do not go near the place of origin of the fire.

THE FIRST 24 HOURS



IF APPLICABLE, CONTACT YOUR INSURANCE AGENT OR COMPANY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Your insurance agent will be able to assist in making immediate repairs or help in getting the building secured. The site of the fire needs to be protected from further damage by weather, theft, or vandalism. Ask them what to do about the immediate needs of the home and what actions you need to take.

Disaster relief services such as the American Red Cross or Salvation Army can assist you and your family with immediate needs such as:

- Temporary Housing
- Food
- Medicine
- Clothing and other essential items

LEAVING YOUR HOME

HOMEOWNER

- It is your responsibility to ensure that any holes are covered to prevent entry and provide protection against weather. All outside doors to your home should be locked or secured. If you need professional assistance boarding up your home, a board up service or fire damage restoration firm can help.
- If the fire is not under investigation and you plan to leave the fire site, try to remove any valuables. Do not leave until the site has been secured and your valuables have been removed.
- If the fire is under investigation, fire department personnel will accompany you while you remove valuables from your property, and they will inventory the property you take.

TENANT

- Contact the resident manager or owner. The property owner is responsible for preventing further loss or damage to the site. Ensure your personal belongings are secure within the building, or move them to another location.
- Contact your renters insurance agent to report the loss.

WHAT TO TAKE

If it is safe to do so, try to locate the following items:

- Vital documents
- Driver's licenses and social security cards
- Purses, wallets
- Insurance Information
- Eyeglasses, hearing aids, or other medical devices
- Valuables, such as credit cards, bank books, cash, weapons, and high-end jewelry

INVENTORY + DOCUMENTATION



YOUR LOSS OF BELONGINGS MAY BE DIFFICULT TO MEASURE.

While personal items may have sentimental value, it is important to use objective measures. Insurance companies will require that you make an inventory of all your damaged personal items, detailed in relation to quantity, description, and how much you paid for each item.

- **COST WHEN PURCHASED**

This is important to establish an item's final value. A receipt will help you verify the cost.

- **FAIR MARKET VALUE BEFORE THE FIRE**

This is also known as actual cash value. The price would reflect the cost of the item's original purchase minus the wear it has sustained since the purchase date. Insurers will use the word "depreciation."

- **VALUE AFTER THE FIRE**

Otherwise known as the item's salvage value.

Use the included Home Inventory Checklist from the National Association of Insurance Commissions or a resource from your insurance company to assist you.

IF YOU ARE NOT INSURED

Community organizations may be able to help with longer-term needs if you are not covered by insurance.

- American Red Cross
- The Salvation Army
- Religious organizations
- Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
- Civic organizations
- Non-profit crisis counseling centers

REPLACING DOCUMENTS



DOCUMENTS CAN BE DAMAGED OR DESTROYED AS A RESULT OF A FIRE. USE THE RESOURCES LISTED HERE TO ASSIST IN REPLACING THE DOCUMENTS.

GOOD INVESTMENT

A good investment is a fire-proof safe that is UL-rated for at least 1 hour of exposure at 1700 degrees Fahrenheit.

- **BIRTH, DEATH, MARRIAGE, DIVORCE CERTIFICATES**
Contact the vital records office in the state in which the certificate was issued.
- **PASSPORTS**
U.S. Passports and International Travel
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html>
- **CITIZENSHIP PAPERS**
U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service
<https://www.uscis.gov>
- **VEHICLE REGISTRATION & DRIVER'S LICENSE**
Idaho Transportation Department
<https://itd.idaho.gov/itddmv>
- **SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS**
Social Security Administration
1249 S. Vinnell Way, Suite 101, Boise, ID 83709 | 1-855-377-9316
- **BANK INFORMATION, CHECKING, SAVINGS OR MORTGAGE DOCUMENTS**
Contact your bank and lending institution
- **CREDIT CARDS, STOCKS AND BONDS, WARRANTIES, PRE-PAID BURIAL CONTRACTS**
Contact the issuing company
- **INSURANCE POLICIES**
Contact your insurance agent or company
- **WILLS AND ESTATE PLANNING**
Contact your attorney
- **MILITARY PAPERS**
Department of Veterans Affairs, 444 W. Fort St, Boise, ID 83702 | 1-800-827-1000
- **MEDICAL RECORDS**
Contact your primary care physician
- **INCOME TAX RECORDS**
Contact the IRS and State Tax Commission

SALVAGE TIPS



PROFESSIONAL RESTORATION COMPANIES CAN HELP YOU SALVAGE AND RESTORE YOUR ITEMS THAT WERE DAMAGED. THESE ARE SOME HELPFUL HINTS IN CASE THOSE COMPANIES ARE NOT AN OPTION FOR YOU.

- **CLOTHING**

Smoke odor and soot can sometimes be washed from clothing. If you will be laundering the clothing yourself, read the care tags carefully and wash them accordingly. If clothing is not bleach-safe, wash with a cup of baking soda or white vinegar added to the wash cycle.

For clothing that can be bleached, the following formula will often work: 4-6 teaspoons tri-sodium phosphate, 1/2 cup household chlorine bleach, 1 gallon warm water.

Use gloves when handling the solution and work in a well-ventilated area. Mix well, add clothes, rinse with clean water and dry thoroughly.

An effective way to remove mildew is to wash the fresh stain with soap and water. Then rinse and dry in the sun. If the stain isn't gone, use lemon juice and salt, or a diluted solution of household chlorine bleach.

- **COOKING UTENSILS**

Cooking utensils should be washed with soapy water, rinsed, and polished with a fine powdered cleaner. You can polish copper and brass with a special cloth, salt on a piece of lemon, or salt sprinkled on a cloth soaked in vinegar.

- **ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES**

Do not use appliances that have been exposed to water or steam until you have a service representative check them for you, especially electrical appliances. If the fire department turned off your gas or power during the fire, call the appropriate utility company to restore services. Do not try to do it yourself.

- **RUGS + CARPETS**

Rugs and carpets should be allowed to dry thoroughly. Throw rugs can be cleaned by beating, sweeping, or vacuuming, then shampooing. Rugs should be dried as quickly as possible. Lay them flat and expose them to a circulation of warm, dry air. A fan turned on the rugs will speed drying. Even though the surface seems 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 cleaner or installer or a qualified carpet cleaning professional.

- **LEATHER + BOOKS**

Wipe your leather goods with a damp cloth and then with a dry cloth. Stuff your purses and shoes with newspapers to retain their shape. Leave your suitcases open. Leather goods should be dried away from heat and sun. When leather goods are dry, clean them with saddle soap. You can use steel wool or a suede brush on suede items. Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry away from heat and sun.

Books can be dried by placing them on end with pages separated. Then, they should be piled and pressed to prevent the pages from crinkling. Alternating drying and pressing will help prevent mildew until the books are thoroughly dry. If your books are very damp, sprinkle cornstarch or talc between the pages, leave for several hours, then brush off. A fan turned on the books will help them dry.

- **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Preserving damaged photographs is often very important to victims of fire, floods, and other disasters. If photos are not burned, they can usually be saved. Never try to peel apart photos that have stuck together.

Soak the photos in clear, clean water and rinse carefully and thoroughly, letting stuck photographs separate on their own. If they stay damp, they can be damaged by mold. If you have quantities of wet photos, wrap them in plastic wrap and freeze them, then thaw them and wash them a few at a time. After washing the photos, dry them image-side up on a smooth, hard surface like a glass table or kitchen counter.

- **WALLS, FLOORS + CEILINGS**

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

4-6 tablespoons tri-sodium phosphate

1/2 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach

1 gallon warm water

Wear rubber gloves when cleaning with this solution and work in a well-ventilated area. Be sure to rinse your walls and floors with clear, warm water and dry them thoroughly after washing them with this solution. Wash one small wall area at a time, working from the floor up. Then, rinse the wall with clear water immediately. Ceilings should be washed last. If the weather allows open windows and use a fan to circulate air. Do not repaint until the walls and ceilings are completely dry.

- **WOOD FURNITURE**

Furniture can be cleaned in the same fashion as walls, floors, and ceilings. Do not dry wooden furniture in the sun, as the wood will warp and twist out of shape. Remove drawers and let them dry thoroughly so there will be no sticking when you replace them.



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