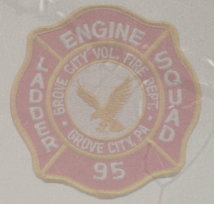


Grove City Volunteer Fire Department
Recovering From the Fire
Grove City Volunteer Fire Department
395 E. Pine St. Grove City, PA. 16127
(724)458-5311



Recovering From the Fire

Taking your life back after a fire
The important next steps



grovecityfire.com

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RECOVERING FROM A FIRE

When a fire strikes, it turns lives around. Often, the hardest part for a homeowner is knowing where to begin the recovery and restoration process.

The Grove City Volunteer Fire Department gathered information from, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), United States Fire Administration (USFA), American Red Cross to help you in this time of need.

A fire in a home can cause serious damage. The building and many of the things in your home may have been badly damaged by flames, heat, smoke, and water. You will find that things the fire did not burn up are now ruined by smoke and soggy with water used to put out the fire. Anything that you want to save, or reuse will need to be carefully cleaned.

While fighting the fire, the firefighters may have cut holes in the walls of the building to look for any hidden flames. They may even have cut holes in the roof and broken windows to let out the heat and smoke.

Immediately following the fire

THE FIRST **24** HOURS IN

SECURE YOURSELF FIRST

Have all your injuries treated by a medical professional. Prevent infection by washing small wounds with soap and water. Using bandages to keep them clean and protected.

Contact your insurance agent.

If you do not have insurance there are agencies who may be able to help you get back on your feet with items like, temporary housing, food, medicine, eyeglasses, clothing, and other essential items. Do not go at this alone.

- The American Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Religious Organizations
- Community Groups
- Non-Profit Crisis Counseling Services

SECURE THE SITE

Do not enter the damaged property unless the fire department has released statement to you stating it is safe to do so. Please understand the health and safety risk after the fire has been put out. The property may still provide dangers from the soot and

dirty water that remains from the fire, these things can make you sick. Be very careful when entering your home or touching anything touched by the fire.

The fire department normally either shuts off or will see that the utilities (electric, water, natural gas) are safe to use before they leave the scene. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO TURN THESE UTILITIES ON YOURSELF.**

Be cautious of structural damage, the floors and roof may no longer be structurally sound. Fire and water damage often leads to sagging floors and ceilings that are subject to collapse without notice.

Foods and medicines exposed to heat, water, soot, or smoke should not be consumed.

Immediately begin to save all the receipts for money that you spend. Your insurance company and you are going to need them to prove losses as well verifying losses on your income tax return. There are many questions that relate to tax implications of the fire. There are resources available at www.redcross.org. Disaster Recovery: A Guide to Financial Issues (A5076)

Contact the Grove City Police Department to let them know you will be away from your home after the fire. Often you may need to secure your home with boards covering the windows and doors.

CHECK YOUR FAMILIES EMOTIONAL STATE

Emotional care and recovery are just as important as the belongings lost.

Disasters are upsetting to everyone involved. Children, people with disabilities and senior citizens are at risk. Children may become afraid and have nightmares, elderly may become disoriented, and the additional assistance required for people with disabilities may not be immediately available to them.

It is critical to let children know that they are safe and that they will have a safe place to stay. Children's view of the world as a safe place may be temporarily broken. They may become afraid that it is going to happen again or that family may be lost or injured. How parents and other adults involved react to the situation can help the children recover quickly and completely.

Some basic steps you can take to meet physical and emotional needs:

- Try to return to as many of your personal and family routines as possible.
- Get rest and drink plenty of water.
- Limit your exposure to the sights and sounds of the fire, especially on television, the radio and in the newspapers.
- Focus on the positive.
- Recognize your own feelings.
- Reach out and accept help from others.

- Do something you enjoy. Do something as a family that you have all enjoyed in the past.
- Stay connected with your family and/or other support systems.
- Realize that, sometimes, recovery can take time.

If you have more questions or observe unusual behavior in your children, which you think may be caused by a reaction to the fire, contact your local Red Cross chapter, child's counselor, or community professional for additional information and help.

The Red Cross can also arrange for you to talk with a member of its disaster staff who has special expertise in dealing with disaster stress for more information. www.redcross.org

SECURE YOUR PETS

Scared pets may often react by biting, scratching, or running away. Handle these pets carefully.

If returning to the site of the fire try and leave pets with someone secure like a family member, veterinarian, or family member.

RECLAIMING BELONGINGS

BEGINNING TO REBUILD

ONCE IT IS SAFE TO DO SO

Begin by trying to locate the following items:

- Driver's license
- Medicare Cards
- Credit Cards
- Military Discharge Papers
- Medical Records
- Auto Registration
- Titles / Deeds
- Stocks / Bonds
- Passports
- Income Tax Records
- Social security cards
- Insurance Policies
- Wills
- Birth / Death / Marriage Certificates
- Divorce Papers

COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE

There are many groups and people that should be notified of the situation.

- Insurance agent
- Employer
- Post Office
- Landlord
- Family / Friends
- Delivery Services
- Mortgage company
- Children's Schools
- Utility Companies

Ask your insurance company about how to learn the value of your home and property.

Take many photos of the site, do not throw away any damaged goods until a proper inventory of all damages are taken for your now developing insurance claim.

Contact your credit card companies to report the cards lost in the fire and to request replacements.

Handle burnt money as little as possible, preserve each bill or piece of bill in plastic cling wrap. If money is only partially burnt and is half or more of a single bill it is still okay, you can take it to your regional federal reserve bank to get it replaced. Speak to your local bank for the nearest federal reserve bank to you.

More information on replacing damaged money can be found at www.moneyfactory.gov/submitclaim

To replace savings bonds, that have been mutilated or destroyed visit www.treasurydirect.gov/forms/sav1048.pdf

Send to:

Treasury Retail Securities Site
P.O. Box 214
Minneapolis, MN 55480-0214

MOVING FORWARD

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

The American Red Cross

Mercer County Office
87 Stambaugh Ave Ste 2-H PO Box 2276
Sharon, PA 16146
Phone: 724-962-9180
www.redcross.org

Red Cross disaster relief focuses on meeting immediate emergency disaster-caused needs. When a disaster threatens or strikes, the Red Cross provides shelter, food, and health and mental health services to address basic human needs. In addition to these services, the core of Red Cross disaster relief is the assistance given to individuals and families affected by disaster to enable them to resume their normal daily activities independently.

REPLACING RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS

Item	Contact
Driver's License	Department of Motor Vehicles
Check Books	Your financial institution
Insurance Policies	Insurance Agent
Military Discharge Papers	Department of Veterans Affairs
Birth / Death / Marriage Certificates	Division of Vital Records
Passports	Passport Service
Divorce Papers	Prothonotary Office
Social Security / Medicare Cards	Local Social Security Office
Titles / Deeds	Local Records Department
Wills	Attorney / Registrar of wills
Medical Records	Family PCP
Mortgage Papers	Lending Institution
Animal Registration Papers	Veterinarian or Breeder

SALVAGING

BEGINNING THE CLEANUP

USE CAUTION

Understand that there are risks to your health and safety even after the fire is out. The contaminants left behind (Soot, water, smoke) may contain things that could make you sick. Touching any fire damaged items may increase this risk. Do not drink eat or breathe anything that has been near the flames, smoke, or soot.

Professional fire and water damage restoration businesses may be the best source of cleaning and restoring your personal belongings. Contact your insurance carrier for a list of professional restoration business services in your area.

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

Don't use appliances that have been exposed to water or steam until you have a service representative check them. In addition, steam can remove the lubricant from some moving parts.

If the fire department turned off your gas or power during the fire, call the electric or gas company to restore these services - do not try to do it yourself.

FOOD

Wash canned goods and foods in jars in detergent and water. If labels come off, be sure you mark the contents on the can or jar with a grease pencil. Do not use canned goods, when the cans have bulged or rusted. Do not refreeze frozen food that has thawed. Do not drink eat anything that has been near the flames, smoke, or soot.

To remove odor from your refrigerator or freezer, wash the inside with a solution of baking soda and water, or use one cup of vinegar or household ammonia to one gallon of water. Baking soda in an open container or a piece of charcoal will also help absorb refrigerator/freezer odor.

RUGS AND CARPETS

Allow rugs and carpets to dry thoroughly. Clean throw rugs by beating, sweeping, or vacuuming, and then shampooing. Dry the rugs as quickly as possible by laying them flat and exposing them to a circulation of warm, dry air. A fan turned on the rugs will speed drying. Make sure the rugs are thoroughly 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 dealer or installer or a qualified carpet cleaning professional.

WALLS, FLOORS AND FURNITURE

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

4 to 6 tbsp. Tri-Sodium
Phosphate
1 cup household cleaner or
chlorine bleach
1-gallon warm water

Wear rubber gloves when cleaning with this solution. Be sure to rinse your walls and furniture with clear warm water and dry thoroughly after washing them with this solution.

Wash small areas at a time, working from the floor up. Then rinse the wall with clear water immediately. Ceilings should be washed last.

Do not repaint until walls and ceilings are completely dry.

Your wallpaper can also be repaired. Use a commercial paste to re-paste a loose edge or section. Contact your wallpaper dealer or installer for information on wallpaper cleaners. Washable wallpaper can be cleansed like any ordinary wall, but care must be taken not to soak the paper. Work from bottom to top to prevent streaking.

CLOTHING/FABRIC

A word of caution:

Test garments before using any treatment and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Several of the cleaning mixtures described in this section contain the substance Tri-Sodium Phosphate (TSP). TSP is a caustic substance used commonly as a cleaning agent. Use it with care and store it out of reach of children and pets. Wear rubber gloves when using TSP if you have sensitive skin. Read the label for further information.

Smoke odor and soot can sometimes be washed from clothing.

The following formula may work for fabric that can be bleached:

4 to 6 tbsp. Tri-Sodium Phosphate
1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach
1 gallon warm water

Mix well; add clothes; rinse with clear water. Dry thoroughly.

To remove mildew from clothing, wash the fresh stain with soap and warm water, rinse and then dry in the sun. If the stain does not disappear, use lemon juice mixed with salt or a diluted solution of household chlorine bleach.

COOKING UTENSILS

Wash pots, pans, flatware, etc., with soapy water; then rinse and polish with a fine-powdered cleaner. You can clean and shine copper and brass with polish, salt sprinkled on a piece of lemon, or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated with vinegar.

LEATHER AND BOOKS

Wipe leather goods with a damp cloth, then a dry cloth. Stuff purses and shoes with newspaper to retain their shape. Leave suitcases open. Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry them away from heat and sun. Then clean leather with saddle soap.

Take care of wet books as soon as possible. The best way to save wet books is to freeze them in a special vacuum freezer, which will remove the moisture without damaging the pages. If you can't readily locate such a freezer, then place your books in a regular freezer until you can locate a vacuum freezer. The library is a good resource for help with damaged books.

LOCKS AND HINGES

Take apart locks (especially iron locks) and wipe them with oil. If you can't remove the locks, squirt machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole, and work the knob to distribute the oil. Clean and oil all hinges thoroughly.

WOOD FURNITURE

- Do not dry your furniture in the sun. The wood will warp.
- Clear off mud and dirt.
- Remove drawers. Let them dry thoroughly, so there will be no sticking when you replace them.
- Scrub wood furniture or fixtures with a stiff brush and a cleaning solution.
- Wet wood can decay and mold, so dry thoroughly. Open doors and windows for good ventilation. Turn on your furnace or air conditioner, if necessary.
- If mold forms, wipe the wood with a cloth soaked in a mixture of borax dissolved in hot water.
- To remove white spots or film, rub the wood surface with a cloth soaked in a solution of 1/2 cup household ammonia and 1/2 cup water. Then wipe the surface dry and polish with wax or rub the surface with a cloth soaked in a solution of 1/2 cup turpentine and 1/2 cup linseed oil. Be careful—turpentine and linseed oil are combustible.
- You can also rub the wood surface with a fine grade steel wool pad dipped in liquid polishing wax. Clean the area with a soft cloth and then buff.

NOTES

CHECKLIST

NEXT STEPS AFTER A FIRE

- Contact local disaster relief service such as the American Red Cross.
- Contact your insurance company if you have insurance.
 - Ask what you should do to keep your home and belongings safe until repair.
 - Ask who you should talk to about professional cleaning of your home
- If you are not insured, try contacting local community groups for aid.
- Check with the Grove City Volunteer Fire Department to make sure that your home is safe to enter.
- Contact your landlord or mortgage company to report the fire.
- Try to find valuable documents and records.
- If you are leaving your home contact the Grove City Police Department to let them know that the site is vacant.
- Begin to save all receipts for any money that you spend related to the fire loss.
- Check with an accountant or the IRS about special benefits to those recovering from a fire loss.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Date of Fire:

Time of Fire:

Location of Fire:

Fire Department Name:

Grove City Volunteer Fire Department

Fire Department Address:

395 E. Pine St. Grove City, PA. 16127

Fire Department Phone:

(724)458-5311

Fire Incident Report #:

Fire Marshall:

Insurance Company:

Insurance Policy #:

Insurance Phone #:

Vehicles Damaged or
Destroyed Vin #'s: