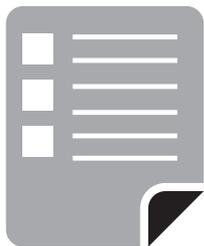


To book a **free Home Fire Safety Visit**
call **0800 0731 999**
Text '**FIRE**' to **80800**
or visit **www.firescotland.gov.uk**

AFTER THE FIRE CAN WE HELP?



Fact.

The task of **restoring your home** can be a **mammoth** one. Where do you **begin**?



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

Introduction

When we leave

If you are reading this booklet, it is likely that you have become a victim of fire or flooding in your home.

The Fire and Rescue Service will have responded swiftly to whatever emergency has befallen you, but we appreciate that when our fire crews leave, you have to cope with the aftermath.

Fires in the home are traumatic and the Fire and Rescue Service can only do so much to alleviate and limit the damage. We hope that the information in this booklet will help you to deal with the immediate situation and guide you to other agencies and sources of advice and help.

Finally, it is hoped that the fire safety guidelines at the end of this booklet will help to ensure that your home is better protected against the threat of fire in the future.

First steps

Safety

Fires produce large amounts of smoke and hot gases. Firefighters have to ventilate the building to lessen the damage that fire causes and speed up the process of firefighting.

For this reason, windows may have to be broken and walls and ceilings forcibly opened to make sure that there are no hidden fires which, if left undetected, could re-ignite later.

Firefighters will have thoroughly examined the structure affected by the fire and will have advised you of any apparent defects affecting the safety of the building.

In cases of severe structural damage, a building inspector may be called to advise as to the safety of the building.

Note: If the roof or any other part of your property is damaged to the extent that it is not wind and watertight, firefighters will have 'sheeted up' to protect your home. These sheets should be returned to the Fire and Rescue Service as soon as you are able to make other suitable arrangements.

Security

Firefighters will have attempted to save valuables from the fire area and will have returned them to their owner or handed them to the police.

When we leave the incident, responsibility for security will be passed over to the householder or the police.

If you intend to leave the property unattended, make sure all doors and windows are closed and locked. If you cannot secure your home properly, look for the services of a boarding-up contractor (under Glass or Glaziers) in your local Yellow Pages or Thomson's Directory. Many operate a 24-hour emergency service.

Local Councils/Housing Associations may also provide the service for their tenants. You might find that the local police station will be able to provide contacts.

Warning

If your smoke or heat alarms have activated, you will need to test and check the alarms to ensure they are still working. Also, if your alarms have been subjected to high temperatures, they may be damaged and need to be replaced.

Gas, electricity and even water supplies may have been disrupted in some way by the fire or firefighting operations. Gas and electricity might be disconnected. **Under no circumstances should you attempt to reconnect or turn these on yourself.** Contact the gas and electricity companies for your area to ensure that damage to any of the systems is rectified before the power supply is safely restored.

Similarly, all repairs to water fittings, pipes, tanks, etc. should be undertaken by a qualified plumber. If you turn on the water unadvised, you might be inviting a flood.

Electricity, Gas, Water

For all these services, the phone number you need will depend on the area in which you live. The best way to identify either an emergency out-of-hours number or the office number of the relevant service is to consult your Yellow Pages or Thomson's Directory under the appropriate heading.

Ensure all trade persons are competent, qualified and belong to an accredited professional body.

Next steps

Drying out and tidying up

The task of restoring your home can be a mammoth one. Where do you begin?

Carpets, curtains and clothes may have been saved and, with proper cleaning, may be salvaged. Specialist cleaning companies will be able to help. If you wish to tackle it on your own, follow the manufacturers' recommendations.

Constant ventilation during the drying out process plus gentle heat, will help speed things up and help prevent rotting, as well as lingering smoke and soot smells.

Walls and ceilings can be washed down with sugar soap or mild detergent. They must be thoroughly dry before redecorating begins.

Furniture should be wiped down and left to dry. Upholstery cleaning products can be used, but for badly damaged or very dirty furniture a specialist may be required.

Any food which has perished must be thrown away. Cans which have blown, or food in glass containers which have cracked, should also be thrown out.

If in doubt – throw it out. Any medicines which have been contaminated will have to be destroyed, or handed in to your local doctor's surgery.

Insurance

One of the first things you should do after a fire or flood is to look after insurance matters. As soon as possible follow this insurance checklist.

- If your property has been severely damaged, emergency repairs may be needed immediately to make it waterproof and secure. If so, make sure you obtain and keep receipts for the work carried out as these may form part of your claim.
- Inform your insurance company of the incident and obtain a claim form. They may wish to inspect the property/contents before clearing up begins.
- Make a detailed list of property/contents damaged. Your insurance company will advise you on how to proceed with the claim. Keep copies of all correspondence.
- Information on insurance matters can be obtained from The Association of British Insurers, 51 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7HQ. Tel 020 7600 3333. There is also an Insurance Ombudsman in cases of dispute.

No insurance

If you are unfortunate to be in this position and you need help, the following agencies may be of assistance:

TYPE OF HELP

Accommodation
Furniture/bedding/clothing

Money
Legal Advice

General Advice

AGENCY

Local Authority
Department for Work and Pensions
Voluntary Services
Department for Work and Pensions
Citizens Advice Bureau
Victim Support Groups
Social Services
Citizens Advice Bureau
Fire and Rescue Service
Police

Important documents

If your personal documents have been lost or destroyed, the following advice may be useful in obtaining replacements.

Bank and Building Society documents/credit cards

Contact your Bank or Building Society, who will issue replacements.

Birth, Death and Marriage certificates

You can obtain a duplicate at the original office of registration.

Driving Licence and Vehicle records

Contact the DVLA at Swansea SA6 7JL.

Medical records

The original documents are usually held at your doctor's surgery or local hospital.

Income Tax records

Your local tax office holds details of each person's tax returns and records. Contact your local office.

Insurance policies

The insurance company will issue you with duplicates of your documents.

Divorce decree

Contact the original Court Office where the decree was made. Your Solicitor may be able to help with this matter.

Wills

Contact your Solicitor or your local Citizens Advice Bureau for advice.

Title deeds

Again, your Solicitor will be able to help you with this matter.

Warranties and Guarantees

Main registration cards or documents are held by the manufacturer.

Stocks and Bonds

Your Broker may have details of the shares that you hold and a Solicitor may be required to legally reconstruct the certificates. Your local Post Office will be able to give you details on how to obtain duplicate Post Office Bonds.

Social Security documents

Contact your local Department for Work and Pensions office.

Payment books

Master registers and accounts are held by the organisation that you are paying.

Passports

These can be obtained from the relevant issuing office. Or, for non-nationals, via your Consulate or Embassy.

Finally



There are many precautions you can take to reduce the chance of a fire occurring in your home. Many fires in the home start at night. Having a night time routine can help protect your home and family.

- Switch off electrical appliances
- Remove plugs from sockets. Some may be designed to be left on all the time. Check the manufacturer's instructions
- Do not leave open fires unguarded
- Ensure cigarettes and pipes are extinguished
- Check seats/sofas for carelessly discarded cigarettes
- Do not empty ashtrays into waste baskets that may catch fire
- Close doors to prevent the spread of smoke and fire
- Chip pans are a major cause of fire in the home. Used safely this need not be the case. They should not be filled more than 1/3 full of fat or oil, allowed to overheat, or left unattended

Additional safety precautions

- Fires should be guarded at all times, especially where children are playing
- **All** smoking materials should be extinguished before going to bed
- You should follow the manufacturer's guide for fuses and plugs on domestic appliances at all times
- **'One appliance, one socket'** should be the rule. Plugs/wiring which are damaged should be repaired by a competent person
- Matches and lighters should be kept out of reach of children

To book a Home Fire Safety Visit from the Fire and Rescue Service go to www.firescotland.gov.uk

Remember – smoke and heat alarms can save lives

These inexpensive and easy-to-fit devices give early warning of smoke and fire, provided they are tested and maintained regularly.

They will give you and all members of your family a chance to get out and to call the Fire and Rescue Service out.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format or a version in another language, please call 0800 0731 999.

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