

AFTER THE FIRE

Getting back to normal



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Date of fire: _____

Time of fire: _____

Address of fire: _____

Olathe Fire Department non-emergency phone number: 913-971-7900

Fire investigator: _____

Fire investigator phone number: _____

Fire investigator email: _____@olatheks.org

Incident number (fire report): _____

Vehicle identification number for damaged cars, trucks, motorcycles, ATVs, etc.:

Notes: _____

PUTTING THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER

Here's a list of ideas to help you start your return to normal after the fire:

- **Call your insurance company** as soon as possible to start the claim.
- Once the fire is out, we will let you know when— or if— your home is safe to enter. If the home is uninhabitable, but safe to enter, you may later **remove items that can be salvaged**.
- **Recover important papers, valuables or other items.** Be sure and take eyeglasses, hearing aids, credit cards, bank books, important documents, jewelry, untainted medicine and other necessary items. Make a list of items removed from the home and give a copy to your insurance agent. *A courtesy inventory list is on page 14.*
- If you're a homeowner, you must **maintain the security of your property** after we leave (e.g., cover holes and openings, lock doors, etc.).
- If you rent, contact the owner or property manager to **secure the property**.
- **Never take risks** with food or medications. If damaged, please replace.
- **Be positive.**
- **Comfort family**, including pets.
- **Return to life's daily routines** as soon as practical.
- **Accept help and support** from others.
- Understand that **recovery may take time**.
- **Rest and hydrate** with water.
- **Schedule an Initial Fire Damage Assessment Inspection:** 913-971-7900 (Building Codes).
- **Ask for "extra patrol"** on your street: 913-971-6950 (Olathe Police).
- **Contact your child's school**, especially if the fire will affect attendance.
- **Notify your employer.**
- **Cancel regularly scheduled deliveries** (newspapers, food products, etc.).
- Contact the Post Office to **manage your mail** (hold, forward, etc.).
- **If firefighting equipment was left** at your home, please call: 913-971-7900.
- **Request a copy of the fire report:** 913-971-8521 (City Clerk's Office).

MONEY MATTERS

- Get in touch with your mortgage lender or property manager as soon as possible.
- Contact your credit card company to report credit cards lost in the fire and request replacements.
- Save all receipts. Receipts are important for the insurance company. Losses due to fire may be tax deductible.
- Video or photographs of your loss may help support your claim.
- Coordinate with the insurance company before contracting for any services.
- There are many companies that specialize in cleaning and restoring your personal items. Whether you or your insurer chooses this type of service, it is important to be clear on who will pay for it.
- Most contractors are reputable, but help protect yourself from contractor fraud with these tips from the U.S. Small Business Administration:
 - ⇒ Ask for multiple current references that you can contact about work the contractor performed.
 - ⇒ Ask the contractor to provide a cost-estimate in writing for any work they will do.
 - ⇒ Make sure they are licensed and insured contractor.
 - ⇒ The contractor should certify that their work conforms to state and local regulations and codes.
 - ⇒ Verify that the contractor carries workers' compensation insurance.
- Be sure and follow local fire and building codes and get a building permit when needed.

Insured or un-insured

If you have insurance:

- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible.
- Ask them what steps you should take next.

Many insurance companies may require the insured to provide a detailed inventory list of damaged and destroyed items. *A starter household inventory list is on page 14.* Any proof of purchase or related value documents, which can help support the items' value, may be needed for this process. The list may include:

- Description of the items.
- Quantity of items.
- Initial purchase date and price of the items.
- Replacement cost.

If you do not have insurance, you may find help from organizations like:

- American Red Cross.
- Salvation Army.
- Faith-based organizations.
- Community groups.
- Nonprofit crisis-counseling centers.

Money replacement

Damaged or destroyed money tips from the U.S. Fire Administration:

- Handle burned money as little as possible.
- Try to place each bill or part of a bill in plastic wrap to help preserve it.
- If money is partly burned if half or more is still ok you can take the part that is left to your regional Federal Reserve Bank to get it replaced.
- You may take burned or torn money to the Post Office and mail it by “registered mail, return receipt requested” to:

Department of the Treasury Bureau of Engraving and Printing
Office of Currency Standards
P.O. Box 37048
Washington, DC 20013

- Damaged or melted coins may be taken to your regional Federal Reserve Bank or mailed by “registered mail, return receipt requested” to:

Superintendent U.S. Mint
P.O. Box 400
Philadelphia, PA 19105

- To replace U.S. Savings Bonds that are destroyed or mutilated, get the Department of Treasury Form PD F 1048 (I) from your bank or at www.ustreas.gov and mail to:

Department of the Treasury
Bureau of the Public Debt
Savings Bonds Operations
P.O. Box 1328
Parkersburg, WV 26106-1328



IMPORTANT DOCUMENT REPLACEMENT

Here's a checklist of some documents you may need to replace and whom to contact for information about the replacement process.

Documents

Driver's license, auto registration
Bankbooks (checking, savings, etc.)
Insurance policies
Military discharge papers
Passports
Birth, death and marriage certificates
Divorce papers
Social Security, Medicaid/Medicare cards
Credit cards
Titles to deeds
Stocks and bonds
Wills and trusts
Medical records
Warranties
Income tax records
Naturalization/citizenship papers
Prepaid burial contract
Animal registration papers
Mortgage papers

Contact

The local division of motor vehicles.
Your bank.
Your insurance company.
Local Veterans Affairs office.
Local passport office.
State office of vital statistics.
Court where decree was issued.
Local Social Security Office.
Issuing companies.
Records department of where property is located.
Issuing company.
Your lawyer.
Your physician.
Issuing company.
The IRS or your accountant.
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.
Issuing company.
Society of registry.
Issuing company.



SALVAGE TIPS — The Recovery Process Begins

Entering Your Damaged Home

Before entering a damaged home or building, make sure it is safe. There may be holes in the floors, loose boards, protruding nails or the structure (floors, walls, ceilings, roof) may have the potential to collapse.

When it is safe to enter your home, a flashlight may come in handy to help light up your path and those dark areas of your home. Always use a flashlight — never use candles or torches.

Be patient. Before moving back in be sure that the home is clean, dry and structurally sound. Never move back into a home until the utilities are inspected and repaired. Most importantly, **never** use candles, torches or gas lanterns while working in a home under repair, as trapped gasses or debris could be ignited and have potentially fatal results.



SALVAGE TIPS — The Recovery Process Begins

Cleaning Household Textiles and Clothing

Betty Feather, University of Missouri Extension, Department of Textile Apparel Management

Retrieved from <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/gh145>

Fires cause considerable damage to homes and their contents; however, "after the fire" activities can cause more damage. It is important to take immediate, appropriate action. Carpets, draperies, upholstered furniture and clothing usually can be refurbished after a fire, except for scorched or severely water damaged items.

Fire creates two types of smoke damage — the **visible soot** and the **invisible odor**. Because each fire is different, it is not possible to provide one set of guidelines for removing soot and odor. For example, smoke odor from wood could react differently to certain cleaning products than smoke odor from plastics. It usually is difficult for inexperienced home owners to remove soot and smoke odors without professional assistance or advice.

This guide provides emergency steps to take after the fire is out and explains some of the processes professional fire restorers use to remove soot and smoke damage. Information about cleaning clothing is based on research findings. Dry cleaning is recommended to remove soot and smoke odors from clothing, but that may not always be the answer.

What to do first

Even small fires can cause severe damage and be extremely costly. That is why it is wise to contact the appropriate individuals to help you. If you have insurance, contact your insurance agent for suggestions and advice. If you rent your dwelling, the owner should be notified as soon as possible so that you can both assess the damage.

Consider contacting a professional fire restorer. They deal with problems similar to yours every day. If your insurance agent doesn't suggest someone, look in the yellow pages of the telephone directory under "Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners" or "Fire and Water Damage Restoration". Keep in mind most professional fire restorers will travel a certain distance to restore fire damaged property. Inquire about the experience the fire restorer has had and, if possible, secure some references of persons they have served. Usually the professional fire restorer can provide helpful hints to prevent further damage, determine which items can be refurbished and estimate the cost of deodorizing and cleaning your home. Hiring a professional fire restorer can be costly, but the best way to remove smoke odor and soot is with the appropriate equipment and appropriate chemicals.

SALVAGE TIPS — The Recovery Process Begins

Preventing fire damage

Don't attempt to clean any household textiles unless you know the proper procedures, because you can cause additional damage. Whether you hire a professional or do the work yourself, you can minimize further damage by following these guidelines.

- Do not touch or attempt to clean carpets, upholstered furniture, draperies or other household textile items. Those cleaning actions will only smear soot into the fabric, making cleaning more difficult.
- Dry wet carpets, upholstered furniture, draperies and clothing as soon as possible to prevent mold and mildew. Hang clothing outside on a clothesline, prop up wet upholstery cushions for even drying, and use fans and dehumidifiers to dry carpets and draperies.
- Place aluminum foil or wood blocks between furniture legs and wet carpeting to prevent rust stains.
- Open windows for ventilation.
- Change the furnace filter (if operating) at least **once a day** until the filter shows no soot. This will help keep particles from being distributed into the air.
- Cover clean items with plastic while further repairs are being carried out in the dwelling to prevent re-soiling.

Removing soot from household textiles

Before carpets, draperies, upholstered furniture and clothing can be deodorized or cleaned, the soot must be removed. Because soot is oily, it easily stains items. This is why upholstered furniture, curtains, and other textile items should not be touched after a fire. If a professional fire restorer is hired, they will remove soot with a heavy duty vacuum.

If you don't plan to hire a professional fire restorer, some of the soot can be removed by holding a vacuum cleaner nozzle slightly off the surface of an item to be cleaned. It is best not to use vacuum cleaner attachments with brushes or upright vacuums because the brushes tend to force soot into carpets, upholstered furniture and curtains. Cover carpets with plastic after removing the soot. The plastic will prevent workmen, inspectors and visitors from grinding dirt into the carpet. After the soot removal, the smoke odor will need to be removed.

Removing smoke odor from household textiles

Smoke odor could remain in clothing, upholstered furniture, carpets and draperies unless it is properly deodorized. Professional fire restorers and some dry cleaners use a deodorizing process that actually breaks up the smoke molecule to eliminate the odor. This deodorization process is called the **ozone treatment**. The ozone treatment produces an oxidizing agent that creates the same sweet smelling air associated with a rain storm. The ozone treatment can be remain after the spray or perfume evaporates. In addition, deodorizing sprays may interact with smoke odor and create an additional odor. Sometimes household textiles are deodorized

SALVAGE TIPS — The Recovery Process Begins

in an ozone room. If the process is done at home, clothing, upholstered furniture and other textile items are put under a tent while the ozone generator is operating. Clothing and other textile items should be deodorized **before** they are cleaned; otherwise, the smoke odor could be set in the fabric.

Household deodorizing products are temporary relief methods. Deodorizing with perfumes, aerosol sprays, and disinfectants generally only mask the smoke odor. The smoke odor will still remain after the spray or perfume evaporates. In addition, deodorizing sprays may interact with smoke odor and create an additional odor.

Removing smoke odor from the home

Smoke can enter and remain in and between the walls of the living space. If it is not properly removed, the smoke odor reoccurs from time to time, particularly during damp periods. Therefore, action should be taken to properly remove all smoke odors.

During a fire, the heat will expand pores in the walls and fill the pores with smoke. After the fire, the house cools, the pores close and trap the smoke odor. On warm days the pores will open and release the trapped smoke odor, which could settle on furnishings. Professional fire restorers can eliminate the smoke odor with a process called thermal fogging, which opens the pores in the walls and neutralizes the smoke odor. There is probably no process a home owner could use that would work as effectively as thermal fogging.

Household vents and ducts trap smoke odors. During a fire, smoke drifts through the ducts and becomes lodged on the sides. Since it may be impossible to clean the ducts; some professional fire restorers will use a chemical sealer to secure smoke permanently to the sides of the ducts. This procedure prevents smoke odors from drifting in the air at a later time. If the attic has been insulated prior to the fire, it may be necessary to remove the insulation. Insulation cannot be cleaned; unfortunately, it will need to be replaced because insulation retains smoke odors.

Cleaning household textiles

After deodorizing household textiles, the items can be cleaned. Dry cleanable clothing and draperies should be taken to a professional dry cleaner. Some professional fire restorers will clean draperies and upholstered furniture in the home.

Carpets should be cleaned by a professional carpet cleaner. Sometimes the carpet will need to be cleaned twice. The first cleaning will be done before repairs begin, and another cleaning will be done after the house has been cleaned. If the carpet is wet after the fire, it will need to be dried before any cleaning can be done. In some cases it may be necessary to remove the carpet for complete drying. After the house is cleaned, the dried carpet can be replaced. Most professional fire restorers can clean draperies carpets, upholstered furniture and other textile items.

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Restoring appearance and removing odor from clothing

Soiled clothing is cleaned by a variety of laundry methods; neither can all fire damaged clothing could be cleaned equally as well by the same method. Sort fire damaged clothing as you would sort any soiled clothing by the recommended care method (found on the permanent care label), color and degree of soil.

Some clothing may require dry cleaning because of fiber content, dyes used in the fabric or incompatibility of fabrics such as linings and face fabrics. In some cases, these articles may be subjected to a careful wetcleaning process, even though they are labeled dry clean only. This can be done only with professional expertise when it is felt that the garment will not be wearable unless another process is used.

Sort washable clothing by color (light/medium/dark) and soil (light/moderate/heavy). The majority of clothing items will probably be cottons, polyesters, and polyester/cotton blends. These can be most effectively renewed by using a warm water wash with either a non-built liquid detergent (Era™) or a low phosphate powder detergent and a liquid chlorine bleach (All™ and Clorox™). This recommendation is based on the research findings of Cloud, Bondurant and Keith at Louisiana State University in their study of removing smoke damage from apparel fabrics.

The researchers found that 100 percent polyester fabrics were not successfully returned to their original color state. The dry cleaning method was the least effective method of restoring fabric appearance, with the powder detergent method only partially effective. Liquid detergent (Era) and powder detergent plus bleach (All and Clorox) were the most effective in restoring appearance to fire damaged fabrics.

SALVAGE TIPS — The Recovery Process Begins

Smoke odor damage was most effectively treated by the three home laundry methods; there was no significant difference by fiber content. The dry cleaning solution did remove a significant amount of odor, but not as effectively as home laundry methods.

This research suggests that visible smoke and odor damaged cotton, polyester and polyester/cotton blend fabrics be washed in warm water with a liquid detergent such as Era for one to five launderings. As bleach may have a damaging effect on the fabric color or fiber content, liquid detergent would be better. Dry cleaning did not effectively remove the visible soil nor odor resulting from fire damage as did the home cleaning techniques and would add unnecessarily to the cleaning costs.

Summary

To effectively remove soot and smoke damage from household textile items such as carpet, draperies and upholstered furniture, it is necessary to use the appropriate chemicals, the right equipment and judgment that comes from experience. Professional fire restorers, properly trained, have the knowledge and materials to refurbish household textiles after a fire.

The most important guideline for home owners to remember is not to begin cleaning until the visible soil and smoke odor are removed. In the long run, money can be saved by contacting a professional fire restorer immediately. These experts can be identified through insurance agents and generally are willing to travel several miles to restore a home.

Damaged clothing in closets and drawers can be restored by home cleaning methods. Research results indicate that home laundry methods are most effective for the majority of washable fabrics and dry cleaning is of limited effectiveness.

References

- Cloud, R.M., Bondurant, L.A., Keith, N.K. "Efficacy of Four Cleaning Solutions in Removing Smoke Damage From Apparel Fabrics," Clothing and Textiles Research Journal 2, 1983-84, 55-57.
- Eickelberger, R. Executive Vice-President of the Building and Maintenance Division for Atkins Chemical and Service Company, Columbia, MO.
- Kogut, J. Specialist in Fire and Storm Damage Restoration for the Kogut Company, Harrisburg, MO.
- Lyle, D. "Smoke and Odor Problems," Bulletin FC-45, International Fabricare Institute, 1979.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How can I get a copy of the fire report?

A. Call the City Clerk's Office at 913-971-8521.

Q. Why did firefighters cut holes in walls?

A. This is done so that we can make sure the fire is completely out and there is no fire inside the walls or in other hidden places.

Q. Why are there holes in the roof?

A. Hot air, most gasses and smoke rise. A hole in the roof helps ventilate and remove hot gasses and toxic smoke from the structure. This may reduce damage to the structure and potentially make conditions safer and easier for us to fight the fire or locate anyone who may need rescue.

Q. Why are there broken windows?

A. Excessive heat can cause windows to shatter. Sometimes, heated windows will come in contact with cold water, which may cause them to break. On occasion, we may need to break windows so as to aid in the removal of smoke and heat from the structure, especially when performing search and rescue.

Q. Why are there holes in the walls?

A. We check for hidden fire inside walls, ceilings and floors. The area affected by the fire may be stripped down to the bare studs so we can look for hidden fire and heat.

Q. Why is the door damaged?

A. When we try to go inside of a structure, we check the door to see if it is unlocked. If it is locked, we use different ways to get inside, which helps expedite firefighting, search and rescue. Fire spreads rapidly and every second counts.

Q. Why are there salvage covers/plastic sheeting left in my home?

A. We use coverings to help minimize damage by protecting your property and possessions.

Q. Why is the fire being investigated?

A. In Olathe, we investigate all fires to determine its origin and cause.

Q. Why did the fire department come back?

A. We will routinely check the structure after clearing (leaving) the scene. We recheck the structure to make sure everything is ok.

Q. Why were my utilities shut off?

A. Gas and electricity may be shut off during a fire to help protect firefighters from unnecessary injury. The water may also be off if water lines melted or ruptured during the fire.

Q. Will I be billed for the fire department response to the fire?

A. No. We are a City service, which is funded by tax dollars.

NUMBERS



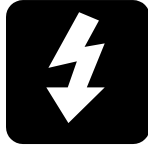
Building Codes
913-971-7900



Water—City of Olathe
913-971-9311, Customer Service
913-971-5151, After Hours



Trash/Recycling —City of Olathe
913-971-9311, Customer Service
913-971-5151, After Hours



Westar Energy
800-383-1183, Customer Service



AT&T U-verse
800-288-2020, Customer Service



Consolidated Communications
913-825-3000, Customer Service



United Way
211



Olathe Medical Center
913-791-4200, Customer Service



Div. of Motor Vehicles—JoCo
913-826-1800



Records & Tax Admin—JoCo
913-715-0775



Fire Department
911, EMERGENCY
913-971-7900



Police Department
911, EMERGENCY
913-971-6950



Water—WaterOne
913-895-1800, Customer Service



Atmos Energy
888-286-6700, Customer Service



KCPL
816-471-5275, Customer Service



Comcast
800-COMCAST, Customer Service
913-782-4466, Olathe Service Ctr.



United States Postal Service
800-ASK-USPS
800-275-8777



Salvation Army
913-782-3640



American Red Cross
816-931-8400



Driver's License—State of KS
913-829-2501



Social Security Administration
800-772-1213
800-325-0778, TTY/TDD

HOUSEHOLD INVENTORY LIST

Qty	Item Description	Brand/Model Number	Purchased Location	Age of item	Repair/Replacement Cost



Olathe Fire Department

1225 S. Hamilton Circle
Olathe, Kansas 66061
911, emergency
913-971-7900, non-emergency

OlatheKS.org/Fire
Facebook.com/OlatheFire
@OlatheFire