



EMERGENCY INFORMATION GUIDE

What To Do Immediately After the Fire

- Try to remain calm. Listen carefully to what people are telling you.
- Tell a Reno Fire Department or REMSA member if you have immediate medical needs.
- If you cannot live in your home and the structure is safe to enter, a fire department representative will accompany you as you try to locate the following items to take with you:
 1. Identification, such as driver's licenses and social security cards
 2. Vital medicines, such as insulin or blood pressure medications
 3. Eyeglasses, hearing aids, prosthetic devices, or other personal aids
 4. Valuables, such as credit cards, bank books, insurance policies, cash, and jewelry
- If you are insured, your coverage may pay for temporary housing, such as a motel.
- If you are not insured, the fire department will attempt to contact local relief services to request assistance with temporary housing.

Helping Your Children

- When disaster strikes, a child's view of the world as a safe and predictable place is temporarily lost.
- Children become afraid that the event will happen again and that they or their family may be injured or killed.
- Talk with your children in a calm way. Let them know they are safe.

Helping Elderly Citizens

- Disasters are upsetting experiences for everyone involved; senior citizens and people with disabilities are especially at risk.
- Seniors may seem disoriented at first, and people with disabilities may require additional assistance.
- Let those at risk know that they are safe and that you will help them find a safe place to stay.

Helping Your Pets

- Try to find and comfort your pet. Scared animals often hide and may react by biting or scratching. Handle animals carefully and calmly.



The First 24 Hours

- **Contact your insurance company** as soon as possible for detailed instructions on protecting your property, conducting inventory, and contacting fire damage restoration companies.
- **Contact the City of Reno (334-2063) or Washoe County (328-2020) Building Departments to expedite your building permits for restoration of fire and smoke damage.** If needed, contact the same to allow for the power to be re-energized.
- Contact the Reno Fire Department Division of Fire Prevention (334-2300) who may have determined the cause and origin of the fire. The fire investigator may be able to assist the insurance company's investigation. **All fire incident reports are public record and are available, for a fee, at Reno Fire Department's Administrative Office, 200 Evans Avenue or by calling 334-2300.**
- Some policy holders may be required to make an **inventory of damaged personal** property, showing in detail the quantity, description, and cost of items.
- Beginning immediately, **save receipts for any fire loss related money you spend.**
- Check with an accountant or the Internal Revenue Service about special benefits for people recovering from fire loss.
- If you own the property, notify your mortgage company of the fire. If you are renting or leasing the property, contact the owner.
- If you are not insured, try contacting private organizations for aid and assistance. Private organizations that may be able to help:

1. American Red Cross	856-1000
2. Salvation Army	688-4555
3. Department of Social Services	328-2300
4. Non-Profit Crisis Counseling Centers	784-8090

- Before they leave the site, the fire department should see that utilities are either safe to use or disconnected. **Do not attempt to reconnect utilities yourself.**
- **Do not cut or walk past colored tape that was placed over doors or windows to mark damaged areas,** unless local authorities advise that it is safe to do so.

If you have had to leave your home, contact:

- **the Reno Police Department (334-2550) or the Washoe County Sheriff's Office (328-3001)**
- your family and friends, your employer, your child's school
- your post office, utility companies and any other service or delivery providers

Seek Medical Attention If Necessary

- To help prevent infection, small wounds should be washed with soap and water.
- Use bandages. Replace them if they become soiled, damaged, or waterlogged.



Recovering Emotionally

- Disasters are upsetting experiences for everyone involved and can stir up many different feelings and thoughts.
- People may experience fear, shock, disbelief, grief, anger, guilt, memory problems, anxiety, and/or depression.
- Your local Red Cross can help; some members of their staff have special expertise in dealing with disaster stress.

Basic Steps You Can Take to Meet Physical and Emotional Needs:

- Reach out and accept help from others. Get rest and drink plenty of water. Focus on the positive. Stay connected with your family and other support systems.
- Try to return to as many of your personal and family routines as possible.
- Do something as a family that you have all enjoyed in the past.
- Limit your exposure to the sights and sounds of disaster, especially on television, the radio, and in the newspapers.



Fire Department Operations

Why are windows broken and/or holes cut in the roof?

Fire produces temperatures well over 1200 degrees Fahrenheit, along with smoke and hot gases. As fire burns, it moves upward then outward. Breaking the windows and/or cutting holes in the roof (called ventilation) slows the damaging outward movement, helps remove blinding smoke that obscures the actual fire, and enables firefighters to fight the fire more efficiently. The result of this action is less damage to the structure in the long run.

Why are holes cut in walls?

This is done so that the fire department is absolutely sure that the fire is completely out, and that there is no fire inside the walls or other hidden places. Without the use of these firefighting techniques, the building could suffer total destruction by fire.



Replacing Documents and Records

Driver's License, Auto Registration Department of Motor Vehicles	684-3500/684-4368
Military Discharge Papers Department of Veterans Affairs	800-827-1000
Birth & Death Certificates Washoe County District Health Department	328-2456
Marriage Certificates Washoe County Recorder's Office	328-3660
Titles to Deeds Washoe County Recorder's Office	328-3661
Social Security/Medicare Cards U.S. Social Security Administration	800-772-1213
Citizenship Papers U.S. Immigration and Naturalization	800-375-5283
Animal Control/Humane Society	858-1616
Income Tax Records	Center where you filed your return or your accountant
Credit Cards	Issuing company
Stocks and Bonds	Issuing company/broker
Warranties	Issuing company
Bank Books (checkbooks, savings, etc)	Your bank
Insurance Policies	Your insurance agent
Wills	Your lawyer
Medical Records	Your doctor
Mortgage Papers	Your lending institution



Restoration Services

Professional fire and water damage restoration businesses are listed in the yellow pages of the phone book. They may be the best source of cleaning and restoring your belongings. Get a cost estimate for the work to be done. Be sure to check references prior to contracting for services. Verify that your insurance company will cover restoration costs.

Restoration services can include:

- Securing the site against further damage
- Estimating and repairing structural damage
- Estimating the cost to repair or renew items of personal property
- Packing, transporting, and storing household items
- Securing appropriate cleaning or repair subcontractors
- Storing repaired items until needed

When You Return To Inspect/Inventory Your Home

- For self-protection, wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, closed-toed rubber-soled shoes or boots, and work gloves.
- Depending on the situation, dust masks, safety glasses, and/or a hard hat and other safety equipment may be needed.
- Do not throw away any damaged goods until after an inventory is made. All damages are taken into consideration in developing your insurance claim.
- Take photographs of the damage to substantiate insurance claims later.
- Save all receipts for materials you purchase or lease for repair purposes.
- Leave your children with a friend or relative. The site may be unsafe for children, and seeing the damage firsthand may upset them and cause long-term effects, including nightmares.

Gas

- **If you detect the odor of natural or propane gas, or hear a hissing noise, leave the property immediately and get far away from it.**
- Call the fire department using a cellular telephone or a neighbor's phone.
- If the fire department instructs you to do so, turn off the gas with the proper tool at the valve on the outside meter.
- When natural gas is turned off at the main valve, it must be turned back on by a professional (Sierra Pacific Power Company 834-4011).
- If you have a propane tank system, turn off all valves and contact a propane supplier to check the system out before you use it again.



- **Throughout your first day back, check the entire home including the attic for smoke and embers.**
- Beware of animals, such as rodents, snakes, spiders, and insects that may have entered your home.

Structural Damage

- Objects, such as furnishings or building parts that have been damaged, may be unstable. **Avoid holding, pushing, or leaning against damaged building parts.**
- Check the ceiling for signs of sagging. If the ceiling is sagging from the weight of water, poke holes in it, starting from the outside of the bulge, to let water drain out slowly.
- Damaged plaster or wallboard will have to be replaced anyway, so you can try to knock it down, but do so carefully. Use a long stick and stand away from the damaged area.
- Knock away small chunks at a time. Striking the center of the damaged area first may cause the ceiling to collapse.
- Check the floor for signs of sagging. Avoid walking on damaged floors; they could collapse.
- If small sections of floors are sagging, place thick plywood panels or strong boards on the floor to cover the damaged area.
- Be sure the wood extends at least 8-12 inches on each side of the sagging area.
- If possible, open windows and doors to ventilate and dry out your home.
- **If the power is out, do not use any open flame (including candles) to inspect for damage or to serve as alternate lighting.**

Utilities

- **Disconnect and check all appliances for water damage before using them.**
- If you don't have a dial tone, try unplugging all the telephones. Plug in one at a time and listen. If you still don't have a dial tone, contact the telephone company to request repair.
- If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using sinks, showers, or toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, turn off the water at the main valve and call a plumber.
- If you have a heating oil tank system, turn off all valves and contact a professional specializing in maintenance of such equipment before using it again.

Electrical Systems

- **If you see sparks, broken, or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker and call an electrician.**



- Inspect the panel box for any breakers that may have tripped. A tripped breaker may indicate damaged wiring inside your home. Do not turn on tripped breakers; instead, turn them to the “off” position and mark them with a piece of tape to indicate which ones were tripped when you found them.
- If the fire department turned off your power, call Sierra Pacific Power Company (834-4011) to restore it. Do not try to do it yourself.

Checking Household Items

- **Food, beverages, and medicine exposed to heat, smoke, soot, and water should not be consumed.**
- Wash your canned goods in detergent and water. Do not use canned goods when the cans have bulged or rusted.
- Your pots, pans, flatware, etc., should be washed with soapy water, rinsed, and then polished with a fine-powdered cleaner. You can polish copper and brass with special polish, salt sprinkled on a piece of lemon, or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated in vinegar.
- Wash the inside of your refrigerator with a solution of baking soda and water, or use one cup of vinegar or household ammonia to one gallon of water.
- Don't use appliances that have been exposed to water or steam until you have a service representative check them out.
- Damaged locks (especially iron locks) should be taken apart and wiped with oil. If locks cannot be removed, squirt machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole, and work the knob to distribute the oil. Hinges should also be thoroughly cleaned and oiled.
- Vacuum all surfaces. Change and clean air conditioner/heater filters.
- Seal off the room in which you are working with plastic wrap to keep soot from moving from one location to another.

Clothing

Test garments before using any treatment, and then follow the manufacturer's instructions. Several of the cleaning mixtures described in this section contain the substance Tri-Sodium Phosphate. This substance can be purchased under the generic name TSP. TSP is a caustic substance used commonly as a cleaning agent. It should be used with care and stored out of reach of children and pets.

Smoke odor and soot sometimes can be washed from clothing. The following formula may work for clothing that can be bleached:

- 4 to 6 tbsp. TSP
- 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach, and
- 1 gallon warm water
- Mix well, add clothes, rinse with clear water. Dry thoroughly.



An effective way to remove mildew from clothing is to wash the fresh stain with soap and warm water, rinse, and then dry in the sun. If the stain has not disappeared, use lemon juice and salt or a diluted solution of household chlorine bleach.

- Alternatively, consider washing clothes in cold water with your usual household laundry detergent and adding one tablespoon of pure vanilla extract.
- This solution has also been shown to remove smoke odors on kitchen surfaces and washable furniture.
- Wipe leather goods with a damp cloth, then a dry cloth.
- Stuff purses and shoes with newspaper to retain shape.
- Leave suitcases open.
- Leather goods should be dried away from heat and sun.
- When leather goods are dry, clean with saddle soap.
- Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry away from heat and sun.

Books

- Wet books must be taken care of as soon as possible. To remove the moisture without damaging the pages, freeze them in a vacuum freezer.
- If you cannot locate a vacuum freezer, place them in a normal freezer.
- For further information, contact a local librarian.

Furniture and Floors

- Use a mild soap or detergent or mix together 4 to 6 tbsp. TSP and 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach to every gallon of warm water. Wear rubber gloves when cleaning with this solution.
- Be sure to rinse your walls and furniture with clear warm water. Dry them thoroughly after washing.
- Washable wallpaper can be cleansed like painted walls, but do not wet through the paper. Work from top to bottom to prevent streaking. Use a commercial paste to re-paste any loose edges or sections.
- Wash a small area of the wall 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.

Wooden Furniture

- Do not dry your furniture in the sun. The wood will warp and twist out of shape.
- Clear off mud and dirt. Scrub with a stiff brush and a cleaning solution.
- Remove the drawers. Let them dry thoroughly so there will be no sticking when you replace them.



- Wet wood can decay and mold, so dry thoroughly. Open doors and windows for good ventilation or 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 ½ cup household ammonia and ½ cup water. Wipe the surface dry and polish with wax, or rub the surface with a cloth soaked in a solution of ½ cup turpentine and ½ cup linseed oil. (Please note: read the warning labels on both turpentine and linseed oil to avoid fire).
- Alternatively, 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.

Rugs and Carpets

- Rugs should be dried thoroughly – as quickly as possible to prevent rotting.
- Lay them flat and expose them to warm, circulated, dry air. (A fan will help).
- For more information, contact a qualified carpet cleaning professional.

Money Replacement

- Handle burned money as little as possible.
- Attempt to encase each bill or portion of a bill in plastic wrap for preservation.
- If money is only half-burned (if half or more is still intact) take the remainder to your regional Federal Reserve Bank for replacement. Ask your bank for the nearest one. Or, mail the burned money 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, D.C. 20013.
- Mutilated or melted coins can 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 19015.
- Destroyed or mutilated U.S. Savings Bonds must be reported on Treasury Form PD F 1048 (1) (get them at your bank) or at www.ustreas.gov. Mail to: Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt, Savings Bonds Operations, P.O. Box 1328, Parkersburg, WV 26106-1328 or Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Savings Bond Division, P.O. Box 89, Minneapolis, MN 55480-0089.