

Caldwell County Fire Marshal's Office

Phone (828)757-1277

Ricky K. Brown, Fire Marshal
2345 Morganton Blvd.
PO Box 2200
Lenoir NC, 28645

Fax (828)757-1182

After the Fire Brochure

When a fire causes any significant damage to your home, Caldwell County Fire Marshal's Office will provide the resident or owner with an "After the Fire" brochure. This document contains a lot of useful information about what you need to do after the fire. Posted below is this document.

After the Fire... What You Need to Know

INTRODUCTION: Recovering from a fire can be a physically and mentally draining process. When fire strikes lives are suddenly turned upside down. Often, the hardest part is knowing where to begin and who to contact. The Caldwell County Fire Marshal's Office has posted this to provide you with information you may need in the coming days to begin rebuilding your life. In the event you cannot find the help you need, please contact us at (828) 757-1277 and we will do our best to assist you in locating the appropriate individual or agency that can help. The Caldwell County Fire Marshal's Office is concerned with your wellbeing and the loss of your property, and we are committed to providing you with the best possible service.

INSURED/NOT INSURED PROPERTY

IF YOU ARE INSURED: The first thing to do after the fire is to contact your insurance company or agent as soon as possible. You or your agent will need to get a copy of the fire report this can be obtained from your local Fire Department. If you do not know this information we can guide you in this process. If you are renting or leasing the property, you must also contact the owner. Your insurance adjuster may be able to assist you in making immediate repairs or help in securing your home. If you are unable to contact your agent and need professional assistance in boarding up your home, you may contact a general contractor or a fire damage restoration firm. (Refer to your phone directory, under Contractors-General or Fire & Water Damage Restoration.)

IF YOU ARE NOT INSURED: If your property is not insured, or if your insurance will not cover all your losses, contact your family lawyer or the Internal Revenue Service for directions. You may be eligible for casualty loss; check Publication 574, Tax Information on Disasters, Casualty Losses and Thefts, available from your local Internal Revenue Service Office. You should also obtain a copy of the fire report at the address mentioned above.

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IF YOU MUST STAY ELSEWHERE

GETTING YOUR FAMILY SETTLED: If your home is unlivable, and if you cannot find a place to stay, such as with family or friends, consult with your insurance company to see if you are covered for additional living expenses. The American Red Cross (please see Reference Directory at the bottom) may be able to provide temporary shelter until you can arrange to rent a place to stay. The Red Cross may also provide additional assistance with food, medicine and clothing.

TAKE VALUABLES WITH YOU: If you must leave your home, try to locate the following items to take with you: important legal documents, identification, vital medicines, eye glasses, hearing aids, valuables, credit cards, checkbooks, insurance policies, money, jewelry, photos, etc. (Note: Let safes cool down before opening.)

UTILITIES: Often the Fire Department who responded must have the utility services shut off or disconnected as a safety precaution and also to prevent further damage to the structure and its contents. The utility companies cannot restore your utilities until the repairs are approved, and a clearance has been issued by the Building Inspector.

IF YOU MOVE: If you move, notify the post office, banks, credit card companies, your child's school, your employer, family and friends, and your utility companies, magazines/newspapers, etc., of your new address. Also notify your mortgage company (inform them of the fire) and contact the Social Security Administration and the Department of Economic Security, if you are receiving benefits (please refer to Reference Directory at the bottom).

GENERAL INFORMATION

IF YOU NEED EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE: If you need emergency assistance for food, clothing or lodging, contact the local American Red Cross (refer to Reference Directory at the bottom).

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PETS: Smoke can damage the lungs of a dog or cat in minutes and sparks can cause painful burns that may stay hidden under your pet's fur. As soon as possible, take your pet to a veterinarian. If your pet is lost in the confusion, call the Caldwell County Animal Shelter (refer to Reference Directory at the bottom).

WHAT ABOUT CASH OR NEGOTIABLES? If burned, handle with extreme care and as little as possible. Attempt to encase each crisp sheet in plastic wrap to salvage as much as possible. Take everything to your local bank for advice regarding replacement.

WHAT ABOUT ODORS? Sometimes there is a residual smoke odor from a small fire that is annoying and lingering. Short of a good cleaning of everything in the house, you can place saucers of household vanilla, vinegar, or activated charcoal about your home to help absorb these odors. Remember that the smoke odor is also inside the heating and cooling ductwork and you get a fresh blast every time your air system is turned on. If insured, consult your insurance company for assistance. If the odor does not go away in about a week, you may, and probably should, call a janitorial supply or cleaning service specializing in restoration of fire damaged property (refer to your yellow pages, under Fire & Water Damage Restoration). They have the equipment to scrub out the ductwork and deodorize everything in the house.

GENERAL CLEANING/SALVAGE TIPS: If insured, contact your insurance company. Professional fire and water damage restoration businesses may be the best source of cleaning and restoring your personal belongings. Companies offering this service can be located in the phone directory. If you are going to do the work yourself, here are some tips you might want to consider: 1. Vacuum all surfaces. 2. Change and clean air conditioner/heater filters. 3. Seal off the room in which you are working with plastic wrap to keep soot from moving from one location to another. Try to keep windows closed.

SPECIFIC CLEANING/SALVAGE TIPS: First a word of caution before you begin: test garments before using any treatment, and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. 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 in paint and hardware stores. Tri-Sodium Phosphate 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. Wear rubber gloves when using if you have sensitive skin. Read the instructions for complete details. Also, do NOT use gasoline for cleaning and do NOT mix ammonia with bleach.

Cooking Utensils: 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.

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Electrical Appliances: Do not operate wet appliances that have been exposed to water or steam until you have had a service technician check them. This is especially true of electrical appliances. 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 (see Reference Directory at the bottom) to restore these services - do not try to do it yourself.

Food and Other Perishables: Any food, beverages and/or medicines exposed to heat or smoke should not be consumed. If food was in tightly closed or sealed containers, or in airtight refrigerators or freezers, they may be salvageable. It is cheaper to replace the material than to jeopardize your health by taking a chance. If in doubt, throw it out! 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 can also be placed in the refrigerator or freezer to absorb odor.

Medicines: Prescription drugs can change strength by exposure to heat. Please check with your doctor first before taking these medicines.

Rugs and Carpets: Rugs and carpets should be allowed to dry thoroughly. Throw rugs can be cleaned by beating, sweeping, or vacuuming, and 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. Make sure the rugs are thoroughly dry. Even though the surface seems dry, moisture remaining at the base of the tufts can quickly cause the rug to rot. For more information on cleaning and preserving carpets, call your carpet dealer or installer or a qualified carpet cleaning professional.

Leather and Books: 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. Wet books can be taken care of as soon as possible. The best method to save wet books is to freeze them in a vacuum freezer. This special freezer will remove the moisture without damaging the pages. If there is a delay in locating such a freezer, then place them in a normal freezer until a vacuum freezer can be located. A local librarian can also be a good resource.

Locks and Hinges: Locks (especially iron locks) should be taken apart, 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.

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Walls, Floors and Furniture: To remove soot and smoke from walls, furniture and floors, use a mild soap or detergent, or mix together the following solution: * 4 to 6 tbsp. Tri-Sodium Phosphate * 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach * 1 gallon warm water. Wear rubber gloves and goggles while working 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 a small area at one 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.

Wood Furniture: * Do not dry your furniture in the sun. The wood will warp and twist out of shape. * 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 is combustible. * A very inexpensive product, oil soap, (readily available in hardware and grocery stores) is a most efficient product to use on wood, including kitchen cabinets. * You can also rub the wood surface with a fine grade steel wool pad dripped in liquid polishing wax, clean the area with a soft cloth and then buff.

Mattresses: Reconditioning an inner-spring mattress at home is very difficult, if not impossible. Your mattress can probably be renovated by a company that builds or repairs mattresses. If you must use your mattress temporarily, put it out into the sun to dry - then cover it with plastic sheeting. It is almost impossible to get smoke odor out of pillows, whether they are made of feathers or foam. * **Cleaning/salvage tips obtained from the United States Fire Administration.**

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REFERENCE DIRECTORY

Bethlehem Fire Department

Chief Ashley Starnes

414 Rink Dam Rd.
Taylorsville, NC 28681
828-495-7411

Collettsville Fire Department

Chief Larry Price

5430 Adako Rd.
Collettsville, NC 28611
828-758-4605

Grace Chapel Fire Department

Chief Jon Crane

4470 Grace Chapel Rd.
Granite Falls, NC 28630
828-396-1702

Hudson Fire & Rescue

Chief Tommy Courtner

122 Mt. Herman Rd.
Hudson, NC 28638
828-728-3584

Lenoir Fire Department

Chief Ken Briscoe

602 Harper Ave.
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-757-2190

North Catawba Fire & Rescue

Chief Randy Swanson

2064 Connelly Springs Rd.
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-728-9041

Rhodhiss Fire Department

Chief William Dennis

200 Burke St.
Rhodhiss, NC 28667
828-396-2942

Blowing Rock Fire Department

Chief Kent Graham

8001 Valley Blvd.
Blowing Rock, NC 28605-9049
828-295-5220

Gamewell Fire Department

Chief Keith Owens

2806 Morganton Blvd.
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-758-2581

Granite Falls Fire Department

Chief Brian Bennett

119 North Main St.
Granite Falls, NC 28630
828-396-2379

Kings Creek Fire Department

Chief Brand Blevins

3420 Wilkesboro Blvd.
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-758-2017

Little River Fire Department

Chief Steve Brown

4800 Oakhill School Rd.
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-754-9505

Patterson Fire Department

Chief Reginald Ford

1414 Yadkin River Rd.
Patterson, NC 28661
828-758-1855

Sawmills Fire Department

Chief David Price

4068 Hwy 321-A
Granite Falls, NC 28630
828-396-1567

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Valmead Fire Department
Chief Mark Yates
1757 Main St. NW
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-754-3567

Yadkin Valley Fire Department
Chief Robert Reid
2815 Hwy 268
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-758-7772

Lovelady Rescue Squad
Chief Keith Davenport
5584 York Rd.
Granite Falls, NC 28630
828-396-3335

Caldwell County Sheriff's Office
Sheriff Alan Jones
2351 Morganton Blvd SW
Lenoir, NC 28645

Other Contacts:

American Red Cross
1144 Morganton Blvd SW
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-754-4161

Blue Ridge Energies
219 Nuway Circle
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-754-9071

Caldwell County Animal Control
Director Greg Greene
829 Fairview Drive SW
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-757-8625

Duke Energy
250 9th ST LN SE
Hickory, NC 28120
800-777-9898