

*South Elgin & Countryside  
Fire Protection District*

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## After the Fire

The South Elgin Fire District provides this information as a guide to help victims of residential fires to create and action plan for worse case scenarios. After a fire you may experience anxious feelings, depression, difficulty concentrating, sadness, anger, fatigue or nightmares. Those are common responses to a traumatic event. In the event that you cannot find the help you need please reach out to your Fire District and we will assist you in any way we can. You may have questions or concerns on the fire or the damage that has occurred due to the fire suppression activates. We encourage you to reach out at any time to your Fire District so that we can answer your questions.

### What to expect

A fire in your home can cause serious damage. Your home and many things inside your home many are badly damaged from flames, heat, smoke, and or water. You may find things that were not damaged by the fire may still be ruined or damaged by the smoke and may be soggy from the water used to put out the fire. Anything you want to save or reuse will need to be carefully cleaned.

To fight the fire, the firefighters may have broken windows, cut holes in the roof or damaged doors. The holes were cut in the roof to slow the fire's growth and to rid the dark smoke that creates dangerous conditions for the firefighters while working.

It is important to understand the risk to your safety and health even after the fire is out. The soot and dirty water left behind may contain things that can make you sick. Be careful if you tough any fire damaged items.

### **Information to have readily available**

- Insurance information, including medical, homeowners or auto policy numbers.
- Medical information
- Driver's license, social security card, credit cards and cash
- Fire incident information including: date, time, location, fire incident number, fire department incident number and lead fire investigator name.

### **First Steps**

- Check with the Fire District or board up company to make sure your residence is safe to enter because of structural damage or toxic gasses.
- Conduct an inventory of all damaged property and save receipts for all money spent on related fire loss. The receipts may be needed later by your insurance company.
- Try to locate valuable documents and records.
- Contact your insurance agent/ company to advise them of your loss as soon as possible.
- Contact your landlord / mortgage company to advise them of the fire.

### **Things NOT To Do**

- **DO NOT** enter the building unless it is safe and it has been approved by the Fire District or board up company/ insurance agent.
- **DO NOT** reconnect the utilities by yourself. Check with NICOR, Com Ed or a professional contractor to ensure it is safe to do so.
- **DO NOT** turn on appliances that have been exposed to water unless they have been inspected by a professional and it is safe to do so.
- **DO NOT** consume anything exposed to fire or smoke, i.e. Food, drinks or medications.
- **DO NOT** allow pets or into your home until you get an all clear that it is safe to do so.

### Be Aware

- Toxic gases and airborne contaminants may be present in the air in your home. These contaminants are commonly not visible and should be evaluated by a professional before it is considered safe to occupy.
- Structural damage may have occurred as a result of the fire. This may cause a roof or floor collapse and must be evaluated by a professional prior to entry to the home.
- Firefighters may have cut holes in the structure or the roof to ventilate the building or to check for smoldering hot spots inside your home.

### Odors

- Sometimes there is a residual smoke odor from a small fire that is annoying and lingering. You can place small saucers of household vanilla, wine, vinegar or activated charcoal around the home to help absorb these odors.
- Remember that the smoke odor may also be inside the heating and cooling ducts and you may get a short blast every time the air system activates. You can contact your insurance agent/ company for assistance; they may be able to direct you to a cleaning company specializing in restoration of fire damaged property.

### Other Tips

- Vacuum all surfaces.
- Change and clean air conditioner/heating filters.
- Seal off the room with plastic in which you are working to keep soot and smoke from moving from one room to another.
- Electrical appliances- Do not run the wet appliances until a service person has checked them.
- Cooking utensils- pots, pans, flatware should be washed with soapy water then rinsed.
- Wash all clothes, blankets. Furniture, flooring, and carpet thoroughly.
- Any food, beverages and/or medications exposed to heat or smoke should not be consumed. Medicines can change strength when exposed to heat. Check with your doctor to ensure they are safe before taking these medications. If food was in a tightly closed or sealed container it **MIGHT** salvageable but it is cheaper to replace the material than to jeopardize your health and safety by taking that chance. When in doubt, throw it out!

## **Helpful Contact Information**

Village of South Elgin  
10 North Water Street  
South Elgin, Illinois 60177  
(847)742-5780

South Elgin Police  
Emergency 911  
Non-Emergency (847)741-2151

American Red Cross Illinois  
2200 West Harrison Street  
Chicago, Illinois (312)729-6100

State of Illinois – Secretary of State (Elgin)  
595 South State Street  
Elgin, Illinois 60123  
(312)793-1010

IDPH- Vital Records  
605 West Jefferson Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62702  
(217)782-6553

Nicor Gas  
(888)642-6748

Commonwealth Edison  
(800)334-7661

### **Cable/ Internet Services**

Comcast/Xfinity customer service (866)203-0432

AT&T customer service (800)331-0500

DIRECTV customer service (855)838-4388

Dish Network customer service (888)434-0112

MetroNet customer service (877)407-3224

Kane County Animal Control  
(630)232-3555

## **Checklist for After the Fire**

Fire Incident #:

Date of Incident:

Fire Investigator Contact Informaton:

Insurance Company:

Agent Name/ Number:

Policy Number:

Landlord Name/ Number:

Other Contacts Made:

**Notes**