

**Returning to normal...**

# **AFTER THE FIRE**



Compliments of:

**YAKIMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 12  
WEST VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT**

<b>3</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>The First 24 Hours</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Renters / Homeowners</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Document Replacement</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Valuing Your Property</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Restoration Services</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Salvage Hints</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Utilities</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Important Numbers</b>





Recovering from a fire can be a physically and mentally demanding process. When fire strikes, lives are suddenly turned upside down. Often, the hardest part is knowing where to begin and who to contact.

West Valley Fire Department, with the assistance from the United States Fire Administration (USFA) has gathered the following information to assist you in this time of need.

Action on some of the suggestions will need to be taken immediately. Some actions may be needed in the future, while others will be ongoing. The purpose of this information is to give you the resources needed to assist you as you begin rebuilding your life.

### **About this book..**

This information was developed as a resource tool to give you information you will need to assist you in reducing your losses after the fire is out.

In the event you cannot find the help you need, please contact us at 509-966-3111 and we will do our best to assist you in locating the appropriate agency that can help you.

**SECURING YOURSELF** ←

- Contact the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army to help with your immediate needs, such as:
  - \* Temporary Housing
  - \* Food
  - \* Medicine
  - \* Eyeglasses
  - \* Clothing
  - \* Other essential items.
- Contact your insurance agent / company.

**CAUTIONS** ←

- Do not enter the damaged site. Fires can rekindle from hidden, smoldering remains.
- Normally, the fire department will see that utilities (water, electricity and natural gas) are either safe to use or are disconnected before they leave the site. Do not attempt to turn on/off utilities yourself.
- Be watchful for structural damage caused by the fire. Roofs and floors may be damaged and subject to collapse.
- Food, beverages and medicine exposed to heat, smoke, soot and water should not be consumed.

**LEAVING YOUR HOME** ←

- In some cases it may be necessary to board up openings to discourage trespassers. West Valley Fire Department can assist you in contacting a Damage Restoration Contractor.
- When you leave your home for the first time, contact the Sheriff's Office to let them know the property will be unoccupied.
- Beginning immediately, save all receipts for any money you spend. These receipts are important in showing the insurance company what money you have spent related to your fire loss.

- If it is safe to do so, or with the assistance of the Fire Department, try to locate the following items:
  - \* Identification (Drivers license, Social Security Cards, Birth Certificates, Etc.)
  - \* Insurance information.
  - \* Medication information.
  - \* Eyeglasses, hearing aids or other devices.
  - \* Valuables, such as credit cards, bank books, cash and jewelry.
  
- There are many people / entities that should be notified of your relocation (change of address), including:
  - \* Your insurance agent / company.
  - \* Your mortgage company.
  - \* Your family & friends.
  - \* Your employer.
  - \* Your children's school.
  - \* The post office.
  - \* Any other delivery services.
  - \* Utility companies.
  
- Do NOT throw away any damaged goods until after an inventory is done. All damages are taken into consideration in developing your insurance claim.
  
- If you are considering contracting for inventory or repair services, discuss your plans with your insurance agent / company first, before any work begins.



***Check out pages 14-16 for important telephone information.***

**FOR THE RENTER** ←

- Contact the property owner or property representative to inform them of the fire immediately. It is the owners responsibility to secure the property after a fire.
- Contact your insurance agent / company immediately.
- Follow the steps below for the INSURED or UNINSURED HOMEOWNER / RENTER.

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**FOR THE INSURED HOMEOWNER / RENTER** ←

- Give notice of the fire to your insurance agent / company immediately.
- Ask the insurance agent / company what to do about the immediate needs of the dwelling, such as covering doors, windows, and other exposed areas, and pumping out water.
- Ask your insurance agent / company what actions are required of you. Some policyholders may be required to make an inventory of damaged personal property showing in detail the quantity, description, and how much you paid for the items.

**FOR THE UNINSURED HOMEOWNER / RENTER** ←

- Your recovery may be based upon your own resources and help from your community.
- Private organizations that may be sources of aid and/or information include: American Red Cross, Salvation Army, churches / religious organizations, Department of Social Services, civic groups, and non-profit crisis centers.

**Tip:** *Regardless if you are insured or not, make sure to contact the Yakima County Assessors Office, to find out if your property tax can be reduced during the repair period.*

Here is a list of valuable documents that may need to be replaced if destroyed, and who to contact for information on the replacement process:

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- **Driver's License:** Dept of Motor Vehicles
- **Bank Books (Checking/Savings):** Your bank, as soon as possible
- **Insurance Policies:** Your agent
- **Military Discharge Papers:** Dept of Veterans Affairs
- **Passports:** Passport service
- **Birth, Death, & Marriage Certificates:** Bureau of Records in the appropriate state, or local Dept of Health
- **Divorce Papers:** Circuit court where decree was issued
- **Social Security/Medicare Papers:** Local Social Security office
- **Credit Cards:** The issuing companies, as soon as possible
- **Titles to Deeds:** Records department of the locality in which the property is located
- **Mortgage Papers:** Your mortgage company
- **Stocks and Bonds:** Issuing company or your broker
- **Wills:** Your lawyer
- **Medical Records:** Your doctor
- **Warranties:** Issuing company
- **Income Tax Returns:** IRS center where you filed, or your accountant
- **Citizenship Papers:** US Immigration & Naturalization Service
- **Animal Registration Papers:** Humane Society



You will encounter different viewpoints on the value of your property, in adjusting your fire loss, or in claiming a casualty loss on your federal income tax. Knowing the following terms will help you understand the process used to determine the value of your fire loss:

### YOUR PERSONAL VALUATION ←

Your personal loss of goods through fire may be difficult to measure. These personal items have SENTIMENTAL VALUE to you; however, it is objective measures of value that you, the insurer, and the Internal Revenue Service will use as a common ground for discussion. Some of these objective measurers are discussed below.

- **Cost when purchased:** This is an important element in establishing an item's final value. Receipts will help verify the cost price.
- **Fair market value before the fire:** This concept is also expressed as *actual cash value*. This is what you could have received for the item if you had sold it the day before the fire. The price would reflect its cost at the purchase minus the wear it had sustained since purchase. DEPRECIATION is the formal term used to express the amount of value an item loses over a period of time.
- **Value after the fire:** This is sometimes called the item's *salvage value*.



**Tip:** 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.

There are companies that specialize in the restoration of fire damaged structures. Whether you or your insurer employs this type of service, be clear of who will pay for the service. Be sure to request an estimate of cost for the work before the work starts. Before any company is hired check their references, or check with the Better Business Bureau. These companies provide a wide range of services that may included some or all of the following:



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

**Tip:** Handle burnt money as little as possible.

Encase each bill or portion of a bill in plastic wrap and take all burnt money and coins to your bank where they can assist you in getting the money replaced.



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, or on page 15 of this book.

#### **VACUUM** ←

Vacuum all surfaces.

#### **FILTERS** ←

Change all air conditioner and furnace filters.

#### **CLOTHING** ←

A word of caution before you begin: test garments before using any treatment, and follow the manufacture'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. 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. Read the label for further information.

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

- 4 to 6 tbsp Tri-Sodium Phosphate
- 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach
- 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 dilute solution of household chlorine bleach.



**WARNING:** Do NOT use gasoline for cleaning

**WARNING:** Do NOT mix ammonia with bleach

## **COOKING UTENSILS**

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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 with vinegar.



## **ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES**

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Don't use appliances that have been exposed to water or steam until you have a service representative check them. This is especially true of electrical appliances. In addition, steam can remove the lubricant from some moving parts.

## **FOOD**

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Wash your canned goods in detergent and water. Do the same for food in jars. If labels come off, be sure you mark the contents on the can or jar with a grease pencil. Do not use canned goods when the cans have bulged or rusted. Do not refreeze frozen food that has thawed.

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 piece of charcoal can also be placed in the refrigerator or freezer to absorb odor.

## **RUGS & CARPETS**

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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 information on cleaning and preserving carpets, call a qualified carpet cleaning professional.

## **LOCKS & HINGES**

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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.



**LEATHER & BOOKS** ←

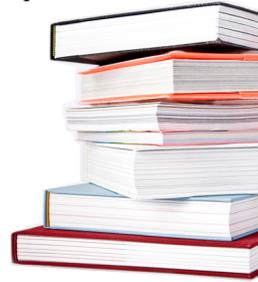
Wipe leather goods with a damp cloth, then a dry cloth. Stuff purses and shoes with newspaper to retain shape. Leave suitcases open. Leather goods should be dried away from heat and sun. When leather goods are dry, clean with saddle soap. Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry away from heat and sun.

Wet books must 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 will be a delay in locating such a freezer, then place in a normal freezer until a vacuum freezer can be located.

A local librarian can also be a good resource.

**WALLS, FLOORS & 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 when cleaning with this solution. Be sure to rinse your walls and furniture with clean 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. Washable wallpaper can be cleansed like any ordinary wall, but care must be taken not to soak the paper. Work from the bottom to the top.

## WOOD FURNITURE

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- Do not dry your furniture in the sun. The wood will warp and twist out of shape.
- Clean 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.

You can also rub wood surfaces with a fine grade steel wool pad dipped in liquid polishing wax, clean the area with a soft cloth and then buff.

## MONEY REPLACEMENT

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Handle burnt money as little as possible. Attempt to encase each bill or portion of a bill in plastic wrap for preservation. All burnt money and coins should be taken to your bank. They will assist you in getting the money replaced or direct you to our local Federal Reserve Bank. If your US Savings Bonds have been destroyed, you must obtain Department of Treasury Form PD F 1048 (I) from your bank or [www.ustreas.gov](http://www.ustreas.gov) and mail to:

**Department of Treasury  
Savings Bonds Operations  
PO Box 1328  
Parkersburg, WV 26106-1328**

- Your utilities may have been disconnected to protect you and the firefighters from the dangers of the gas and/or electricity. If temperatures are below freezing it will be important to protect water pipes by restoring heat or by draining the plumbing.
- If your homes electrical or gas systems have been damaged, it may not be possible to reconnect these services.
- If the fire department has turned off any of your utility services during the fire, call the utility company to restore the service. NEVER try to restore the service yourself.
- ONLY the utility company may restore your service. The West Valley Fire Department WILL NOT turn your utilities back on.
- Your mechanical, electrical and gas systems may need to be checked by a professional, even if they do not appear to be damaged.

<b>PACIFIC POWER</b>	
<i>24-hour Customer Svc.</i>	888-221-7070
<i>Emergency Line</i>	877-548-3768
<b>QWEST</b>	
<i>Service/ Billing</i>	800-244-1111
<i>Repair</i>	800-573-1311
<b>INTEGRA TELECOM</b>	509-453-8777
	800-285-6100
<b>DISH NETWORK</b>	888-581-9799
<b>DIRECT TV</b>	888-795-9489
<b>CHARTER CABLE</b>	800-936-1479
<b>YAKIMA WASTE</b>	509-248-4213
<b>NOB HILL WATER</b>	509-966-0272
<b>CASCADE NATURAL GAS</b>	800-552-0615
<b>YAKIMA POST OFFICE</b>	509-225-1389



## DAMAGE RESTORATION CONTRACTORS



<b>BELFOR USA GROUP INC.</b>	509-453-8551
<b>DIAMOND PRO</b>	509-575-5470
<b>HARLAN, HOLLINGBERY &amp; KIMMEL</b>	509-961-2216
<b>PACIFIC CONTRACTING</b>	509-452-2685
<b>PRIME RESTORATION</b>	509-249-5998
<b>RAINBOW INTERNATIONAL</b>	509-575-1100
<b>SERVICEMASTER</b>	800-759-3051
<b>SERVPRO OF YAKIMA COUNTY</b>	509-575-5455
<b>VALLEY CONSTRUCTION</b>	509-698-3802

## COUNTY SERVICES

**ASSESSOR**  
509-574-1100  
**TREASURER**  
509-574-2800

## ANIMAL SERVICES

<b>COUNTY DOG CONTROL</b>	509-574-2420
<b>CITY ANIMAL CONTROL</b>	509-575-6038
<b>HUMANE SOCIETY</b>	509-457-6854
<b>YAKIMA VALLEY PET RESCUE</b>	509-248-3113

## FIRE SERVICES

**WV FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
509-966-3111  
**FIRE MARSHAL**  
509-574-2360

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

**SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
509-574-2500  
**YAKIMA POLICE DEPT**  
509-575-6200  
**STATE PATROL**  
509-575-2320  
**YAKAMA TRIBAL POLICE**  
509-865-2933

## AUTO RENTAL

**AVIS**  
800-230-4898  
**BUDGET**  
800-527-0700  
**ENTERPRISE**  
800-736-8222  
**HERTZ**  
800-654-3131

## INSURANCE COMPANIES

<b>AAA</b>	877-222-4678
<b>AARP</b>	877-805-9918
<b>AFLAC</b>	509-469-2733
<b>AIG</b>	800-243-2422
<b>ALLSTATE</b>	800-255-7828
<b>GEICO</b>	800-841-3000
<b>ARGUS</b>	800-366-1009
<b>COUNTRY FINANCIAL</b>	800-846-0100
<b>ESURANCE</b>	800-378-7262
<b>FARMERS</b>	(contact agent)
<b>FIREMAN'S FUND</b>	800-441-3888
<b>GRANGE</b>	800-546-8850
<b>GROUP HEALTH COOPERATIVE</b>	800-458-5450
<b>LIBERTY MUTUAL</b>	800-225-2467
<b>MET LIFE</b>	800-854-6011
<b>NATIONWIDE</b>	800-421-3535
<b>PEMCO</b>	800-467-3626
<b>PROGRESSIVE</b>	888-220-1650
<b>REGENCE BLUESHIELD</b>	800-458-3523
<b>STATE FARM</b>	Auto 888-257-4179 Fire 888-251-6066

**IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

