



AFTER THE FIRE

Returning to Normal

Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service
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Message from the Chief

The Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service is dedicated to serving the citizens of Winnipeg with the utmost care and professionalism. Providing as much assistance to you as possible after the fire is extinguished is very important to us. This booklet was developed as a resource to aid in your adjustment and recovery. It is our hope that this booklet will assist you in the recovery process.

Fire & Paramedic Chief

Our Vision

To enhance the quality of life within our City by embracing community interests, needs and concerns for a safe and healthy environment and to protect and save lives.

Our Mission

To serve and safeguard the community by protecting life, property and the environment through prevention, education, medical and fire services and to provide optimum emergency and stable patient pre-hospital care to the citizens of Winnipeg.

Fire Extinguishment

Why are there broken windows and doors, or holes in the roof? Fire produces temperatures well over 1200o F, along with smoke and hot gases. At times it is necessary to eliminate heat, smoke, and hot gas by ventilation before firefighters can enter to extinguish the fire. Ventilation must be done quickly to help reduce fire spread. Often firefighters must forcibly open walls and ceilings, to find the "hidden" fires, allowing for complete fire extinguishment. After the fire is out, this type of damage may appear unnecessary. However, without the use of these firefighting techniques, extinguishing the fire would be much more difficult and smoke and fire damage would be more extensive.

Property insurance

Contact your local company or agent as soon as possible. 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 helping to secure your home. If you are unable to contact your agent and need professional assistance in boarding up your home, a general contractor, or a fire damage restoration firm can help. Check the yellow pages.

If your property is not insured or if your insurance will not cover all your losses, contact your family lawyer for directions on what to do.

If you are unable to stay in your home, please...

1. Remove as many valuables as possible. Note: the home owner may temporarily be denied access to certain articles, areas, or the entire structure until the scene is studied and then released by the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, Winnipeg Police Service, or the Office of the Fire Commissioner. This does not imply suspicion, but rather it is Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service policy to attempt to find the cause of the fire. Once the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, Winnipeg Police Service and the Office of Fire Commissioner have released the structure it becomes your responsibility.
2. Check your residence for important documents which may have been damaged. Refer to the document section.
3. For those individuals in need after a fire or other disaster, assistance from the Salvation Army or the Red Cross may be available. (Refer to the telephone directory on the back of this booklet.)
4. Try to locate the following items to take with you:
 - personal identification
 - credit cards
 - cheque books
 - insurance policies
 - jewellery
 - photos
 - eyeglasses
 - hearing aids or other personal aids
 - vital medications, such as blood pressure medication, insulin, etc.

Note: Please check with your physician or pharmacist prior to taking any medication. Consumption of medication exposed to fire may post a health risk.

Remember: If you moved because of the fire you should notify the following:

- Canada Post
- your insurance company
- your bank
- credit card companies
- water and other utilities
- newspaper
- your children's school

Utilities

Often Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service will have the utilities shut off or disconnected as a safety precaution and to prevent further damage to the structure and its contents. All utilities must be inspected by the appropriate inspectors to determine if they were affected by fire or extreme heat before they can be turned back on. This will include electricity, gas, water, and telephone.

Counselling Support

After a fire, you may experience some of the following reactions:

- anxious feeling
- depression
- difficulty concentrating
- sadness
- anger
- fatigue
- hopelessness
- irrational (unfounded fears)
- nightmares

These are all common responses to a traumatic event. There are agencies to help you work through this time of crisis, such as the Salvation Army, Red Cross or your local clergy.

Care of Documents

Documents are very important to your well-being and can be damaged as a result of a fire or other disaster. Locating these documents will speed up the process of recovering from a disaster.

- Birth Certificates
- Drivers License

- Bank Books
- Insurance Policies
- Military Discharge Papers
- Passports
- Social Insurance Cards
- Marriage Papers
- Divorce Decree
- Credit Cards
- Title to Deeds
- Stocks and Bonds
- Wills
- Medical Records
- Payment Books
- Warranties
- Income Tax Records
- Auto Registration
- Citizenship Papers
- Burial Contracts
- Animal Registration
- Death Certificates
- Health Services Cards
- RSP Papers

It is wise to store all important documentation in an approved container that is specifically designed for such purposes (fireproof container).

If documents are wet, freeze them immediately! When copies are needed, simply allow to thaw, lift off each page as it thaws, and photocopy.

Note: If you have a safe, do not attempt to open until it is well cooled for several hours, as the contents could burst into flames.

Pets

As most people will agree, our pets are a very important part of our lives. After a fire strikes, don't assume that your pet has escaped unscathed just because it looks all right. Smoke can damage the lungs of a dog or cat in minutes, and sparks can cause painful burns that will stay hidden under fur. As soon as possible, take your pet to a veterinarian. If your pet has been lost in the chaos, contact Animal Services or the Humane Society (phone numbers are listed on the back of this booklet).

Salvage Hints

The following sections are designed to assist in the restoration of smoke and water damaged property. You may also want to consult with a professional cleaning company. Various companies are listed in the Yellow Pages.

Painted Walls

To remove soot and smoke from walls, mix together:

60 ml – 90 ml (4-6 teaspoons) tri-sodium phosphate (TSP)
and
4.5 litres of water

The use of rubber gloves and goggles is recommended. Wash a small area at a time working from the floor up. Do ceilings last. Rinse thoroughly. Do not repaint until completely dry. It is advised that you use a smoke sealer (purchased in a paint stores) before painting.

Wallpaper

1. Heat and ventilate the room for several days to dry the plaster and paper.
2. If mildewed paper is washable, wipe it with a soapy cloth. Rinse clean with clear water.
3. When washing wallpaper, work quickly so paper does not become soaked. Work from the bottom to the top to prevent streaking.
4. Repaste edges or loosened sections.

Floors

Use flax soap on wood and linoleum floors. This will require 4 or 5 applications. Then strip and re wax.

Rugs

Let rugs and carpets dry out thoroughly. Clean by sweeping or vacuuming. Shampoo with a commercial rug shampoo. Dry the rugs as quickly as possible by laying them flat and exposing them to warm, dry air. A fan will help. You can also contact any of the carpet cleaning firms in the Yellow Pages.

Wall-to-Wall Carpet

A wet/dry vacuum or water extractor carpet cleaning machine is good for the job. They can be rented at most supermarkets or drugstores and they will remove the standing water and dirt. Then add carpet cleaning detergent and clean the carpet as instructed on the machine. Rinse by using vinegar and water in the tank of the machine.

Mildew

Mildew is mould growth. If it is allowed to continue to grow it will weaken or rot fabrics. To remove mildew, wash stain with soap and water. Rinse well and allow to dry. If stain remains, use lemon juice and salt, or a solution of 15 ml (1 tablespoon) of bleach to 600 ml (20 ounces) of lukewarm water.

Note: Spot test all fabrics before using any treatment.

Upholstered Articles, Mattresses and Rugs

1. Remove loose mould from surfaces by brushing with a broom. Do this outdoors to prevent scattering of mildew spores.
2. Vacuum surface to draw out more of the mould.
3. Thoroughly dry by using an electric heater or fan to eliminate moist air.
4. If mildew remains, sponge lightly with thick detergent suds, using only the foam; wipe with a clean, damp cloth.
5. If mould has grown into the inner part of an article, send to a reliable dry cleaner.

Warning: Under no circumstances should you mix ammonia with any other cleaning products such as chlorine bleach, Lysol, tri-sodium phosphate, Spic and Span, etc. These products must be diluted with cold water and washed down the drain.

Removing White Spots on Furniture

1. Rub with a cloth wrung out of turpentine or camphorated oil.
2. Wipe dry at once and polish with wax or furniture polish.
3. For deep spots, use a drop or two of ammonia on a damp cloth and polish.
4. A dry mixture of vegetable oil and ashes rubbed in with fingertips is sometimes effective.

Note: Be sure to wear rubber gloves.

Clothing with Soot and Smoke Odor

Spot test coloured garments before using any treatment. Smoke odor and soot can sometimes be washed from clothing. The following formula will often work for clothing that can be bleached.

- 20-30 ml (4 to 6 teaspoons) tri-sodium phosphate (TSP) (from a paint store)
- 250 ml (1 cup) Lysol or any household chlorine bleach
- 4.5 litres (1 gallon) of warm water

Mix well, then add clothes, rinse with clean water, and dry well.

OR

- 125 ml (1/2 cup) ammonia to 9 litres (2 gallons) water. Rinse in vinegar (use rubber gloves).

Should you have doubts or questions about the cleaning or preparation of clothing, it is wise to contact a cleaning service. Take wool, silk and rayon garments to the dry cleaners as soon as possible.

Leather and Books

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

Books can be dried by placing them on end with pages separated, or place unmarked dry paper between the pages and press to prevent crinkling and distorting. If very wet, air dry until damp, then sprinkle cornstarch between the pages and allow starch to consume moisture. Wipe dry with dry cloth and press.

Locks and Hinges

Locks (especially iron locks) should be taken apart, wiped with kerosene, and oiled. If locks cannot be removed, squirt machine oil through the bolt opening or keyhole and work the knob to distribute the oil. Hinges should also be thoroughly cleaned and oiled.

Air Filters

Replace air conditioner and heater fan filters or have them checked by a qualified service person.

Hazardous Materials

Charcoal

Caution: Charcoal briquettes may spontaneously ignite when damp. They should be disposed of or stored in a non-combustible container with lid, away from any combustibles.

Fertilizers

These can spread on lawns and gardens and watered into the soil in the usual manner. Caution: Do not crush or pound lumps of ammonium nitrate to reduce them to usable size. These lumps are best diluted in water and used as a liquid. Water into the soil well so it will not burn your plants.

Warning: Under no circumstances should you mix ammonia with any other cleaning products such as chlorine bleach, Lysol, tri-sodium phosphate, Spic and Span, etc. These products must be diluted with cold water and washed down the drain.

Food Management

Refrigerator and Freezer Odor

- Defrost and wash all surfaces with water and dish washing detergent. Rinse with 30 ml (2 tablespoons) baking soda per litre of water, and re-rinse with clear water.

OR

- Wash with solution of 250 ml (1 cup) vinegar to 4.5 litres (1 gallon) of water.

What to do when a Freezer Stops

If your home freezer has stopped running, you can still save the frozen food by placing dry ice inside and keeping the freezer door closed. Your freezer has enough insulation to keep food frozen for 1 - 3 days.

Food - If in doubt, throw it out!

If your food has thawed, observe the following procedures:

- Partial thawing and refreezing will reduce the quality of foods, particularly fruits, vegetables and prepared foods.
- It is normally considered a safe practice to refreeze foods that have partially thawed, if the food still contains visible ice crystals.

Meat is unsafe to eat when it begins to spoil. If the colour or odor of the thawed meat is questionable, dispose of it! Follow the same rules for frozen vegetables.

Fruits usually ferment as they begin to spoil and generally will absorb smoke or other by-products of fire, leaving the fruit bitter to the taste and often discoloured. It is a wise decision to dispose of this food.

Canned Foods

Do not use any canned food where the can has bulged, is badly dented or has rusted. To disinfect the exterior of a can or jar wash the container in a solution of 45 ml (3 tablespoons) of household bleach to 4.5 litres (1 gallon) of water.

Cooking Utensils and Dishes

Your pots, pans, flatware, etc. should be washed with soapy water, rinsed and then polished with a finely 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. Dishwashers are excellent for cleaning dishes due to the high temperature of the water. Most dishes can be soaked in a solution of 15 ml (5 tablespoons) of bleach to 4.5 litres (1 gallon) of water for 30 minutes prior to washing.

Telephone Directory

Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service

Emergency	911
Non-emergency	204-986-6380
Fire Prevention	204-986-6358
Fire Investigations	204-986-6813

Winnipeg Police Service

Emergency	911
Non-emergency	204-986-6222

Other Services

Office of the Fire Commissioner	204-945-3322
Salvation Army	204-946-9490
Red Cross	204-982-7330
Water Works	204-986-2626
Garbage Collection	204-986-5858
Building Inspector	204-986-5300
Manitoba Hydro (24 hrs.)	1-888-474-0707
Manitoba Telecom Service	204-941-6800
Animal Services	204-986-2155
Winnipeg Humane Society	204-982-2025

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