

Cleaning up

Smoke and water can damage your house and contents. If you have insurance, your insurer / loss adjuster (person appointed by the insurance company to handle your claim) can assist by arranging specialist companies for cleaning and salvage, and removal of damaged items and materials.

You may be able to salvage some items that are affected by heat, smoke or water but are otherwise intact. Keep in mind that damage to the property often goes beyond what the eye can see. Smoke and soot can travel and penetrate into other rooms affecting walls, carpet, upholstery, curtains, clothing and any other belongings.

Here are some general cleaning tips:

- Get the air moving. Open windows to ventilate areas. Use a fan to circulate air
- Dry wet items as soon as possible
- Take non-washable clothing and curtains to a drycleaner
- Wash regular clothing in warm water with detergent
- To remove soot and smoke from walls, furniture and floors, wear rubber gloves and wash with detergent
- Electrical appliances exposed to fire or water will need to be checked by an electrician or authorised service technician prior to use

Assistance

If you do not have family, friends or neighbours who can assist you, you may be eligible for assistance. The following organisations may be able to provide assistance:

Local Council
Municipal Recovery
Manager
For advice on local
community support
services

Victorian Emergency
Recovery Information
Line
(regarding hardship
assistance)
t: 1300 799 232

Office of Housing and
Community
Buildings (DHHS)
For public housing
renters
t: 13 11 72
(24-hr service)

RSPCA
t: 9224 2222

Consumer Affairs
Victoria
If renting you may be
entitled to end your
tenancy or to reduced
rent.
t: 1300 558 181

Lifeline
for counselling and
emotional support
t: 13 11 14
(24-hr service)

Translating and
interpreting service
t: 13 14 50

Centrelink
(for Exceptional
Circumstances Relief
Help)
t: 13 28 50

CHECKLIST

After the fire checklist:

- Check with the Fire Officer in Charge that your home is safe to stay in or if you need to leave
- If you can stay, contact gas, electricity, water and telephone providers about reconnection
- Contact your insurance company for contents and building insurance advice
- Notify the landlord if you rent your home
- Secure your home from further damage by weather, vandalism or theft

If you are leaving your home:

- Organise somewhere to stay
- Take the personal items you will need (see recommended list in this brochure)
- Contact gas, electricity, water and telephone providers to cancel services
- Cancel all delivery services (e.g. Australia Post for redirect of mail, newspapers)
- Notify important contacts about your change of address such as employer, children's schools, insurance company and neighbours
- Contact local police. Inform them that your property has been involved in a fire and is vacant

After the Fire.

This information will assist
you after the fire.



Translating and Interpreting
Service Tel: 13 14 50



Is it safe to stay in your home?

After a fire or other emergency it may not be safe for you to stay in your home. The Fire Officer in Charge will advise you if it is safe or not. In some situations the Officer may need to call the local council building inspector to assess the safety of the building.

Gas, Electricity, Water and Telephone

As a result of the fire, gas, electricity, water supply or telephone lines may have been damaged, destroyed or disconnected by the fire brigade or the provider of these services.

It is the owner's responsibility to have the services inspected and repaired by a qualified tradesperson and reconnected by the provider.



Property security



After the emergency services have finished their work, the property will be handed back to you.

You are then responsible for the security of the property.

Your property may need to be protected from further damage by weather, theft and vandalism. You may need to engage a provider of shutters and/or temporary fencing to secure your home.

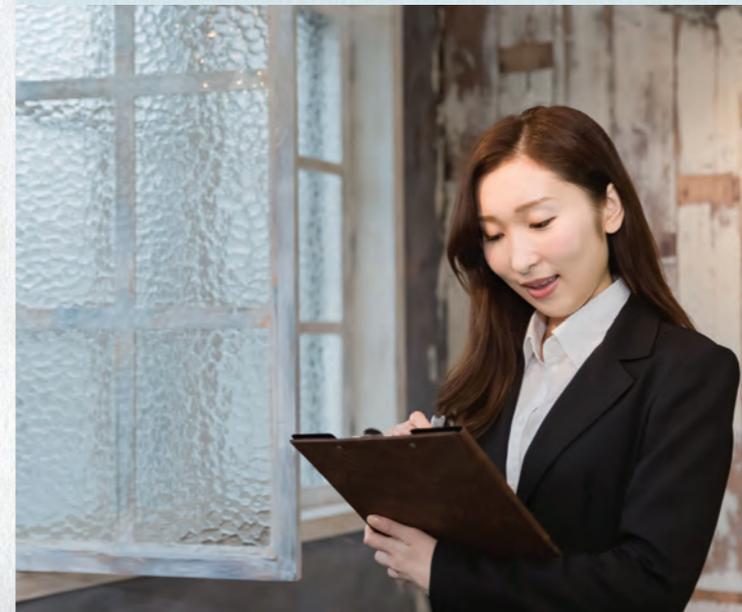
If you live in rental housing you must inform the real estate agent or owner/landlord to secure the home.

Be aware that any damage to your home that occurs after the emergency resulting from not securing your property may be refused by your insurance company. Your insurance company may be able to help with securing your property.

Insurance

If you have property or contents insurance you should contact your insurance company as soon as possible after the fire.

- Ask your insurer for advice on actions you should take
- Do not discard or throw away damaged items without first consulting your insurance company
- Make a list of items that have been damaged and take photographs if possible
- Keep receipts for any emergency repair work
- Check with your insurance company to see if your policy covers emergency accommodation



If you can't stay in your home

Before you leave your home check with the Fire Officer in Charge that it is safe to enter. If safe to do so, it is recommended you take the following items:

- Identification – driver's licence, Medicare card, passport
- Insurance contact details and policies
- Credit cards, cheque books
- Medicines and prescriptions (medication exposed to heat and smoke should be disposed of)
- Personal aids – mobility aids, glasses, hearing aids, etc
- Valuables – personal items such as jewellery, photographs, cash, laptops, etc
- Legal documentation
- Car keys and house keys
- Mobile phone and charger

Where to stay

If you can't remain in your property, staying with family, friends or neighbours until more permanent arrangements can be made is the best option. Some insurance policies may also cover you for the cost of accommodation.