

Checklist for Next Steps After a Fire

Here are the steps to follow after a fire in your home:

- Contact your local disaster relief service, such as the American Red Cross. This will help you find a place to stay and to find food, clothing and medicine.
- If you have insurance, contact your insurance company. Ask what you should do to keep your home safe until it is repaired. Ask who you should talk to about cleaning up your home. If you are not insured, try contacting community groups for aid and assistance.
- Check with the fire department to make sure that your home is safe to enter. Be very careful when you go inside. Floors and walls may not be as safe as they look.
- The fire department will tell you if your utilities (water, electricity and gas) are safe to use. If not, firefighters will have your utilities shut off before they leave. **Do not** try to turn them back on by yourself. This could be very dangerous.
- Contact your landlord or mortgage company about the fire. Try to find valuable documents and records. See the information in this brochure about how to get new copies if you need them.
- If you leave your home, call the local police department to let the police know that the site will be vacant.
- Begin saving receipts for any money that you spend related to fire loss. The receipts may be needed later by the insurance company and to prove any losses claimed on your income tax.
- Check with an accountant or the IRS about special benefits for people recovering from fire loss.