

Bridgeport Fire Department



After the Fire Handbook

This handbook is provided as a service of the Bridgeport Fire Department and includes valuable information on what to do after a fire



A fire will change your life in many ways. Knowing where to begin and who can help you is important. The Bridgeport Fire Department hopes you find this information useful on what to do "After the Fire".

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

◆ **Why are windows broken or holes cut in the roof?**

As fire burns, it moves up, down and across, growing very fast. Breaking windows and cutting holes in the roof is called ventilation. This slows the fire's growth. It helps get rid of dark smoke that makes it hard for firefighters to see. It helps them to fight the fire more quickly and help save lives and property.

◆ **Why are holes cut in the walls?**

Holes are cut in the walls to make sure that the fire is completely out and not hidden in the walls.

◆ **You've been displaced from your home and can't stay with family or friends, what do you do?**

Let the Bridgeport Fire Department aware you do not have a safe place and need assistance. They will contact the American Red Cross who can assist you in finding short term housing arrangements.

◆ **How can I get copy of the Fire Report?**

Contact the Bridgeport Fire Department, Records Department at 203-337-2047 located at 30 Congress Street, 3rd Floor, Bridgeport, CT, 06604. You can also email your request to Bridgeport.fire@bridgeportct.

SAFETY & SECURITY

- ◆ **DO NOT** enter a damaged home or apartment unless the Fire Department deems it safe. Fire can start again, even if they appear to be out. Watch for damage caused by the fire. Roofs and floors may be damaged and could fall down.
- ◆ The Bridgeport Fire Department will make sure the utility services (water, electricity and gas) are safe to use. If they are not, firefighters will have the utilities turned off or disconnected. **DO NOT** attempt to turn them back on yourself.
- ◆ Contact the Bridgeport Police Department to let them know you will be away from the home and it will be unoccupied. In some cases, you may need to board up openings so no one can get in.
- ◆ **DO NOT** eat or drink food, beverages nor take any medication that have been exposed to heat, smoke, soot or water. Doing so, could make you sick.

TIPS ON HOW TO HANDLE THE DAMAGE

There are companies that are experts in cleaning and/or restoring your personal items. Whether you or your insurer buys this type of service, be clear on who will pay for it. Be sure to ask for an estimate of cost for the work and agree to it in writing. You will find names and phone numbers for companies that do this work in the telephone book and on the internet.

INSURANCE

Contact your insurance company immediately. Ask what to do about the immediate needs of your home. This includes pumping out water and covering doors, windows and other openings.

Ask your insurance company what to do first. Some companies may ask you to make a list of everything that was damaged by the fire. They will ask you to describe these items in detail and say how much you paid for them.

FINANCES

Contact your landlord or your mortgage lender ASAP. Contact your credit card company to report all credit cards that were lost in the fire and request replacements. Save all of your receipts for any money you spend. The receipts may be needed later by the insurance company. You will need the receipts to prove any loss claimed on your tax return.

REPLACING MONEY

Handle burnt money as little as possible. Try to place each bill or part of a bill in plastic wrap to help preserve it. If money is partly burnt, if half or more is still OK, you can take the part that is left to your regional Federal Reserve Bank to get it replaced. Ask your bank for the one nearest you, or you can take the burnt or torn money to the Post Office and mail it by "Registered Mail, Return Receipt Requested" to:

**Department of Treasury
Bureau of Engraving and Printing
Office of Currency Standards
P.O. Box 37048
Washington, DC 20013**

Damaged or melted coins may be taken to your regional Federal Reserve Bank or mailed by "Registered Mail, Return Receipt requested" to:

**Superintendent U.S. Mint
P.O. Box 400
Philadelphia, PA 19105**

To replace U.S. Savings Bonds that are destroyed or mutilated, get the Department of Treasury Form PD F-1048(I) from your bank or at www.ustreas.gov and mail to:

**Department of the Treasury
Bureau of the Public Dept
Savings Bonds Operations
P.O. Box 1328
Parkersburg, WV 26106-1328**

Animal Registration Papers	Human Society or Town of Residence
Bankbooks (checking, savings, etc.)	Your bank
Birth, Death and Marriage Certificates	Vital Records from the City you were born, married or the City/Town the person passed.
Credit Cards	The issuing companies
Divorce Papers	Court where decree was issued
Driver License, Auto Registration	Department of Motor Vehicles
Citizenship Papers	Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services at 1-800-375-5823
Income Tax Records	The IRS center where filed, your Accountant or call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040
Insurance Policies	Your insurance company or agent
Medical Records	Your Physician or Pharmacy
Military Discharge Papers (DD-214)	Department of Veteran Affairs 1-800-827-1000
Mortgage Papers	Your lending institution
Passport	US State Department, Passport Services 1-877-487-2278
Prepaid Burial Contract	Issuing Company
Social Security or Medicare Cards	Social Security Administration Office or call 1-800-772-1213
Stocks and Bonds	Issuing company or your broker
Title to Deeds	Records Department in the locality in which the property is located
Wills	Your Attorney
Warranties	Issuing Company



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. They 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 yourself. This could be very dangerous.
- ◆ Contact your landlord or mortgage company about the fire.
- ◆ Try to find valuable documents and records.
- ◆ 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 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.