

# INFORMATION TO HELP YOU AFTER A FIRE



If you or your family needs immediate assistance,  
be sure to call either:



(306) 244-6280



**CANADIAN  
RED CROSS**

1-888-800-6493

## **FIRE CHIEF'S MESSAGE**

*Saskatoon Fire Department (SFD) is dedicated to serving the citizens of our community with the utmost care and professionalism. Providing as much assistance to you as possible after the fire is out is part of our job. This booklet was developed with this assistance in mind and is meant to aid you and your family in adjusting to your loss and recovery.*

*It is our hope that this booklet will assist you and your families in reducing your loss, speed up your recovery process, and answer the questions you may have.*

## **FIRE EXTINGUISHMENT**

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Why are there broken windows and doors, or holes in the roof? Fire produces temperatures well over 1200°F, along with smoke and hot gases. At times it is necessary to eliminate heat, smoke and hot gas by ventilating 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, fire and water damage would be more extensive.

## **PROPERTY INSURANCE**

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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 fire damage restoration firm can help.

If your property is not insured or if your insurance will not cover all of 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 released by Saskatoon Fire Department. This does not imply suspicion; rather it is our policy to attempt to find the cause of all fires. Be sure to inventory what is removed. Once SFD personnel leave, the building then becomes your responsibility.

2. Check your residence for important legal documents which may have been damaged. Refer to the “Care of Documents and Books” section of this brochure for more information.
3. Contact the Saskatoon Police Service which will help keep an eye on the property during your absence.
4. For those individuals in need after a fire or other disasters, assistance from the Salvation Army is available. Temporary accommodations, emergency financial and grocery assistance may be obtained. Call family services at (306) 244-6280. The Canadian Red Cross also provides assistance to fire victims. Call 1-888-800-6493 within 72 hours of the fire.
5. Try to locate the following items to take with you:
  - Personal identification
  - Vital medicines, such as blood pressure regulating medications or insulin

NOTE\* Please check with your physician or pharmacist prior to taking any medication.  
Consumption of medication exposed to intense heat or air contaminants may not be safe.

- Eyeglasses, hearing aids or other personal aids
- Credit cards, cheque books, insurance policies, jewellery, photos

NOTE\* If you have a safe, do not attempt to open it. A safe involved in a fire may hold intense heat for several hours. If the door is opened before the safe is cooled, the contents may burst into flame.

6. If you are required to move:
  - Notify Canada Post
  - Notify your bank
  - Notify your credit card companies
  - Notify Customer Service (Revenue Branch) at (306) 975-2400
  - Notify Utility Services (Garbage Collection) at (306) 975-2486
  - Check with local school district
  - Notify newspapers subscribed to.
7. If the building is structurally damaged and not habitable, a Building Inspector must be called. After the building inspection is complete a permit must be obtained prior to making repairs (Building Inspection – (306) 975-7924).

**IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO STAY IN YOUR HOME**

## UTILITIES:

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Often SFD will have the utility services shut off or disconnected as a safety precaution and to prevent further damage to the structure and its contents. The procedures for re-establishing utility services are as follows:

**Electricity:** An Electrical Inspector must check the wiring to be sure it is safe before the power can be reconnected. Saskatoon Light & Power – (306) 975-2621 or SaskPower – 1-888-757-6937 option 5

\*Do not operate wet or damp appliances. Have them checked first.

**Water:** This utility may be turned back on by the resident. Use caution because the fire may have damaged the plumbing which may cause water damage to occur when the pipes are filled again. Revenue Branch (water connects/disconnects) at (306) 975-2400

**Gas:** DO NOT turn the gas back on. A Gas Inspector must check the piping, etc. to be sure it is safe before you restart gas appliances. SaskEnergy 24-hour natural gas emergency – 1-888-700-0427

**Telephone & Internet:** SaskTel Business Office – 1-800-727-5835 or Shaw Customer Service – 1-888-472-2222.

## COUNSELLING SUPPORT

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After a fire, you may experience some of the following reactions: anxious feelings, depression, difficulty concentrating, sadness, anger, fatigue, hopelessness, irrational (unfounded) fears, and nightmares. These are common responses to a traumatic event. There are agencies in our area that can help you work through the crisis.

Government of Saskatchewan and Social Services offers 24-hour Mobile Crisis hotline at no charge and a referral service for counselling – call (306) 933-6200.

If you are a member of a church congregation your parish priest or minister may also be of some assistance.

## CARE OF DOCUMENTS

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

Birth Certificates  
Divorce Decree  
Income Tax Records  
Drivers Licence  
Credit Cards  
Auto Registration  
Bank Books  
Title to Deeds

Citizenship Papers  
Insurance Policies  
Stocks and Bonds  
Burial Contracts  
Military Discharge Papers  
Wills  
Animal Registration  
Passports

Medical Records  
Death Certificates  
Social Insurance Cards  
Payment Books  
RSP Papers  
Marriage Papers  
Warranties  
Health Services Cards

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

## PETS

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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 alright. Smoke can damage the lungs of a dog or cat in minutes, and sparks can cause painful burns that will stay hidden under the fur. As soon as possible, take your pet to a veterinarian. If your pet has been lost in the chaos contact the SPCA at (306) 374-7387.

## **SALVAGE HINTS**

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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.

### **PAINTED WALLS**

To remove soot and smoke from walls, mix together:

- 60 ml – 90 ml (4-6 tablespoons) tri-sodium phosphate and 4.5 litres of water. The use of rubber gloves and goggles is suggested. 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 store) before painting. Keep away from children and pets.

### **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 cloth wrung out of thick soap suds. Rinse clean with clear water.
3. Repaste edges or loosened sections.
4. When washing wallpaper, work quickly so paper does not become soaked. Work from the bottom to the top to prevent streaking.

### **FLOORS**

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

### **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.

## **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 the rug to warm, dry air. A fan will help. You can also contact any of the carpet cleaning firms in the yellow pages of the telephone directory.

## **MILDEW**

Mildew is a 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 15ml (1 tablespoon) of perborate bleach to 600ml (20 ounces) of lukewarm water. Or dilute with a solution of household chlorine bleach. Test coloured garments 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 a 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 clean, damp cloth.
5. If mould has grown into the inner part of an article, send to a reliable dry cleaner.

## **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 cigarette ashes rubbed in with fingertips is often effective.

## CLOTHING WITH SOOT AND SMOKE ODOR

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Test coloured garments before using any treatment.

Smoke odour and soot can sometimes be washed from clothing. The following formula will often work for clothing that can be bleached.

\*20-30ml (4 to 6 teaspoons) tri-sodium phosphate (from paint store)

250ml (1 cup) Lysol or any household chlorine bleach

45 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) of 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

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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 pages and allow starch to consume moisture. Wipe off with dry cloth and press.

## REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER ODOR

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- Defrost and wash all surfaces with water and dishwashing 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

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If your home freezer 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 food has thawed, observe the following procedures:

1. Partial thawing and refreezing will reduce the quality of foods, particularly in fruits, vegetables and prepared foods.
2. It is normally considered a safe practice to re-freeze foods that have partially thawed, if the foods still contain visible ice crystals.

Meat is unsafe to eat when it begins to spoil. If the color 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 wise decision to dispose of this food.

## **CANNED FOODS, MEDICINES AND COSMETICS**

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

Discard medicines and cosmetics if contamination is suspected.

## **COOKING UTENSILS/DISHES**

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Your pots, pans, flatware, etc. should be washed with soapy water, rinsed and then polished with 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 with vinegar. Wash dishes in very hot, soapy water. Rinse in hot water. 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 (1 tablespoon) of bleach to 4.5 litres (1 gallon) of water for 30 minutes prior to washing.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

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### **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. Replace air conditioner/heater fans.

## **HOME CLEANING PRODUCTS**

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Bleaches, cleaning and laundry

Warning: under no circumstances, mix ammonia with any other cleaning products such as chlorine bleach, Lysol, Tri-sodium Phosphate, Spic and Span etc. These products can be diluted separately with cold water and washed down the drain.

## CHARCOAL

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

## FERTILIZERS

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These can be 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 the soil well so it won't burn your plants.

## NOTES

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**DISCLAIMER:** This booklet was prepared by Saskatoon Fire Department as an aid to fire victims. There are no warranties made in connection with this publication and the City of Saskatoon shall not be held responsible for any damages (consequential, special or otherwise) arising from its use.

### **Saskatoon Fire Department**

- Emergency ..... 9-1-1
- Administration ..... (306) 975-2520
- Non-Emergency and After Hours ..... (306) 975-3030
- Fire Prevention Division..... (306) 975-2578
- Safety & Property Maintenance Hotline..... (306) 975-2828

### **Saskatoon Police Service**

- Emergency ..... 9-1-1
- Non-Emergency..... (306) 975-8300

### **City of Saskatoon**

- Revenue Branch (water connects/disconnects) ..... (306) 975-2400
- Utility Services (garbage collection) ..... (306) 975-2486
- Building Inspection ..... (306) 975-7924
- Saskatoon Light & Power..... (306) 975-2621

Salvation Army (Family Services) ..... (306) 244-6280

Canadian Red Cross..... 1-888-800-6493

Social Crisis Intervention Service (24 Hour Hotline) ..... (306) 933-6200

SaskPower ..... 1-888-757-6937 option 5

SaskEnergy (24 Hour Emergency) ..... 1-888-700-0427

Gas Inspector ..... 1-888-700-0427

SaskTel (Customer Services) ..... 1-800-727-5835

Shaw Customer Service ..... 1-888-472-2222

SPCA ..... (306) 374-7387

SK Workers Compensation Board ..... (306) 933-6312