



Emergency Steps to Take After Fire and/or Smoke Damage

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If your insured has just experienced a loss or damage due to fire or smoke, here are a few helpful tips. After the smoke clears it is natural to want to clean a building and its contents. Timely action can be a great help, but incorrect or delayed action can jeopardize or seriously impede satisfactory restoration.

Because it is important to remember that airborne soot particles are hazardous to your health, do not enter the affected area without an OSHA-approved respirator. Limit your movement in the area and keep your hands clean. Most importantly, remember that the cleaning of soot from walls, woodwork and upholstery is best left to a professional. Improper techniques can easily make the situation worse.

In the meantime the insured can:

- ✓ Limit movement and keep your hands clean to prevent additional damage.
- ✓ If the electricity is off, empty the refrigerator or freezer and leave the doors open.
- ✓ Prevent sinks, toilet bowls and tubs from freezing when heat is off.
- ✓ Clean and protect chrome on plumbing fixtures and other metal surfaces with a light coat of WD-40 to help prevent corrosion or pitting.
- ✓ Change HVAC filters and tape double layers of cheesecloth over registers.
- ✓ Blow off or brush vacuum loose soot particles from upholstery, drapes and carpets.
- ✓ Place clean towels or linens on carpets in heavy traffic areas.
- ✓ Cover upholstered furniture with sheets to prevent additional soiling.
- ✓ Wash plant leaves with softened water on both sides.
- ✓ Inventory and discard canned or packaged foods or beverages close to the fire.
- ✓ Do not attempt to clean walls or painted surfaces. Further damage may result.
- ✓ Do not attempt to clean carpets or upholstery. Further damage may result.
- ✓ Do not attempt to clean electrical appliances that were close to the fire.