

# AFTER THE FIRE



INSTRUCTION BOOKLET

*BECAUSE WE CARE*

Dear Citizen:

The Stillwater Fire Department strives to serve the community of Stillwater by saving lives and property. Firefighters are familiar with the devastation and trauma resulting from fire. Generally, those who experience fire are not. The difficult period directly after a fire is confusing and traumatic. We recognize this and have created this booklet to assist you through this trying and tragic period.

While Firefighters are on scene they will attempt to assist you and your family as best they can. After they leave questions may arise. By referring to this booklet, many of your concerns may be addressed. A list of important resources and telephone numbers are also included to speed your recovery from this unexpected event.

If we can help you in any other way, please do not hesitate to call the Stillwater Fire Department at 405-742-8308.

Terry Essary  
Fire Chief  
City of Stillwater

## TELEPHONE NUMBERS

American Red Cross.....	(405) 372-1833
Animal Services .....	(405) 372-0334
Auto Registration (Stillwater Tag Office).....	(405) 624-0200
Building Inspection & Permits.....	(405) 742-8218
Chamber of Commerce.....	(405) 372-5573
County Health Department.....	(405) 372-8200
City of Stillwater Main Switchboard.....	(405) 372-0025
Payne County Courthouse.....	(405) 747-8338
Driver's Licenses (Dept. of Public Safety).....	(405) 743-9140
Federal Information Center.....	(800) 688-9889
Fire Department – Administration.....	(405) 742-8308
Fire Department (Emergency).....	911
Humane Society.....	(405) 377-1701
Internal Revenue Service.....	(580) 234-5417
Medical Emergencies.....	911
Police – Administration.....	(405) 372-4171
Police (Emergency).....	911
Sanitation .....	(405) 377-3880
Social Security.....	(888) 366-6143
Veterans Information.....	(405) 707-8100
Voters Information.....	(405) 747-8350
Welfare Office.....	(405) 707-3700

## RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS

Records and documents are very important to your well being and can be damaged or destroyed as a result of a fire. For this reason, the Stillwater Fire Department provides the following list of records and documents that should be located and/or replaced. Locating these documents will speed up the process of recovering from a fire.

Driver's License.....	(405) 743-9140
Checks.....	your bank
Insurance Policies.....	your insurance agent
Military Discharge Papers.....	your local service recruiter
Passports.....	(405) 377-3867
Marriage License.....	Payne Co. Courthouse or state where ceremony was performed
Divorce Decree.....	Payne Co. Courthouse or Circuit Court where decree was issued
Social Security Card.....	(888) 366-6143
Credit Cards.....	issuing companies
Titles to Deeds.....	Payne Co. Courthouse or county where property is located
Stocks.....	issuing company or your broker
Wills.....	your lawyer
Medical Records/Prescriptions.....	your physician or pharmacist
Warranties.....	issuing company
Income Tax Records.....	(580) 234-5417
Auto Registration/Title.....	(405) 624-0200
Aging & Adult Services.....	(405) 707-3700
Welfare Office & Food Stamp Cards.....	(405) 707-3700

Note: It is wise to store all important documents and records in an approved container that is specifically designed for such purposes.

## IMPORTANT NAMES/TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Insurance Co. \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Adjuster \_\_\_\_\_

Contractor \_\_\_\_\_

Plumber \_\_\_\_\_

Bank(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor(s) Office \_\_\_\_\_

Dentist \_\_\_\_\_

Pharmacy \_\_\_\_\_

School(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Veterinarian \_\_\_\_\_

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

## **HOUSING ASSISTANCE**

Contact your local disaster relief services agency such as the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army if you are in need of temporary housing. They have other services to help fire victims. Give them a call to see if they can assist you in any way.

If you are insured under a package homeowner's or tenant's policy, a section of your coverage may pay for temporary housing.

### **IF YOU MUST LEAVE...**

This may be your decision or that of the Fire Department or building inspector if the building is unsafe. If you must leave:

- Contact the Police Department (405) 372-4171 so they can keep an eye on the property during your absence.
- Try to locate the following items to take with you:
  - All important identification
  - Vital medicines such as insulin or heart medication
  - Eyeglasses, hearing aids or other personal aids
  - Valuables such as money, insurance policies, credit cards, jewelry, checkbook, etc.

If you feel you will be out of your building for an extended period of time, you may want to notify the following of your relocation:

- Post Office to forward your mail to your new address
- Your bank(s)
- Utility companies
- Social Security Administration
- Insurance company
- Fire Department (if the fire is under investigation)
- Newspapers and magazines you may subscribe to

If there is structural damage to your building, check with the City building department to see if there is a need for a permit before attempting repairs.

## **INSURANCE**

### **INSURED**

Contact your insurance agent as soon as possible after a fire. If you are renting the property you must contact the owner as well. Your insurance agent may be able to help you in making immediate repairs or help in securing your home. If you cannot reach your agent and need professional assistance in boarding up your home, a general contractor or fire damage restoration firm can help. Check your Yellow Pages.

Remove as many valuables as possible if you must stay elsewhere. Be sure to inventory the property you remove. Also, check for important documents that may have been damaged.

Mobile home insurance coverage is similar to other forms of homeowners coverage. Check with your agent for the specifics regarding your coverage.

### **UNINSURED**

If your property is not insured, or if your insurance will not cover all your losses, contact your family lawyer. You may have to depend on your own resources and help from other agencies to recover your fire loss.

The American Red Cross, Salvation Army, local church groups or civic organizations such as Rotary or Christian Community Action may be able to provide assistance.

Some losses due to fire are tax deductible for your federal income tax. Be sure to keep receipts for money spent on repairs or replacing damaged property and in covering your living expenses. These receipts will be helpful in calculating the loss for your yearly tax return.

Check with your local Internal Revenue Service office for PUBLICATION 547, TAX INFORMATION ON DISASTERS, CASUALTY LOSSES AND THEFTS. A quick refund is possible if you file Form 1045, APPLICATION FOR TENTATIVE REFUND. Check with the I.R.S. first.

## **MONEY REPLACEMENT**

### **PAPER CURRENCY**

**NOTE:** Handle burned money as little as possible. Attempt to encase each bill or portion of bill in plastic wrap for preservation.

If the money you've kept in your home is only half burned or less, you can check with any local commercial bank or take the remainder to the Federal Reserve Bank, or you can mail the remainder of the money (in plastic wrap) via first class mail to:

U.S. Treasury Department  
Main Treasury Building, Room 1123  
Washington, D.C. 20220

### **COINS**

Mutilated or melted coins can be taken to the Federal Reserve Bank or mailed via first class registered mail to:

U.S. Mint  
5<sup>th</sup> and Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19015

### **SAVINGS BONDS**

If your U.S. Savings Bond(s) have been mutilated or destroyed, write to:

U.S. Treasury Department  
Bureau of Loans and Currency  
537 W. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60605  
ATTN: Bond Consultant

Be sure to include name(s) and address on bonds, approximate date or time period when purchased, denominations and approximate number of each.

## SECURING THE SITE

The Fire Department will remove as much water and debris as possible from the fire building before turning the building over to the owner. It is the responsibility of the owner to see that the property is secure after the Fire Department leaves the scene. In the event the Fire Department feels the building is unsafe, we will secure the property as best we can.

## CAUTIONS

Household wiring which may have been water damaged should be checked by an electrician before the current is turned back on.

The Fire Department will see that the utilities (water, electric, or natural gas) are either safe to use or are disconnected before we leave. The utility companies will not make repairs on the customer's side of the meter; therefore, a private contractor will have to be contacted to make repairs. All repairs of this nature require permits and inspection by proper building department personnel. The utility companies will not restore your utilities until the repairs are approved by the building department. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RECONNECT UTILITIES YOURSELF!

Be watchful for any structural damage caused by the fire. The Fire Department will secure property we believe to be a safety hazard.

Any food or beverages that had contact with smoke, soot, or heat should be discarded. Wash your canned goods and jars in soapy water. If the labels come off, remark them with a permanent marker if you know the contents. Don't use canned goods when cans have bulges, are dented or show rust. **IF YOU ARE UNSURE, THROW IT OUT!**

Any medications that had contact with smoke, soot, or heat should also be thrown out. If you are uncertain about the reusability of the medication, **DISCARD IT**. Notify your physician and/or your pharmacist for replacement.

If your power has been turned off **KEEP DOORS TO REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER CLOSED!** Refrigerators and freezers left unopened will hold their temperature for a short time. If your food becomes spoiled or thawed, **THROW IT OUT!** (For more information on saving foods, see salvage hints.)

If you have a safe, **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO OPEN IT!** Hot gases could burst into flames when the door is opened. Wait until the safe has cooled.

## **SALVAGE HINTS**

The following salvage information was furnished by the Fire Center of the University of Minnesota as reprinted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Fire Administration.

These hints are meant as an economical way to clean up or salvage items after a small fire. Be sure to contact your insurance company to see exactly what they will cover. Also, consider taking pictures of the damage.

### **CAUTION**

Several cleaning mixtures contain the substance Tri-Sodium Phosphate. Tri-Sodium Phosphate is a caustic substance used commonly as a cleaning agent. It should be used with care and stored out of the reach of children and pets. Wear rubber gloves when using it. Read the instructions on the container before you start. (Tri-Sodium Phosphate, also known as TSP, can be purchased in your local hardware, paint or home improvement store.)

- Vacuum all surfaces.
- Change and clean air conditioner filters.
- Seal off the room in which you are working with plastic to keep soot from moving from one location to another. Try to keep windows closed.

### **WALLS AND CEILINGS**

To remove soot and smoke from painted walls, mix together four to six tablespoons of Tri-Sodium Phosphate and one gallon of water.

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 advisable that you use a smoke sealer (available where paint is sold) before painting.

Wallpapered walls usually cannot be restored. Check with your wallpaper dealer.

### **CARPETS AND RUGS**

Carpets and rugs should be allowed to dry thoroughly. Throw rugs can be cleaned by beating, sweeping or vacuuming, and shampooing. Rugs should be dried as quickly as possible. Lay them flat and expose them to a circulation of warm, dry air. A fan turned on the rugs will speed drying. Make sure the rugs are thoroughly dry. Even though the surface seems dry, moisture remaining at the base of the tufts can quickly rot a rug. For more information on cleaning and preserving carpets, call your carpet dealer.

## **MATTRESSES**

Reconditioning an innerspring mattress at home is nearly impossible. Your mattress might be able to be renovated by a company that builds or repairs them.

If you must use your mattress temporarily, put it out in the sun to dry, then cover it with plastic sheeting. It is impossible to remove the odor of smoke out of pillows. The foam and feathers hold the odor in.

## **WOOD FURNITURE**

Do not use chemicals on furniture. A very inexpensive product called FLAX SOAP (available in hardware and paint stores) is a most efficient product to use on wood, including kitchen cabinets. If you do not have Flax Soap:

- Wipe off with Borax dissolved in hot water to remove mildew.
- To remove white spots or film, rub the surface with a cloth soaked in a solution of  $\frac{1}{2}$  water and  $\frac{1}{2}$  vinegar. Then wipe dry and polish with wax.
- You can also rub the wood surface with steel wool in liquid polishing wax, wipe with soft cloth and then buff.

NOTE:      Wet wood can decay and mold, so dry well **BUT DO NOT DRY IN DIRECT SUNLIGHT** as the wood may warp and twist out of shape.

## **WOOD AND VINYL FLOORS**

Use Flax Soap on wood and vinyl floors. It will take 4 to 5 applications. Then strip and rewrap. When water gets underneath linoleum, it can cause odors and warp the floor. If this has happened, remove your linoleum. Call your linoleum dealer for suggestions on how to loosen the adhesive without damaging the floor covering. Be sure to let the floor dry thoroughly before replacing it.

## **LOCKS, HINGES, TYPEWRITERS AND SMALL APPLIANCES**

Steam from a fire removes lubrication from these items. They should be taken apart and oiled. It is suggested that these items be taken to a repair shop. If locks cannot be removed, squirt machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole and work the knob to distribute the oil. Hinges should also be thoroughly cleaned and oiled.

## **COOKING UTENSILS**

Your pots, pans, flatware, etc., should be washed with a fine-powdered cleanser. You can polish copper and brass with special polish, or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated in vinegar.

## REFRIGERATORS AND FREEZERS

To remove odors from your refrigerator or freezer, wash the inside with a solution of baking soda and water or use one cup of vinegar or household ammonia to one gallon of water. Some baking soda in an open container, or a piece of charcoal can be placed in the refrigerator or freezer to absorb odor.

**Caution:** When cleaning or discarding any refrigerator or freezer, be sure the doors are removed or secured against closing on a young child.

## FOOD

If your freezer has stopped running, you can still save the frozen food:

- Keep the freezer closed. Your freezer has enough insulation to keep food frozen for at least one day, perhaps more.
- Move your food to a neighbor's freezer or a commercial freezer firm. Wrap the frozen food in newspaper and blankets, or use insulated boxes.

If your food has thawed, observe the following procedures:

- FRUITS can be refrozen if they still taste and smell good. Otherwise, if the fruits are not spoiled, they can be eaten.
- VEGETABLES should not be refrozen if they have thawed completely. Refreeze only if they have ice crystals in the vegetables. If your vegetables have thawed and cannot be used soon, THROW THEM AWAY! If you have any doubts whether your vegetables are spoiling, THROW THEM AWAY! Don't wait for a bad odor.
- MEATS may be refrozen (if the ice crystals remain). Cook very thoroughly before eating the meat. If odor is poor or if you question these foods, THROW IT AWAY, as bacteria multiply rapidly.

## CLOTHING

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

4-6 teaspoons Tri-Sodium Phosphate  
1 c. Lysol or any household chlorine bleach  
1 gallon warm water  
Mix well – add clothes, rinse with clean water – dry well

To remove mildew, wash the fresh stain with soap and water. Then rinse and dry in the sun. If the stain isn't gone, use lemon juice and salt, or diluted solution of household chlorine bleach. TEST COLORED GARMENTS BEFORE USING ANY TREATMENT! Take wool, silk or rayon garments to the dry cleaners as soon as possible.

## **LEATHER AND BOOKS**

Wipe your leather goods with a damp cloth, then with a dry cloth. Stuff your purses and shoes with newspapers 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 steel wool or a suede brush on suede. Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry away from heat or sun.

Books can be dried by standing them up with their pages separated. Then they should be piled and pressed to prevent the pages from crinkling. Alternating drying and pressing will prevent mildew from forming until the books are thoroughly dry. If your books are very damp, sprinkle cornstarch or talc between the pages, leave for several hours, then brush them off. A fan turned on the books will help them dry.

## **HOW TO USE 9-1-1**

1. 9-1-1 can be dialed from any phone in the Payne County area. No change is needed when using a pay phone.
2. When calling, state the nature of the emergency and the address where emergency aid is needed.
3. Give the address of the emergency and the number from the phone you are using.
4. REMAIN CALM and answer any questions that the 9-1-1 operator has for you. The operator wants to help you, but won't be able to if you are too excited.
5. Speak clearly and do not shout into the phone.
6. Do not hang up the phone until the 9-1-1 operator has done so.

## FIRE PREVENTION TIPS

1. Install and maintain smoke detectors. These are best installed on the ceiling adjacent to sleeping areas.
2. Avoid overloading electrical outlets. This condition can cause fires due to an excessive amount (3 or more) of appliances in an outlet.
3. Have an escape plan for every person in the house. Two escape routes, either through a door or window, are recommended per room.
4. Have a meeting place to go to if escaping a fire. For the children's sake, call it "home base" or "safe zone" because they respond to this as well as identify with the concept. This should be a place away from the home, preferable a mailbox, neighbor's porch, etc.
5. If a fire occurs get out! Call the Fire Department. Fires grow quickly! A small fire can, in less than seconds, become a raging, choking inferno. Leave it to the professionals. Also, often there will be less damage than if you and neighbors attempt extinguishment.
6. Post your address and telephone number by the phone for babysitters, guests, and even yourself to use in case of emergency. 9-1-1- is uncomplicated; however, you may even forget your own name and address under extreme stress.
7. If a pan fire occurs, put a lid or cover on it. Tip the lid so it shields your arm from the flames as you place it. Turn off the heat. AVOID water or application of any towel, wet or dry, on a pan fire.

Call the Fire Department!

## **HOW YOU CAN HELP WHEN EMERGENCY PERSONNEL ARE AT YOUR HOME**

1. If it is a fire, stay away from the house or apartment on fire.
2. Tell firefighters if there are any other persons in the structure.
3. If an animal is still in the structure, tell the firefighter that an animal is inside the home. Avoid saying only the animal's name or a special term used for the animal. This leads to confusion, resulting in firefighters looking for a human.
4. Remain as calm as possible. Stay with friends or other family members, but please do not leave the fire location unless to accompany a rescue vehicle.
5. If you accompany an ambulance to a hospital via a private car, DO NOT speed or go through any red lights. The ambulance drivers are trained, licensed, and signal equipped for this. Another accident on the way to the hospital will not help a victim. Remember – they are in qualified, caring hands.
6. If it is an ambulance call, state as clearly as possible any medications or medical problems the patient might have. If you do not know the answers, say so! You are helping speed care by being clear and truthful.
7. If you have been directed not to enter a structure after a fire, heed this warning. Remaining smoke is a killer, along with the possibility of structural weakness in the building.
8. As much as you may wish to physically assist emergency personnel, please avoid the temptation. This is a team effort at your service. Only a limited number of specially trained persons can make it work. Follow the previous steps, stay on the fringe, and we will assist you in the caring, professional manner that we are equipped for.

## **ABOUT OUR OPERATIONS**

Here are a few common questions people have about our operations.

### **WHY ARE WINDOWS BROKEN OR HOLES CUT IN THE ROOF?**

As a fire burns, it moves upward and then outward. Breaking the windows and/or cutting holes in the roof (called ventilation) stops that damaging outward movement and enables firefighters to fight the fire more efficiently, resulting in less damage to the structure in the long run.

### **WHY DO WE CUT HOLES IN WALLS?**

We have to be absolutely sure that the fire is completely out, and that there is no fire inside the walls or other hidden places. We will do the least amount of damage necessary to ensure everything is safe.

### **WHY DOES A STILLWATER FIRE ENGINE RESPOND TO MEDICAL EMERGENCIES WHEN THERE IS NO FIRE?**

This allows faster response to an emergency, better use of manpower, and most importantly, expeditious care to patients. This program allows the nearest engine to quickly respond to a medical emergency, yet is always backed up by an advanced life support unit.

### **IS IT POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THE FIRE REPORT?**

Yes. A fire report is a public document and is available at the Stillwater Fire Department Administrative Office, located at 1510 S Main. You can reach us by phone at 405-742-8308. Important information concerning your fire can be found on the back cover of this booklet.

A final note – The Stillwater Fire Department is here for you. It is made up of 70 Firefighters. There are four stations throughout the City for your protection. Both advanced life support and basic life support are available. Full drug and advanced life saving techniques are available at your call.

We are here to serve. Our greatest concern and commitment is for the safety and well-being of the citizens of Stillwater.

If you have any questions or comments about any part of our operations, call the Fire Department.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Incident No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Fire \_\_\_\_\_

For additional information please call  
Fire Department Administration at  
(405) 742-8308.