



SOUTH ELGIN & COUNTRYSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Headquarters Station 21 1090 W. Spring Street, South Elgin, IL 60177 847-741-2141



After the Fire

The South Elgin Fire District provides this information as a guide to help victims of residential fires create an action plan for worst case scenarios. After a fire you may experience anxious feelings, depression, difficulty concentrating, sadness, anger, fatigue, or nightmares. These are common responses to a traumatic event. In the event that you cannot find the help you need, please reach out and we will assist you in any way we can. You may have questions or concerns on the fire or the damage that has occurred due to the fire suppression. We encourage you to reach out at any time so we can answer your questions.

What to expect:

A fire in your home can cause serious damage. Your home and many things inside your home are badly damaged from flames, heat, smoke, and/or water. You may find things that were not damaged by the fire, but may still be damaged by the smoke or soggy from the water used to put the fire out. Anything you want to save or reuse will need to be carefully cleaned.

To fight the fire, firefighters may have broken windows, cut holes in the roof, or damaged doors. The holes were cut in the roof to slow the fire's growth and to clear the dark smoke that creates dangerous conditions for the firefighters.

It is important to understand the risk to your safety and health even after the fire is out. The soot and dirty water left behind may contain things that can make you sick. Be careful if you touch any fire damaged items.

Information to have readily available:

- Insurance information: medical, homeowners, and/or auto policy numbers
- Medical information
- Driver's license, social security card, credit cards, and cash
- Fire incident information, including: date, time, location, fire department incident number, and lead fire investigator name

First steps:

- Check with the Fire District or board up company to make sure your residence is safe to enter because of structural damage or toxic gasses.
- Conduct an inventory of all damaged property and save receipts for all money spent related to the fire loss. The receipts may be needed later by your insurance company.



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- Try to locate valuable documents and records.
- Contact your insurance agent/insurance company to advise them of your loss as soon as possible.
- Contact your landlord or mortgage company to advise them of the fire.

Things NOT to do:

- DO NOT enter the building unless it is safe and has been approved by the Fire District or board up company/insurance agent.
- DO NOT reconnect utilities by yourself. Check with NICOR, ComEd, or a professional contractor to ensure it is safe to do so.
- DO NOT turn on appliances that have been exposed to water unless they have been inspected by a professional and it is safe to do so.
- DO NOT consume anything exposed to fire or smoke (i.e. food, drinks or medications).
- DO NOT allow pets into your home until you get an all clear that it is safe to do so.

Be aware:

- Toxic gases and airborne contaminants may be present in the air of your home. These contaminants are commonly not visible and should be evaluated by a professional before your home is considered safe to occupy.
- Structural damage may have occurred as a result of the fire. This may cause a roof or floor collapse, and must be evaluated by a professional prior to entry to the home.
- Firefighters may have cut holes in the structure or roof to ventilate the building and/or to check for smoldering hot spots inside your home.

Odors:

- Sometimes there is a residual smoke odor from a small fire. You can place small saucers of household vanilla, wine, vinegar or activated charcoal around the home to help absorb these odors.
- Remember that the smoke odor may also be inside the heating and cooling ducts, and you may get a short blast every time the air system activates. You can contact your insurance agent/insurance company for assistance, as they may be able to direct you to a cleaning company specializing in restoration of fire damaged property.
- Vacuum all surfaces.



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Other tips:

- Change and clean air conditioner/heating filters.
- Seal off the room in which you are working with plastic to keep soot and smoke from moving from one room to another.
- Electrical appliances: Do not run the wet appliances until a service person has checked them.
- Cooking utensils: pots, pans, and flatware should be washed with soapy water and thoroughly rinsed.
- Wash all clothes, blankets, furniture, flooring, and carpet thoroughly.
- Any food, beverages, and/or medications exposed to heat or smoke should not be consumed. *Medications can change strength when exposed to heat.* Check with your doctor or pharmacist to ensure they are safe before taking these medications. If food was in a tightly sealed container, it MIGHT salvageable, but it is cheaper to replace the material than to jeopardize your health and safety. When it doubt, throw it out!

Helpful Contact Information:

Village of South Elgin
10 North Water Street South Elgin, Illinois
(847) 742-5780

South Elgin Police
Emergency 911
Non-Emergency (847) 741-2151

American Red Cross Illinois
2200 West Harrison Street Chicago, Illinois
(312) 729-6100

State of Illinois – Secretary of State (Elgin)
595 South State Street Elgin, Illinois 60123
(312) 793-1010

IDPH – Vital Records
605 West Jefferson Street Springfield, Illinois 62702
(217) 782-6553

Kane County Animal Control
(630) 232-3555



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Nicor Gas
(888) 642-6748

Commonwealth Edison
(800) 334-7661

Cable and Internet Services

Comcast/Xfinity customer service
(866) 203-0432

AT&T customer service
(800) 331-0500

DIRECTV customer service
(855) 838-4388

Dish Network customer service
(888) 434-0112

MetroNet customer service
(877) 407-3224

Checklist for after the fire:

Fire Incident #:

Date of Incident:

Fire Investigator Contact Information:

Insurance Company:

Agent Name/Number:

Policy Number:

Landlord Name/Number:

Other Contacts Made: