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RESTORING PEACE OF MIND[®]

FIRE RECOVERY GUIDE



IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

ServiceMaster Restore® business name

ServiceMaster Restore® contact & phone number

ServiceMaster Restore® e-mail address

Insurance Agent name & phone number

Insurance Claim Representative name & phone number

Insurance Claim number

Other phone numbers



Click here or scan the QR code to see our video on fire damage recovery.

[Watch video now](#)



EMERGENCY FIRE & SMOKE SERVICE

Thank you for choosing ServiceMaster Restore® to provide emergency services for your fire and/or smoke damage. We understand that experiencing something like this is difficult. Rest assured ServiceMaster Restore is the right company and has the qualified technicians to restore your property.

This is most likely your first fire-related loss. However, at ServiceMaster Restore, we have helped people through this process countless times. Years of experience have led us to advanced scientific methods, techniques and products for restoring buildings and personal property.

We suggest that you do not attempt any “do-it-yourself” cleaning methods without consulting with your ServiceMaster Restore Restoration Technician. This could actually make the damage worse. Touching surfaces covered in soot can permanently set the soot. Please consider there are complex chemical reactions and hidden damage that are best restored with specific products, equipment and expert methods. Returning your property back to pre-loss condition and helping families and individuals like you is what we do.



UNDERSTANDING FIRE & SMOKE DAMAGE

During a fire, smoke is driven by heat created by flames. No matter where the fire originates, smoke may penetrate throughout a building structure. Smoke also combines with humidity and can form corrosive residues that may cause secondary damage. Long after the fire is put out, the damage can continue, as remaining free-floating smoke settles on horizontal surfaces and contents.

Fire does burn, but residual smoke may burn as well. This is sometimes called etching, pitting or chemical burning. Quick response and action are critical. The more time that elapses before treatment, the greater the damage.

ServiceMaster Restore® is a highly reputable, licensed, insured and endorsed provider of fire and smoke restoration services. In addition to our years of experience, our uniformed Restoration Technicians have completed advanced training in fire mitigation, restoration systems and corrosion control. We also require continuing education to learn about new techniques and equipment to better serve you in your time of need.

It is our goal to restore your property as quickly and efficiently as possible. Depending on the source, nature and size of the fire, the cleaning and restoration may require several phases before completion.

While each fire or smoke loss is unique, the information in this recovery guide is general. However, we hope it will help answer your questions and aid you in understanding the processes and procedures for restoring your property. We understand that as the property owner, you deserve clear and thorough communication, and we will give our full cooperation to both you and your insurance claims representative.

RESTORE VERSUS REPLACE DECISIONS

We work to restore all property to a pre-loss condition when possible. Some items cannot be restored. Others could cost more to restore than they are actually worth. We will advise you and your insurance claim representative, and explain the limits of what we as professional restorers can do.



ONLY CHECKED ITEMS NEED TO BE DONE TO YOUR PROPERTY.

The following information is a checklist of services and items that may need to be addressed in order to restore and protect your property, along with a brief explanation.

Our ServiceMaster Restore® Restoration Technician will walk you through this checklist. While not all of the items will apply, this information will help you understand the procedures involved in restoring your property.

We have identified the type of fire and smoke problem and the scope of the damage. The assessment includes a thorough visual inspection with photo documentation to determine the extent of the damage, enabling us to form the most effective plan for returning your property to pre-loss condition as quickly as possible. To ensure proper claims investigation, the area where the fire started must be secured and undisturbed until released for cleaning by your insurance representative.

Your damage has been caused by one or more of the following:

- PROTEIN FIRE**
Food from the oven or stove has burned; strong burnt food odor exists; smoke residue is on contents and surfaces.
- COMPLEX FIRE**
Multiple natural and synthetic items inside the structure have burned; black smoke residue is on contents and surfaces; synthetic smoke odor exists; emergency corrosion mitigation is needed to protect at-risk surfaces.
- NATURAL FIRE**
Trees, shrubs and bushes have burned (example: forest fire); smoke has penetrated the structure from outside; smoke residue and odor are present.
- FURNACE MALFUNCTION**
Heating appliances such as oil-fired furnaces have malfunctioned and caused smoke to be distributed throughout the property.

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Board up or cover with tarp to secure the property or protect it from the elements.
- Inspect furnace or air conditioner unit; replace furnace filter, cover supply and return air vents to prevent cross contamination of smoke and odor into other areas; clean and deodorize duct work.
- Turn off electrical power to address safety issues.
- Restore electrical power to use lighting and restoration equipment.
- Remove debris to clear a way for complete restoration and provide for worker and occupant safety.
- PERFORM EMERGENCY WATER DAMAGE MITIGATION**
Extract excess water remaining from firefighting; check flooring and structural components for remaining moisture; set up drying and dehumidification equipment.
- PERFORM EMERGENCY CORROSION MITIGATION**
Corrosive by-products from smoke residues can cause irreversible damage in a short period of time; removing smoke residues and treating at-risk surfaces with a corrosion inhibitor will protect these items. Examples of at-risk surfaces: marble, stone, grout, aluminum, glass, fixtures, appliances, etc.
- Empty refrigerators or freezers to prevent spoiling and associated odors; empty food cabinets; dispose of spoiled food items. Note: We recommend you keep a list of all disposed items.
- Begin initial odor control measures such as ventilation to air out the property, application of deodorizers, placement of air filtration units, etc.
- Arrange for emergency laundry/dry cleaning for several changes of clothing for immediate use while the remainder of your clothing is restored.

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ODOR CONTROL SERVICES

Smoke and odor particles continue to be airborne many days after the fire has stopped. Removal of severe odors from fire and smoke damage requires a variety of professional products, systems and specialty equipment. Often multiple treatments are necessary during the restoration process.

- Air Scrubbers**
Air scrubbers use High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtration to remove these particles from the air, enhancing the efficiency of cleaning and clearing the air for safe breathing. Please do not move or turn off this equipment.
- Thermal Fogging**
This process neutralizes odor, using a strong deodorizer that penetrates everywhere the smoke traveled and will require the removal of pets, plants and human occupants for a short period of time.
- Ozone**
Ozone is an oxidizing agent produced by a portable ozone generator. This process will require the removal of pets, plants and human occupants for a short period of time.
- OdorKlenz® Technology**
This environmentally friendly deodorizing process removes odors and air particulates using OdorKlenz air cartridges in traditional air scrubbers. Safe for people, pets and plants.

RESTORATION SERVICES

- Restoration laundry/dry cleaning**
Because fire damage requires a special form of dry cleaning, this service will be performed by a restoration dry cleaner. Includes inventory control and documentation of clothing and textiles, including bedding, window coverings, etc.
- Carpet and furniture cleaning**
Includes inspection, pretesting, professional cleaning and deodorization, speed drying and covering to protect during structural restoration. May include reapplication of stain protection.
- Structural restoration**
Structural restoration includes cleaning of ceiling and walls, as well as cleaning, polishing and deodorizing woodwork.
- Closets, attics, cabinets and drawers**
These areas are sources of trapped smoke odor and require thorough cleaning, deodorization and airing out.
- Hard surface floor cleaning**
Includes inspection and cleaning of marble, stone, tile, wood, laminate and other flooring. Floors will then be covered for protection during structural restoration.
- Separate items**
We will work with you and your insurance claims representative in the decision-making process on items we cannot clean or restore.

HARD AND SOFT CONTENTS RESTORATION

We have advanced products and systems for restoring different smoke-damaged contents, whether furniture and upholstery, knick-knacks or other belongings.

- Hand washing and drying**
Items are carefully cleaned by hand. Care is taken to use dry methods with water-sensitive items.
- Ultrasonic cleaning**
Ultrasonic tanks are used to clean certain items. Some items that might be cleaned ultrasonically are blinds, collectibles and other smaller contents.
- Furniture and upholstery cleaning**
This requires specialty equipment, products and technicians trained and certified in furniture restoration.
- Contents restoration will be performed:**
 - On-site
 - At our warehouse facility
- Packout services will be performed by:**
 - ServiceMaster Restore®
 - A qualified moving subcontractor
- Moving services will be handled by:**
 - ServiceMaster Restore®
 - A qualified moving subcontractor

Some items may require a specific, qualified restorer such as: appliances, electronics, HVAC systems, furniture, textiles, antiques, etc. If so, ServiceMaster Restore will work with your insurance company to manage this process for you.

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PACKOUT SERVICES

Some fires require that your contents and furnishings be inventoried, packed and safely transported to a secure, climate-controlled location for cleaning, deodorization, restoration and storage until the structural restoration is complete. Be assured that ServiceMaster Restore® Restoration Technicians are fully trained and will treat your possessions with the utmost care.



Your role in the packout process:

1. Sign an authorization form.
2. Identify immediate need items. (Medication, emergency clothing, etc.)
3. Identify items to keep in your possession. (Personal valuables, jewelry, etc.)
4. Assist with restore versus replace decisions, especially regarding family heirlooms and sentimental items.
5. Be available on-site during packout and redelivery.

ServiceMaster Restore will:

1. Coordinate activities with your insurance claims representative.
2. Separate items that will not be moved, including items that will not be restored.
3. Pack, provide general inventory and transport your belongings to a secure facility. We will provide you with a copy of the general inventory.
4. Perform restoration, cleaning, deodorization, repacking and storage.
5. Provide regular, frequent communication regarding the progress of your restoration claim.
6. Arrange for redelivery of your household belongings once restoration and reconstruction are complete.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long will the restoration process take?

Because there are many variables and many services involved in fire and smoke restoration, it is difficult to predict exactly how long the complete restoration will take. Consult with your ServiceMaster Restore® Restoration Technician on the estimated dates and phases of your restoration project.

Can I clean it myself?

We suggest that you do not attempt any “do-it-yourself” cleaning methods without consulting your ServiceMaster Restore Restoration Technician. Pretesting, using the right cleaning agent for the particular item, mixing deodorizing agents with cleaning solutions and using correct dilution rates are just some of the ways a fire restoration technician expertly controls the results. Professional cleaning systems and products used by experienced, trained ServiceMaster Restore Restoration Technicians give you the best chance for complete restoration of your belongings.

What are some safety concerns?

At ServiceMaster Restore, occupant and worker safety is top priority. During the initial inspection, safety hazards are identified and addressed, including debris removal, air quality, electrical hazards, slip and trip hazards, etc. Burnt electrical cords and appliances are separated out for disposal, and questionable electrical appliances are unplugged and tagged for evaluation of safe operation. Electrical power may be turned off and kept off until evaluation by a licensed electrician.

Can I turn on my heating and air conditioning unit?

We recommend that you not turn on your furnace or air conditioning unit without clearance from the HVAC contractor.

What items do I keep in my possession?

- Cash
- Medications
- Valuable Jewelry
- Checkbooks
- Personal Documents
- Valuable Paintings
- Flammables
- Pets
- Weapons/Ammunition
- Gasoline Cans
- Stamp/Coin Collections

How do I keep track of non-restorable items?

We recommend you make a list of items (including food items) deemed non-restorable. Use a format like the sample below, or obtain a similar form from your insurance company. Make a copy for your insurance company and keep one for yourself.

Quantity	Item	Year Purchased	Cost
1 package	4 pc. Chicken Breast	2012	\$8.69
3	Silk Flower Arrangements	2009	\$50.00

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need to move out of my property during this process?

This is ultimately your decision. Some things you may want to consider are safety concerns, odors, electricity, noise from equipment, etc. If vacating your premises for any length of time consider the following: forward your mail to your temporary residence; stop newspaper and other deliveries; notify utility company, cable company, etc., of temporary suspension of services.

Do I need general contractors?

There are some items that may require general contractors such as drywall/painting; electrical; plumbing; roofing; framing/finish carpentry; flooring/carpet; installation of doors, windows, cabinets, post-construction cleanup, etc.

Do my belongings need to be moved away from the premises?

Depending on the source, nature and extent of the fire, it may be best to remove all belongings to a secure facility for cleaning, storage and to make room for restoration or construction. ServiceMaster Restore® will work with you and your insurance claims representative to manage this process.

Will I have access to my belongings while they are in storage?

Yes, with advance notice we can schedule time for a ServiceMaster Restore Restoration Technician to meet with you and provide access to your requested items. A service charge may apply.

What about special items? Artwork, china, heirlooms, etc.

Some high-value items require restoration by a specialist. Working with your insurance claims representative, we can help you identify these and locate a qualified restorer.

Who is responsible for paying for the service?

Ultimately you, the property owner, are responsible for payment and will need to sign a form authorizing payment for the restoration services. If this is an insurance claim, ServiceMaster Restore® generally collects only the deductible (co-payment) amount from you and bills the balance to your insurance provider as a service to you. If you have a large loss, your mortgage company may be included as a payee on the payment from your insurance company, and you may need to obtain a signature from them as well. If your claim is not covered by insurance or you decide not to file a claim, you will be expected to pay in full.



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Services provided by independently owned and operated businesses.
Services may vary upon location.

TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS SAFE IN THE FUTURE:

FIRE AND SMOKE DAMAGE

- Place a smoke alarm on each floor of your home or business (and one in each bedroom at home). Store fire extinguishers within reach in the kitchen and utility areas.
- Schedule service and cleaning annually for furnaces, heating systems, chimneys and fireplaces.
- Avoid overloading electrical circuits. Check extension cords and fuse boxes or circuit breakers, making sure there is never a combination of appliances that exceeds 1500 watts on the same circuit.

WATER DAMAGE

- Periodically check the following to ensure they are secure, in good condition and leak-free: hot water tanks, washing machine hoses, dishwashers, refrigerators and ice makers.
- Clean your gutters every autumn to prevent backup and leaks.
- Prevent frozen pipes and their disastrous results by keeping your home or business heated while you're away on vacation. Close interior valves for exterior faucets during the winter months. Leave cabinet doors open during extremely cold weather to allow warm air in to help prevent pipes from freezing.