

After The Fire

Important First Steps



City of Durham Fire Department
2008 East Club Blvd
Durham, NC 27704
(919) 560-4242



We hope that you will find the information in this booklet helpful as you start to rebuild your life.

VITAL INFORMATION

Date and Time of Loss:

Location:

Vehicle ID numbers for damaged cars, trucks, and motorcycles

Durham Fire Department Contact Information:

Durham Fire Investigator Contact Information:

Fire Report #:

Police Report #:

Police Investigator Contact Information:

Insurance Company Contact Information:

Insurance Adjuster Contact Information:

Restoration Contact Information:

Red Cross Info: 4737 University Drive #3, Durham, NC 27707
RedCross.org or Call 1-800-733-2767

Contact: _____

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FIRE

The Red Cross will require identification for some services. Some acceptable forms of identification are driver's license, government documents, neighbor information, utility bills, etc.

Have injuries treated by qualified professionals.

- First, wash and disinfect any wounds to remove all dirt and debris. When wrapping wounds, always use a sterile dressing or bandage. (Very minor wounds may heal fine without a bandage.)

Remain calm and pace yourself.

- This is a very stressful time and you may be required to make difficult decisions. Listen carefully to what trusted people are telling you. Deal with urgent situations first. Use the resources you have been given to make informed decisions.

Check with the Fire Department to ensure your residence is safe to enter.

- Do not cut or walk past the tape that has been placed over doors or windows. This tape indicates that the structure is unsafe to enter. The proper authorities will be notified to inspect the structure and will advise you when it's safe to re-enter.

Your family's physical and emotional care and recovery are just as important as rebuilding and healing physical wounds.

- Try to return to as many of your personal and family routines as possible.
- Get rest and drink plenty of water.
- Reach out and accept help from others, recognize your own feelings. Stay connected with family and other support systems.
- Focus on the positive; do something you enjoy.
- Realize that recovery can take time.

Durham Urgent Care Locations

Duke Urgent Care Croasdaile
1821 Hillandale Rd, Suite 24A
Durham, NC 27705
(919) 383-4355

FastMed Urgent Care
7010 NC-751
Durham, NC 27707
(919) 313-3900

Duke Urgent Care South
5716 Fayetteville Road
Durham, NC 27713
(919) 572-1868

Next Steps

It is very important to understand the risk to your safety and health as you prepare to re-enter your home.

Do not eat, drink, or inhale fumes from anything that has been near flames, smoke, or soot or water used to put the fire out.

You may be anxious to clean your home after a fire, but you should first get permission from the proper authorities to safely re-enter your home. Contact your insurance agency immediately after the fire is out. They will provide advice on restoration or replacement of damaged items. If you rent, notify the property owner so that both of you can assess the damage together.

Some possessions that did not burn may be very wet and covered with soot. Now is the time to remove items that you want so that they may be thoroughly cleaned.

Firefighters may have cut holes in structure walls or in the roof to search for fire extension or to ventilate, so cleanup will take time.

Preventing Further Damage If the Home is Accessible:

Get air moving - Open windows to ventilate areas by possibly installing a fan to circulate air. Start the drying process of wet items as quickly as possible. Use fans and dehumidifiers to dry carpets and draperies. If not thoroughly dried, the carpets and floors underneath may be quickly damaged beyond repair by mold and mildew. Cover clean and dry items with plastic while repairs are in progress. If there is substantial water damage, you may need a dehumidifier. During cold weather, if your heating system is operating, the cold air will usually assist in removing moisture. When the heating system is running, change your furnace filter daily until it shows no trace of soot. Smoke odor may remain in clothing, upholstered furniture, carpets and draperies unless they are properly deodorized before cleaning.



Additional Resources:

Durham Fire Department - durhamfd.org

The American Red Cross - redcross.org

The Federal Emergency Management Agency - FEMA.gov

The Salvation Army - salvationarmymycarolinas.org

The Fire Department will ensure that utilities such as electricity, gas, and water are safe to use. If they are unsafe, firefighters will have your utilities turned off or disconnected before they leave. **Do not try to turn them back on yourself.**

Contact the Police Department to let them know you will be away from your home. In some cases, you may need to board up doors and windows to secure your property while it is uninhabitable.

Durham Police Non-Emergency # – (919) 560-4600

If you do not have insurance, your family and community may be able to help you get back on your feet. Organizations that may be able to help include:

- American Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Religious Organizations
- Public Agencies, such as the Public Health Department
- Community Groups
- State or Municipal Emergency Services Office
- Nonprofit Crisis-Counseling Centers

Don't Forget Your Pets

If you have pets, quickly secure and comfort them. Scared animals will often react by biting or scratching, so be very gentle with them. Try to leave your pets with a veterinarian, family member or friends while you are transitioning back to a regular routine. Pets are naturally inquisitive and could be injured in a damaged home.

Animal Protection Society of Durham – (919) 560-0640



Check List for Next Steps

- ✓ Visit DurhamFD.org to request a fire report. This may be required by your insurance company or other agencies.
- ✓ Contact a local disaster relief service such as the American Red Cross, if you need assistance. They can assist you in finding a place to stay, food, and clothing. They can also assist you in replacing prescription medications. The American Red Cross provides a great deal of assistance for at least the first 72 hours after a fire, and will follow you through recovery.
- ✓ If you have insurance, contact your insurance company quickly. Find out what you should do to keep your home safe until repairs are completed and ask who you should hire to clean and make immediate repairs to your home. If you are not insured, contact local community groups for assistance.
- ✓ Secure your home against further damage; make temporary repairs that are necessary. Save all receipts.
- ✓ List everything that was damaged by the fire. Describe items and try to estimate how much you paid for them.
- ✓ Contact your credit card company to report credit cards that were lost.
- ✓ Take photographs of the damage to substantiate insurance claims. It's a good idea to have two sources of photographs.
- ✓ Check with the fire department to ensure that your home is safe to enter. Be very cautious if you decide to go inside as there could be unseen structural damage to your home.
- ✓ Locate safe storage for household items that have been removed from your home.
- ✓ The Fire Department will notify you if your utilities (water, electricity, and gas) are safe to use. If the utilities are turned off, it was determined by the Fire Department that they weren't safe to use. **Do not turn them back on.**
- ✓ Contact your landlord or mortgage company about the fire.
- ✓ Try to find and secure valuable documents and personal records.
- ✓ If you have left your home, call the Durham Police non-emergency line to inform them that your home will be vacant and possibly unsecured.
- ✓ Save all receipts for any money spent on items related to the fire loss. The receipts may be required for insurance and to prove

losses claimed on tax returns. Check with an accountant or the IRS about special benefits for persons recovering from fire loss.

Replacing Valuable Documents and Records

If lost or destroyed by the fire, you may be required to replace the following documents:

- Driver's license
- Auto registration
- Bankbooks (checking, savings, etc.)
- Insurance Policies
- Military discharge papers
- Passports
- Birth Certificates
- Death Certificates
- Marriage Certificates
- Divorce Papers
- Social Security Cards
- Credit Cards
- Titles or Deeds
- Stocks and Bonds
- Wills
- Medical Records
- Medicare or Medicaid cards
- Warranties
- Income Tax Records
- Citizenship Papers
- Prepaid Burial Contract
- Animal Registration Papers



Replacing Money

Handle charred money as little as possible. Try to place each bill or partial bill in plastic wrap to help preserve it. If you have over half of the currency intact, you may be able to get it replaced by your bank. Call (866) 575-2361 for assistance.

Fifth District – Richmond
Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond
701 East Byrd Street
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 697-8000

You can mail money by “registered mail, return receipt requested” to:

Bureau of Engraving and Printing
MCD/OFM, Room 344 A
P.O. Box 37048
Washington, DC 20013

Vital Documents/Replacement Contacts

- **Driver’s License** – www.ncdot.gov – (919) 715-7000
- **Government Issued ID** – Contact the issuing authority
- **Insurance Policies** – Insurance agent or company
- **Military Discharge Papers – Department of Veterans Affairs** - 1-800-827-1000 or TDD/ITY 1-800-829-4833
- **Passports** – State Department – Passport Services – 877-487-2778 or 888-874-7793 (24 hours)
- **Birth, Death and Marriage Certificates** – Bureau of Records in the issuing state
- **Social Security or Medicare Cards** - 3511 Shannon Road #200 Durham, NC 27707 (888) 759-3908
- **Medicaid Cards** – NC Division of Social Services – 414 E Main Street Durham, NC 27701 (919) 560-8000
- **Credit Cards** – American Express – 1-800-528-4800, Discover – 1-800-347-2683, MasterCard and VISA contact the issuing financial institution.
- **Titles to Deeds** - Durham County Register of Deeds, 200 E Main Street Durham, NC 27701 (919) 560-0480
- **Stocks and Bonds** – Issuing company or your broker

- **Wills** – Your attorney
- **Income Tax Records** – www.irs.gov - US Internal Revenue Service – 7741 Brier Creek Pkway, Raleigh, NC (919) 401-0300 – 1-800-375-5283
- **Citizenship Papers** – Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, 1-800-375-5283
301 Roycroft Dr. Durham, NC 27703 (919) 998-5800
- **Mortgage Papers** – Lending institution
- **Animal Registration Papers** – www.akc.org/pdfs/masterform.cfm. AKC – (919) 233-9767

Rebuilding

Verify that the contractor rebuilding your home has obtained proper permits and follows all current building, fire and electrical codes for the City of Durham.

Durham County Inspections Department – 101 City Hall Plaza, Durham, NC 27701 – (919) 560-4144

- If you are making repairs, carefully follow the instructions provided with tools and equipment to maintain personal safety at all times. Wear protective equipment such as gloves and goggles. Wear long sleeves and long pants while performing tasks. Always keep children away while operating power tools.
- When planning construction, ask a professional about having an automatic residential fire sprinkler installed during the construction. It is much less expensive to have sprinklers installed during reconstruction rather than installing them once the home is complete.

Smoke alarms are a key part of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so that you can get outside quickly.

- If you are unable to obtain a smoke alarm, the Durham Fire Department will provide a 10-year battery smoke alarm, free of charge. Call to request the smoke alarm to be installed in your home.



Fire Education Officer
2008 East Club Blvd, Durham, NC 27704
(919) 560-4242 extension 19223 or 19242
FireEducation@durhamnc.gov

- Make sure that smoke alarms are installed in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home, including the basement. Smoke alarms should be interconnected. When one sounds, they all sound.

This is an opportune time to update your Family Emergency Plan and replenish essential disaster supplies as you are rebuilding your home and life.

- You will always have comfort knowing that you are prepared and ready for any emergency. Create a home escape plan using the NFPA's home escape plan grid. Practice your home fire escape plan twice a year, making the drill as realistic as possible. Make arrangements in your plan for anyone in your home who has a disability. Be informed about hazards and emergencies that may affect you and your family. Learn where to seek shelter from all types of hazards.
- Consider purchasing homeowner's or renter's insurance.
- Make copies of important documents, such as birth and marriage certificates and insurance policies. Secure your important documents in a safe place using a separate location.

Notes



2021 City of Durham Fire Department

*Microsoft Word-Print Both Sides-Flip Pages on Short Edge-Landscape-Letter
PDF-Print Booklet-Both Sides-Landscape*