



A GUIDE TO RECOVERY

# AFTER THE FIRE



**KANNAPOLIS FIRE DEPARTMENT**



To Whom It May Concern:

Words cannot express how sorry that I, along with the members of Kannapolis Fire Department (KFD), am for the recent fire event that has affected you and your family. We regret having to respond to any structure fire as we know that it is one of the most devastating events faced by members of our community such as yourself.

We realize that the trauma of fire is rapidly surpassed by the many tasks that come afterwards such as securing lodging, replacing personal items, cleaning up, etc.

KFD staff have compiled the following information to help provide some answers to questions that may arise as you begin this process. In addition, the fire investigators and community outreach personnel are here to assist you should you have additional questions or concerns.

In this world, not every moment is a happy one. We met you during one of the worst moments of your life. Now, as the debris cools and the smoke clears, it is my hope that we can provide a little help and comfort to you as you begin the journey of moving forward.

Please accept my heartfelt condolences for this loss.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracy Winecoff", written in a cursive style.

Tracy Winecoff, Fire Chief

# AFTER THE FIRE

Date of the fire: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of the fire: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of the fire: \_\_\_\_\_

Residents of this location: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Incident report number: \_\_\_\_\_

KFD Officer/Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Damage report: (Circle one)

*minimal*

*major*

*destroyed*

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) for any damaged cars, trucks, boats, and motorcycles: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Co. phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Co. policy number: \_\_\_\_\_

# GETTING STARTED

A fire will change your life in many ways and knowing where to begin and who can help you is important. Kannapolis Fire Department (KFD) hopes you find this information helpful.

After experiencing a residential fire, you may find yourself emotionally drained and a little scared or worried. The first time you see your home and your belongings, possibly damaged by smoke and water, the emotional toll may be significant. Once the smoke clears, the fire engines have left, and the neighbors have gone back inside, the process of recovering from this event will begin.

Below is an overview of this “After the Fire” packet and the steps you can take to begin the process of recovery.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- Step 1 Housing Needs
- Step 2 Taking Care of Pets
- Step 3 Plan for Being Displaced
- Step 4 Insurance or Other Assistance
- Step 5 Security & Safety
- Step 6 Replacing Valuable Documents & Records
- Step 7 Financial Information
- Step 8 Community Support
- Step 9 Is Returning Home an Option?
- Step 10 Important Tips to Review



# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 1: Housing Needs

If the fire was severe enough that you cannot stay there, one of the first things to consider is temporary housing. You will find that things not damaged by the fire may still be ruined by smoke and/or may have been damaged by water. Anything you want to save, or reuse will need to be carefully and thoroughly cleaned. Before collecting any items, check with the fire department to make sure it is safe to enter the home and ask them about the condition of your belongings. They will give you an honest opinion about what can be salvaged. If you enter the property, we encourage you to wear a mask and gloves.

KFD can arrange to have the American Red Cross come to your home after the fire and they may assist you with the following needs:

- Temporary housing
- Food
- Medicine
- Eyeglasses
- Clothing
- Other essential items

**American Red Cross**  
(Greater Carolina's Region)  
1-888-580-6620

Provide the following:

- Contact information
- Location of fire
- Name of KFD Officer/Investigator
- Damage report  
- minimal, major or destroyed

### NOTIFY THESE PEOPLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OF YOUR RELOCATION:

- Insurance Agent/Company
- US Postal Service
- Family & Friends
- Employer
- Children's School
- Mortgage Company or Landlord
- Newspapers and magazines
- Delivery Services
- Fire & Police Departments
- Utility Companies

# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 1: Housing Needs

Your home may have suffered extensive smoke and water damage, even if the fire was contained to a single room. It is important to understand the risk to your safety and health even after the fire is out. The soot and dirty water from the fire and firefighting operations could contain toxins so be very careful if you go into your home when touching any fire-damaged items. Even if you think it is not that bad, you should consider staying elsewhere until the damage has been repaired and cleaned.

If you need professional assistance in boarding up your home, you may contact a fire and water restoration company or a general contractor. Ask your insurance agent who is responsible for hiring and paying for this service. Many insurance companies have companies on standby who are available 24/7.

Here in Kannapolis, fire and water restoration company representatives often respond to fire scenes and may want to talk with you immediately. Don't hire anyone before talking to your insurance agent or before checking references.

## STEP 2: Taking care of pets

If you have pets, find and comfort them if you can. Handle them carefully, as scared animals may bite or scratch.

Smoke can damage the lungs of an animal in minutes and sparks can cause painful burns that may stay hidden under your pet's fur. As soon as possible, take your pet to a veterinarian.

Local animal services agencies may be able to help in the event you cannot locate your pets. You can contact someone at Cabarrus County Animal Services and/or Rowan County Animal Shelter for more information.

### FOR PETS:

**Cabarrus County Animal Services**  
**(704) 920-3288**

**Rowan County Animal Shelter**  
**(704) 216-7768**

**244 Betsy Carpenter Place - Concord**

**1465 Julian Road - Salisbury**

# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 3: Plan for being displaced

REMEMBER THE 6 P'S NEEDED FOR A TEMPORARY DISPLACEMENT:

1



People and pets

2



Papers, phone numbers and other important documents

3



Prescriptions, medications, and eyewear (glasses, sunglasses, contacts, etc.)

4



Pictures and irreplaceable memorabilia

5



Personal computers/tablets, USBs, phones, etc.

6



Plastic (credit cards, ATM cards) and cash

## Resources

Fire and Police	911
City of Kannapolis Customer Service	(704) 920-4300
PSNC Energy	(877) 776-2427
US Postal Office - Kannapolis	(704) 933-6337
Cabarrus County Schools	(704) 260-5600
Kannapolis City Schools	(704) 938-1131
Rowan-Salisbury Schools	(704) 636-7500

# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 4: Insurance and Other Assistance

### IF YOU HAVE HOMEOWNER'S OR RENTER'S INSURANCE:

Your insurance agent can be of great assistance after you experience property loss or damage and will provide detailed instructions on protecting the property, conducting an inventory, and contacting fire restoration companies. Steps to take include:

- Notify your insurance agent immediately.
- Ask your agent what to do about the immediate needs of the dwelling, such as covering doors, windows, and other exposed areas, and pumping out water.
- Coordinate with the insurance company before contracting for any service because if you enter into a contact without the knowledge and consent of the insurance company, they may refuse to pay and you may be left with bills to pay that otherwise might have been covered by the insurer.
- Ask your agent what actions are required of you.
- Take photos of the damage, if possible, without endangering yourself or causing further damage.
- Do not throw away any damaged goods until after an inventory is made and all damaged are taken into consideration in developing your insurance claim.



Some policyholders may be required to make an inventory of damaged personal property showing in detail the quantity, description, purchase date, and purchase price of items.



# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 4: Insurance and Other Assistance

### IF YOU DO NOT HAVE INSURANCE:

If you are not insured, try contacting private organizations for aid and assistance. Renters are not usually covered by their landlord's policy and renters are usually responsible for providing insurance coverage for their own personal belongings.

Make sure to check the credibility of any door-to-door contractors that offer their services. Double check that they are licensed and insured and consider checking with the Better Business Bureau before signing any contracts.

**Better Business Bureau of Southern Piedmont and Western N.C.**  
**(704) 927-8611**

Your recovery from a fire loss may be based upon your own resources and help from the community. If you are a member of a religious organization, reach out to your religious leaders as they may be able to provide some assistance.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Cabarrus Health Alliance	(704) 920-1000	300 Mooresville Road Kannapolis 28081
Cabarrus Meals on Wheels	(704) 932-3412	342 Penny Lane Concord 28025
Cooperative Christian Ministry	(704) 786-4709	246 Country Club Drive Concord 28025
Meal on Wheels Rowan	(704) 633-0352	1307 Salisbury Avenue Salisbury 28159
N.C. Baptist Aging Ministries	(877) 506-2226	P.O. Box 338 Thomasville 27361
Rowan County Health Department	(704) 216-8777	1811 E. Innes Street Salisbury 28146
Rowan Helping Ministries	(704) 637-6838	226 N. Long Street Salisbury 28144
The Salvation Army of Cabarrus County	(704) 782-7822	116 Patterson Avenue Concord 28025
The Salvation Army of Rowan County	(704) 636-6491	620 Bringle Ferry Road Salisbury 28144
Community Free Clinic	(704) 782- 0650	528 Lake Concord Rd. NE, Ste. E, 28025

# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 5: Security & Safety

Make sure your property is secure and your residence is protected from the elements, the threat of robbery, or vandalism. Be cautious once it is safe to enter the damaged site. A fire scene contains many hazards that you may not see. Roofs, floors, and ceilings may have sustained more damage than they appear and could collapse after the fire is extinguished.

The fire department will see that utilities (water, electric, gas) are either safe to use or are disconnected before they leave the site. If your residence is uninhabitable, or you must relocate for any reason (either temporarily or for an extended period), please remove your valuables if possible. Protect salvageable items from further damage from the weather or theft.

If you are the owner of the property involved in the fire, board up broken windows and doors or any other possible means of entry from outside. If your insurance company did not send one, search for damage/restoration companies or general contractors that specialize in fire clean up and building security. As mentioned previously, some insurance policies cover the cost of emergency or temporary repairs to protect your property from further damage and theft.

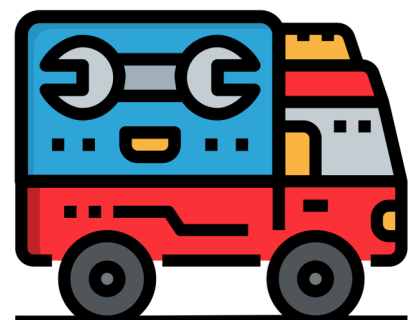
### IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO, LOCATE:

- 
- Driver's Licenses or ID Cards
  - Social Security Cards
  - Passports and Other Identification
  - Cash, Check Books, & Credit Cards
  - Important Financial Documents
  - Insurance Information
  - Medication, Eye Wear, Hearing Aids
  - Valuables, Jewelry, Heirlooms, Photos

**Let Safes Cool Down  
Before Opening!**

### PLEASE NOTE:

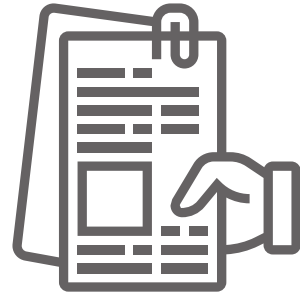
If the utilities were turned off, do NOT attempt to turn them on yourself. Contact the proper utility company to have this done safely.



# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 6: Replacing Documents & Records

Here's a checklist of documents you will need to replace if they have been destroyed, and whom to contact for information regarding the replacement process.



### ITEMS

### WHOM TO CONTACT

● Bank books (Checking, Savings, etc.)	➤ Your bank, ASAP
● Credit cards	➤ Issuing companies, ASAP
● Mortgage papers	➤ Lending institution
● Driver's license, auto registration	➤ Department of Motor Vehicles
● Insurance policies	➤ Your insurance agency
● Military discharge papers	➤ United States Department of Veteran Affairs
● Birth, death, marriage and/or divorce certificates	➤ North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services/Vital Records
● Social security or	➤ Local Social Security office
● Medicare/Medicaid cards	➤ Issuing company
● Stocks and bonds	➤ Your attorney
● Wills	➤ Your doctors' offices
● Medical records	➤ Your accountant or the IRS Center where filed
● Income tax records	
● Citizenship papers	➤ United States Citizenship & Immigration Services

# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 7: Finances

### Money Replacement

Handle burned money as little as possible. Attempt to encase each bill or portion of a bill in plastic wrap for preservation. If at least half of the bill is intact, you can take the remainder of the bill to your local Federal Reserve Bank for replacement. Your local bank may also provide replacements but if not, they can provide you with information on how to obtain replacement bills. You can also contact the U.S. Treasury Department's Mutilated Currency Division at 866-575-2361.

### U.S. Savings Bonds

If your U.S. Savings Bonds have been mutilated or destroyed, contact the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond-Charlotte Office at (704) 358-2100.

Have the following information handy:

- Name that appears on the bonds
- Approximate date or time period when purchased, denominations & number of each.

### Mortgage

Keep paying your mortgage! Even if you have moved out of your home during repairs and you are paying to live elsewhere, you are still responsible for paying your mortgage. Many banks and mortgage companies will insist that you stay current on your mortgage while some may offer you a deferment. Do not count on a deferment and be prepared to continue making your regular payments.

### Taxes

Check with an accountant or the Internal Revenue Service about special benefits for people recovering from fire loss. Also seek professional advice and make sure to keep all your receipts.

### TAX INFORMATION

Cabarrus County Tax Administration	(704) 920-2020
Rowan County Tax Collection Office	(704) 216-8544
N.C. Department of Revenue	1-877-252-3052
U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS)	1-800-829-1040



# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 8: Community Support for Emotional and Physical Stress



After a fire, you and your loved ones may experience a wide range of emotions including anxious feelings, depression, difficulty concentrating, sadness, anger, fatigue, and more. These are common responses to a traumatic event. If you notice persistent feelings of distress or hopelessness or find yourself unable to cope with daily responsibilities and activities, consider seeking support from trained mental health professionals. Some employers and/or health insurance carriers provide coverage for counseling services.

Selfcare is vitally important. As busy as you are returning to normal, take a few minutes each day to relax, read, journal, or engage in another low-risk activity to help your mind and body heal. Physical activity that elevates the heart rate and increases oxygen intake such as going for a walk/run, playing a sport, taking an exercise class, etc. releases substances in the body that improve mood and release stress. The City of Kannapolis has several greenways and parks including the newly renovated downtown area which may offer walking areas and activities for residents.

Children and adolescents can react in a variety of ways when dealing with fire and their ability to cope is highly influenced by how their parents/caregivers deal with crisis. Be open to children when sharing their thoughts, concerns, and ideas. Encourage them to return to their normal routines, including playtime and/or downtime. Watch for signs of distress or inability to cope with daily activities. If detected, consider seeking support from trained mental health professionals who specialize in working with children.

### Community Resources for Emotional & Physical Health

24/7 Lifeline	1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Cabarrus County Schools Psychological Services	(704) 260-5771
Cabarrus Health Alliance	(704) 920-1000
City of Kannapolis Parks & Recreation Information	(704) 920- 4343
Kannapolis City Schools Student Services	(704) 938-1131
NC Baptist Aging Ministries HOPE Line (for those 65+)	(866) 578-4673
RHA Behavioral Health Services	(704) 721-5551
Rowan/Salisbury Schools Student Services	(704) 636-7500

# AFTER THE FIRE



## STEP 9: Cleaning Your Home

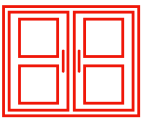
Professional fire and water restoration businesses may be the best source for cleaning and restoring your personal belongings. There are several of these businesses in our community (listed in alphabetical order below).

Diamond Restoration	1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Metrolina Restoration	(704) 260-5771
RestoPro's Restoration	(704) 920-1000
SERVPRO of North Cabarrus County & China Grove	(704) 920- 4343
SERVPRO of South Cabarrus County	(704) 938-1131

If you plan to do some of the cleaning yourself, remember to use gloves, goggles, and/or possibly a mask when doing so.



**Step 1 – Vacuum all surfaces.**



**Step 2 – Seal off the room in which you are working with plastic wrap to keep soot from moving from one room to another. Try to keep windows closed.**



**Step 3 – Monitor your health while cleaning. Take breaks and get fresh air, as needed.**

### ODOR OF SMOKE

Sometimes there is a residual smoke odor from a small fire that is annoying and lingering. Short of a good cleaning of everything in the house, you can place small saucers of household vanilla, wine, vinegar, or activated charcoal around your home to help absorb these odors. Keep children and pets away from these items.

**CHANGE AND CLEAN AIR CONDITIONER/HEATER FILTERS.**

**Remember that the smoke odor may be inside the heating and cooling ducts and may spread the odor every time the air system activates. If so, a fire and water damage company can be hired to clean duct work and deodorize everything in the home.**

# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 9: Cleaning Your Home

### MILDEW

To remove mildew, wash stain with soap and water. Rinse well and dry. If stain remains, use lemon juice and salt, or a solution of household bleach and warm water.

### WALLS

To remove soot and some from painted walls, mix 4 to 6 tablespoons of Tri-Sodium Phosphate, or TSP, and 1 gallon of water. Use rubber gloves and goggles when working with this solution and keep away from children and pets. TSP can be purchased from a local paint store.

To use: Wash a small area at a time working from the floor up, saving the ceilings for last. Rinse thoroughly; do not repaint until completely dry. It is advised to use a smoke sealer (also available at a local paint store) before repainting. If your walls are wallpapered, usually the wallpaper cannot be restored.

### FURNITURE

Do not use chemicals on furniture. A flax oil soap such as Murphy's Oil Soap (available at a local hardware store) is a most efficient product to use on wood, including kitchen cabinets. Do not dry furniture in the sun as the wood will warp and twist out of shape.

### FLOORING

Use a flax oil soap on wood and linoleum floors. It will take 4 to 5 applications. Then strip and re-wax.

### RUGS & CARPETS

Rugs and carpets should be allowed to dry thoroughly. Throw rugs can be cleaned by beating, sweeping, or vacuuming, and then shampooing. Rugs should be dried as quickly as possible. Lay them flat and expose them to warm, circulating, dry air. When cleaning carpeted floors, steam clean, shampoo, and repeat steam cleaning.

### LOCKS & HINGES

Locks, especially iron locks, should be taken apart, wiped with kerosene, and oiled. If locks cannot be removed, squirt machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole and work the knob to distribute the oil.

### MATTRESSES

Reconditioning an inner-spring mattress at home is difficult, if not impossible. Your mattress can probably be renovated by a company that builds and repairs mattresses. If you must use your mattress temporarily, put it out in the sun to dry and then cover it with plastic sheeting. It is almost impossible to get smoke odor out of pillows. Feathers and foam retain odors.

# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 9: Cleaning Your Home

### CLOTHING

Test garments before using any treatment and follow the manufacturer's instructions. To remove smoke odor or soot from white laundry, add ½ cup of ammonia to 2 gallons of water; then rinse in vinegar (use rubber gloves). An effective way to remove mildew from clothing is to wash with soap and warm water, rinse, and then dry in the sun. If the stain has not disappeared, use lemon juice and salt or a diluted solution of household chlorine bleach.

Should you have any questions about the cleaning or preparation of clothing, it is wise to contact a cleaning service.

Take wool, silk, or rayon garments to the dry cleaner as soon as possible.

**WARNING – Do NOT mix ammonia with bleach!**

### LOCAL DRY CLEANING SERVICES

County Cleaners	(704) 933-6480	2001 S. Cannon Blvd. Kannapolis
Dixie Cleaners	(704) 932-7106	307 Jackson Park Rd. Kannapolis
Vogue Dry Cleaners	(704) 633-5411	106 N Long Street, Suite A Salisbury

### ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

Do not use appliances that have been exposed to water or steam until you have them serviced by a professional.

### FOOD

**ALL OPEN FOOD SHOULD BE DISCARDED!**

Wash canned and jarred goods in detergent and water. If labels come off, be sure to mark the contents on the can or jar with a marker. Do not use canned goods that are bulged or rusted. Do not refreeze frozen food that has thawed. If food has been exposed to heat or if there are concerns about its safety, please discard the food in question.

To remove odor from your refrigerator or freezer, place baking soda in an open container or a piece of charcoal inside to absorb odors.

### COOKING UTENSILS

Your pots, pans, and flatware, etc. should be washed with hot, soapy water, rinsed, and then polished with a fine-powdered cleaner. You can polish copper and brass with special polish, salt sprinkled on a piece of lemon, or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated with vinegar.



# AFTER THE FIRE

## STEP 10: Important Tips



Remember that you are not alone; the first responders that work on your fire are there to help guide you.



**Keep Good Notes** - The process to restoring your home and your possessions after fire damage is long and involves lots of details. It is wise to keep a notebook or binder with all your necessary information in one place.



**Beginning immediately, SAVE receipts** for any money you spend as these receipts are important for showing the insurance company what money you have spent related to your fire loss and for verifying losses claimed on your income taxes. **Handling Cash** – If burned, handle with extreme care and as little as possible. Attempt to encase each crisp sheet in a plastic wrap to salvage as much as possible. Take everything to your local bank for advice regarding replacement.



Check with an accountant or the IRS to see about special benefits



**Remember:** Food, beverages, and medicine that were exposed to heat, smoke, soot, and/or water should NOT be consumed. Medicines, especially, can change strength by exposure to heat. If food was in tightly sealed containers, or in airtight refrigerators or freezers, they may be salvageable. It is cheaper to replace the material than to jeopardize your health by taking a chance.



**WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**

# AFTER THE FIRE

## KANNAPOLIS FIRE DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

### Fire Operations

Kannapolis Fire Department's mission is to provide professional service and compassionate care from our family to yours. An additional mission of all the fire service is to save lives and protect property. Firefighting can be a messy job and KFD does our best to minimize damage where we can.

Here are some of the necessary tasks performed when the department responds to a residential fire.

**Checking for Extension** – KFD fire crews open up walls by removing the drywall to look for hidden fires. Fires located in the wall space is very common way for fire to spread. Fire crews “check for extensions” as a way to make sure the fire is out to the best of their ability.

**Ventilation** – KFD fire crews want to get the smoke and heat out of the building. This is done for their safety and ability to do their job. TO you, this may look like broken windows and possibly a hole in your roof. This is done in an effort to improve the air quality and visibility, but it also can create less smoke and heat damage in your home.

**Smoke, Fire, Water Damage** – Crews do their best to reduce the amount of damage caused by smoke, fire, and water where we can. The reality is fire and smoke travels through the house, especially when doors are left open and can cause significant damage even before firefighters arrive. Fire crews work to minimize the damage as best as they can by using the water in calculating ways and sometimes, they are able to use tarps to protect personal belongings.

When we are done and the fire is out, we work hard to leave your home in the best condition possible. It may not always look like that to you but we can assure you that we constantly strive to create the best possible outcome in a terrible and tragic situation.

### Fire Investigations

In accordance with the North Carolina General Statutes and local ordinances, the Kannapolis Fire Department is authorized and responsible for investigating and determining the origin and circumstances of all fires that occur within the City of Kannapolis. This investigation may begin even before the fire has been completely extinguished.

Investigating a fire can be a laborious task that may require digging through debris, conducting interviews, and thorough documentation of the fire scene. Fire investigators may contact you several times during the course of that time. When the investigation is complete, the investigator will attempt to notify the property owners and occupants. However, if you have questions or wish to speak to an investigator please call Kannapolis Fire Department at (704) 920-4260.



# CONTACT INFORMATION:

401 Laureate Way, Kannapolis, NC

704-920-4260

[www.kannapolisnc.gov/FIRE](http://www.kannapolisnc.gov/FIRE)

