



East Sussex
Fire & Rescue Service

After a Fire or Flood

Some help and advice

Alternative formats and translation

Albanian	Me kërkesë, një përmbledhje e këtij dokumenti gjendet edhe në gjuhën shqipe.
Arabic	.ملخص لهذه الوثيقة متاحاً أيضاً باللغة العربية عند الطلب.
Bengali	এই ডকুমেন্টের সারাংশও অনুরোধে বাংলায় পাওয়া যায়।
Cantonese	本文件的摘要也可應要求製作成中文(繁體字)版本。
Farsi	.خلاصه شده این مدرک هم در صورت درخواست به فارسی موجود است.
Russian	Краткое содержание настоящего документа по отдельному запросу предоставляется также на русском языке.
Gujarati	આ દસ્તાવેજનો ટૂંકસાર વિનંતી કરવાથી ગુજરાતીમાં પણ મળી રહેશે.
Kurdish	کورتیهکی ئەم بەلگهیه ههروهها به پێی داواکاری به زمانی کوردی دەس دهکەیت
Portuguese	Encontra-se também disponível um sumário deste documento em Português, a pedido.
Polish	Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany w języku polskim.



0303 999 1000

The following formats are available on request:

Large print

(reformatted and increased to 18 point sans serif font)

CD ROM in plain text format to enable computer 'reader' systems to access and translate the information. Audio tape, audio CD and braille. Pictorial format suitable for people with learning difficulties ('easy read').

For translations of this document, please contact the Publicity and Media Officer.

Tel: 0303 999 1000

Fax: 01323 725574

Minicom: 01323 462003



Advice after a Fire

Your property is your responsibility when the firefighters leave.

If you intend to leave your property unattended:

- Lock all windows and doors, if it is safe to do so.
- If windows/doors require boarding up contact a contractor. Your building insurance will normally pay for this work.
- Remove valuables/important documents, if safe to do so.
- Contact your local Police to make them aware that your property will be empty, or access unsecured.

Gas, electricity and water supplies

Utilities may have been affected and been turned off or disconnected. Under no circumstances should you attempt to reconnect or turn on utilities yourself unless qualified to do so. You must contact the gas and electricity supply companies to arrange reconnection.

Rented accommodation

If you are a tenant contact your landlord or managing agent. It is their responsibility to arrange all repair work.

Is the building safe to re-enter?

Do not re-enter a building until informed by the Fire Officer that it is safe to do so. You will be advised of any apparent defects.

In cases of severe structural damage, a Local Authority Building Inspector may be required to advise on the safety of the building.

Our firefighters may have opened up areas to find hidden seats of fire and also to vent large volumes of very hot smoke and gases to reduce the spread of fire. They may also do this to make sure there is no fire left undetected which could flare up later.

Electrical appliances

Do not use affected electrical appliances until cleaned and checked by a qualified person.

Asbestos containing materials

Many common building materials contain asbestos and this is harmless unless disturbed. During a fire, these materials can be damaged resulting in the release of asbestos fibres into the air. Asbestos can be harmful to your health if inhaled. If you suspect that an asbestos containing material has been damaged seek advice from the Local Authority Environmental Health Officer or the Health & Safety Executive. Artex manufactured in the UK up to 1985 may contain asbestos.

Safety with pets

Injured animals, including those obviously affected by smoke, should be taken to a vet for prompt treatment. The RSPCA or PDSA charities offer help and advice.

Chimney fires

The surrounding brickwork and plaster may remain warm for several hours after a chimney fire. Some noise may be heard due to the cooling down effect.

To prevent further damage:

- Place a metal bucket or large metal pan part filled with water within the fireplace or hearth to catch any falling debris from the chimney.
- Place a fire guard in front of the fire.
- Allow the chimney to cool for at least 24 hours before lighting a fire.
- Have the chimney swept on regular basis thereafter - consult the National Association of Chimney Sweeps, www.nac.org.uk

Do you feel unwell?

Contact your doctor and your local hospital A&E department if you suffer the after effects of fumes, smoke inhalation, or shock caused by the incident and if you feel unwell at any time after a fire or flood.

Sufferers from allergies, breathing problems or asthma should keep away from the property until air quality has improved. If in doubt seek medical advice.



Advice after a Flood

Avoid direct contact with any contaminated water (e.g. sewage and storm water). Wash your hands thoroughly before touching food and protect any cuts with a waterproof plaster. Persons with a weak immune system, particularly the elderly and young infants, should be especially careful. In cases of severe flooding, the structural stability of buildings or garden walls could have been affected. If in doubt, seek advice from your Local Authority Environmental Health or Building Control Officer, or request that your landlord arranges a safety inspection.

Safety with electrical supplies

Damaged or wet electrical wiring or appliances must be isolated and checked by a competent person before reconnection. Remember, water conducts electricity.

Water damage - what to expect

If your property has been flooded, it is essential for you to identify the type of water involved, as this decides the appropriate action required to get things back to normal as quickly as possible. If water escapes from within a property ask yourself, has it come from a clean source, like a water pipe, or supply hose to a washing machine? If it has, it is clean water. However, any water from the sewage system, heating system or from outside the property should be regarded as contaminated.

If the water is clean Dealing with clean water is simpler than contaminated water and for small leaks you may be able to contain the situation yourself. Remember, you may not be able to detect trapped moisture under flooring, wall cavities, so will require the services of a specialist fire and flood company. Insurers will normally pay for this work.

If the water is contaminated You must take great care with personal and food hygiene if your property has been flooded with contaminated water. Thorough cleaning and decontamination is essential. Insurers will normally pay for this work.

Emergency Tips

The harmful effect of water is significantly reduced by prompt action. Specialist firms can help you with their appropriate equipment and expert knowledge, getting the building back into normal use faster. Your insurance company will usually pay for the work.

You can do this:

- Keep out of rooms where ceilings are weakened or wet - older ceilings may be lath and plaster, which does not sag, is very heavy, and can suddenly fall.
- Punch small holes in sagging plasterboard ceilings to release trapped water - place pans or buckets beneath. Note: Older artex may contain asbestos.
- Keep the freezer closed if electricity is likely to be restored in under 24 hours and equipment is not affected by water.
- Open drawers and cabinet doors to air dry.
- Remove valuable paintings and art objects to a safe, dry place.
- If evidence of condensation is present, open windows to assist drying. But don't leave building insecure.
- Place damaged photographs and documents in plastic bags and freeze for later inspection.

Emergency Work

Your insurance company will lead you through the cleaning process and provide specialist contractors to carry out repairs and restoration to your property. In extreme cases they will source emergency accommodation.

When you contact your insurance company, remember that both contents and building insurers may need to be informed. Don't worry if you cannot find your insurance details, as there will be a record linked to your postcode.

Loss adjusters and loss assessors

The insurer may send a loss adjuster or claims advisor to inspect damage to the property and/or its contents, and to agree the claim with you. They represent your insurers and are appointed by them to assess the extent of the damage. You will not be charged for this. Don't dispose of anything, including appliances that may have caused the incident, until authorised to do so.

Take photographs

Photograph damage, including items put outside by our firefighters.

Rented accommodation

If so, then contact the building owner, landlord or their agent, or the management company, and inform them of the event.

Commercial leaseholders

You will need to check the terms of your lease, which will define your responsibility for the property. You are advised to inform the owner who may be responsible for the building insurance.

If you have no insurance

Support agencies may be able to help you if you do not have insurance and have immediate hardship. See useful contacts.



Further Help

Useful contacts

Citizens Advice Bureau

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau can offer advice and telephone numbers of other sources of help. Visit the CAB on www.adviceguide.org.uk

Assistance from your local Authority

Your local Environmental Health or Building Control Officer will assist you if you have concerns about building stability or pollution.

Emergency clothing & bedding

Contact the Department for Work & Pensions, Social Services or British Red Cross.

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

20 Upperton Road

Eastbourne

BN21 1EU

Telephone: 0303 999 1000

Fax: 01323 725 574

Minicom: 01323 462003

Email: enquiries@esfrs.org

Keep yourself safe

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service can offer guidance for future safety in the home. Here are a few steps to think about yourself:

- Make an escape plan and involve everybody.
Plan and discuss escape routes and plan what to do if trapped upstairs.
- Try out your plan with your family; make sure everyone knows what they must do. How long does it take for everyone to get up and get out. Time it.
- Switch off and unplug electrical appliances when not in use.
- Close internal doors at night.
- Put out candles and cigarettes properly.
- Keep keys for windows readily available in each room - especially upstairs.
- Keep entrance door keys near exit, but hidden out of reach of burglars.
- Inform guests where all keys are kept and about your escape plan.
- Install and regularly check the operation of smoke alarms. Make sure that the alarms are BS approved. Always follow the installation instructions.
- Never take out smoke alarm batteries to use in toys.

Fitting smoke alarms in your home gives you the earliest possible warning of fire and that provides vital time for you and your family to get out, stay out and call the Fire & Rescue Service out.

If you live in a block of flats make sure you know the evacuation policy for your building. Further information can be found on our website: <http://www.esfrs.org/your-safety/fire-safety-at-home/planning-a-safe-escape/>

We can come and give you a Home Safety visit, which provides important information on safety in the home, just call us on 0800 177 7069.

Flood risk information

- Contact Floodline to register for flood warnings (this service is provided FREE)
- Make sure you understand the flood warnings and codes and actions.

For your useful numbers and information

Contents

Insurance company: _ _ _ _ _

Insurance phone number: _ _ _ _ _

Policy number: _ _ _ _ _

Claim reference: _ _ _ _ _

Date of incident: _ _ _ _ _

Date reported incident: _ _ _ _ _

For your useful numbers and information

Building

Insurance company: _ _ _ _ _

Insurance phone number: _ _ _ _ _

Policy number: _ _ _ _ _

Claim reference: _ _ _ _ _

Date of incident: _ _ _ _ _

Date reported incident: _ _ _ _ _

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For your notes

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East Sussex
Fire & Rescue Service



www.esfrs.org



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