



After a fire, *flood or natural disaster* What to do next

Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service
www.fire.nt.gov.au



After a fire, flood or natural disaster, there are some important things you need to do

Nothing can really prepare you for the impact of a fire or other emergency on your family and property. Even a small fire or flood can make you feel helpless and unsure of what to do next. This is entirely understandable and normal.

The Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service have produced this brochure to give you some guidance on the important things you need to do now that the unimaginable has happened. While understanding and accepting what has happened will be difficult, there are some things you can do, starting now, to begin rebuilding your life and your home.



After a fire or other emergency



At the scene



Your reaction



Fire prevention



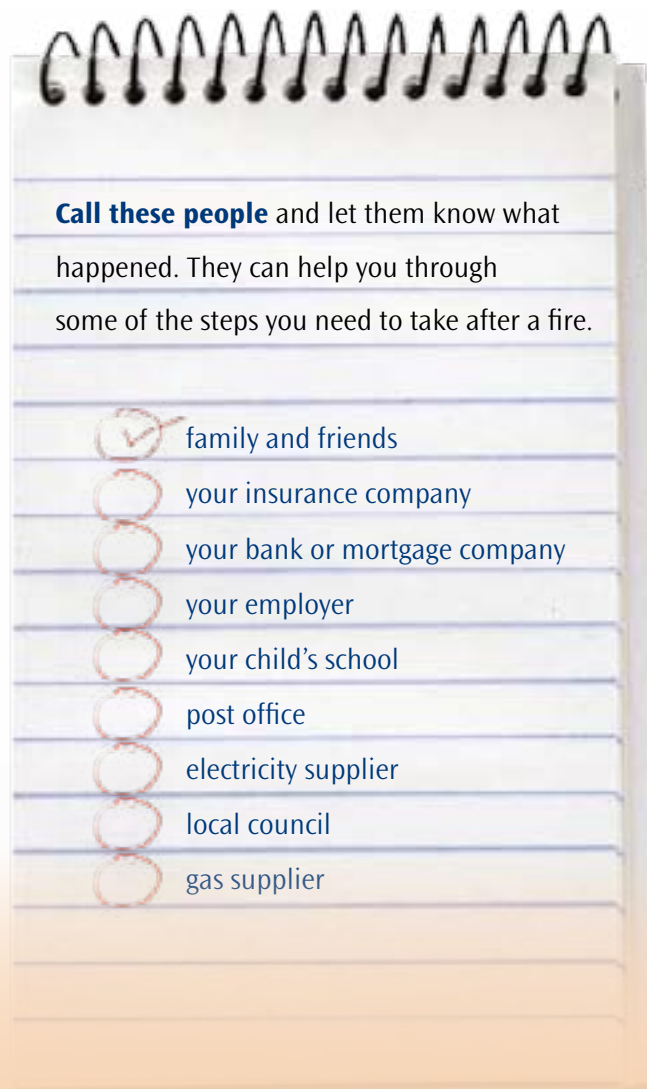
After a flood or natural disaster



Restoring property from fire damage

Who to call after a fire or other emergency

There are organisations and people who will help you through the process. Your starting point is to secure and protect your property.



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If you are a tenant

Contact your landlord as soon as possible.

If you are a public housing tenant contact
Territory Housing on (08) 8999 8860



If you don't have insurance ...

Depending on the seriousness of the damage, it may take some time to get back on your feet.

Who to contact for help:

Centrelink	132850
Territory Housing	8999 8860
The Salvation Army	8944 6000
Somerville Community Service	8920 4100
Australian Red Cross	
Your church	
Local support agencies	

It may be possible to stay with family or friends.
Other options are to contact Territory Housing or the Salvo Care Line.



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Find out what you are required to do, such as secure the house and make a list of damaged items (see next page).

Talk to your insurance company before arranging any repairs.

Important notes to remember for claim purposes:

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At the scene, remember



Do not enter your damaged house unless you have to and have been advised it is safe to do so.

The Fire Service will check water, electricity and gas supplies and either arrange to have them disconnected or advise you what action to take.

If you can't enter your home, you'll need to arrange accommodation. You'll probably need to stay with family, friends or in a hotel for at least one night, and longer if the house has been seriously damaged. If you are insured see page 6 for additional information.

When your house is safe and you are allowed back

Try to find your:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> identification | <input type="checkbox"/> insurance information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> eye glasses | <input type="checkbox"/> medication information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hearing aid | <input type="checkbox"/> wallet and valuables |
- ☐ If the house is too badly damaged to live in, board up openings to discourage trespassers.
 - ☐ You may need to arrange security patrols to protect it from burglary.
 - ☐ Keep receipts for expenses resulting from the fire, such as accommodation or clothes.
 - ☐ Get supplies of medicine or eye glasses.

Your reaction is normal



It is normal to feel unsettled and disrupted for a while.

You may well be able to overcome any problems yourself but don't be afraid to ask for help.

After a crisis, it is often easier to talk to someone who is not involved and is trained to listen and point you in the right direction to find the help or services you need.



You'll want to prevent a fire happening again



After experiencing the devastating effects of fire first hand, you'll want to prevent it ever happening to your family and property again.

Smoke alarms save lives and sprinklers reduce the effects of fire.

Smoke alarms are inexpensive and can be purchased from your local hardware shop or supermarket. They should be installed in all bedrooms, hallways and living areas.

All fire services in Australia recommend photo-electric smoke alarms when installing or replacing existing smoke alarms.

For more information visit www.fire.nt.gov.au



For additional protection consider installing interconnected smoke alarms connected to 240 volt mains power.

If the damage caused by fire in your home will mean a full or partial rebuild, it is worthwhile discussing the installation of home sprinklers with your insurance company, architect or builder. Home sprinklers provide 24/7 protection of your family's lives, home and contents and in most cases a sprinkler will put out a fire before you even knew you had one.

Installing home sprinklers into a new house or adding them as part of renovations is a good idea. Home sprinklers can be part of the domestic plumbing system, using the same water that feeds your kitchen taps and laundry. The average house would need between seven and ten sprinkler heads



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Cleaning up after the fire



Depending on the extent of damage, you may need to hire professional fire and water damage restorers.

Check the Yellow Pages.

Food Safety

- ☐ Discard food, drinks and medicine exposed to the fire, smoke or water. They are not safe.
- ☐ Wash tins and jars in detergent and water.
Don't eat tinned food if the tin has bulged or rusted.
Don't refreeze thawed food. It's not safe.

Kitchen utensils and electrical appliances

- ☐ Wash cooking pots and pans with detergent and water, then rinse and polish with a fine powdered cleaner.
- ☐ Have all electrical appliances checked by a qualified service person before you use them.

Cash

- ☐ Damaged notes and coins will usually have some value. For information on damaged cash, contact the Reserve Bank in Sydney on 1800300288 or www.rba.gov.au



Furniture and furnishings

- ☐ Rugs and carpets should be dried as fast as possible because they will begin to rot. A carpet dealer or professional carpet cleaner can give specific advice.
- ☐ Scrub furniture with cleaner and a brush and dry thoroughly in the shade where there is good ventilation to stop mould and mildew. Wooden furniture must be dried away from heat and sun or it will warp. Remove drawers to dry and to stop them sticking.

Leather and books

- ☐ Wipe leather goods with a damp cloth, then a dry cloth. Stuff purses and shoes with newspaper to retain shape. Leather goods should be dried away from the heat and sun. When dry, clean with saddle soap.
- ☐ Wet books must be taken care of as soon as possible. The best method to save wet books is to freeze them in a vacuum freezer. This special freezer will remove the moisture without damaging the pages. In the meantime, put them in a household freezer to stop the pages sticking together and rotting until you can find a vacuum freezer.

A local librarian or book restorer may be able to give you more specific advice.

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Walls, floors and ceilings

- ☐ Clean soot and smoke from walls and floors with mild soap or detergent, or the following cleaner.

Wear rubber gloves.

4-6 tsp emulsifying solvent cleaner (this substance is an effective cleaning agent that can be purchased from a hardware or paint shop)

1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach

4 litres warm water

Rinse with clean warm water, then dry thoroughly.

Clothing

- ☐ The smell of smoke and soot can sometimes be cleaned from clothing. Follow the care instructions on the garment, or try the cleaning solution above on clothes that can be bleached. Mix solution well then add your clothes.

Rinse with clear water and dry thoroughly.

- ☐ Wear rubber gloves.

For more cleaning tips go to –

www.mfs.sa.gov.au/site/community_safety/home_fire_safety_information_sheets_domestic.jsp

After a flood or natural disaster



If your property has flooded contact your local council and/or insurance company to have your house inspected and the damage assessed.

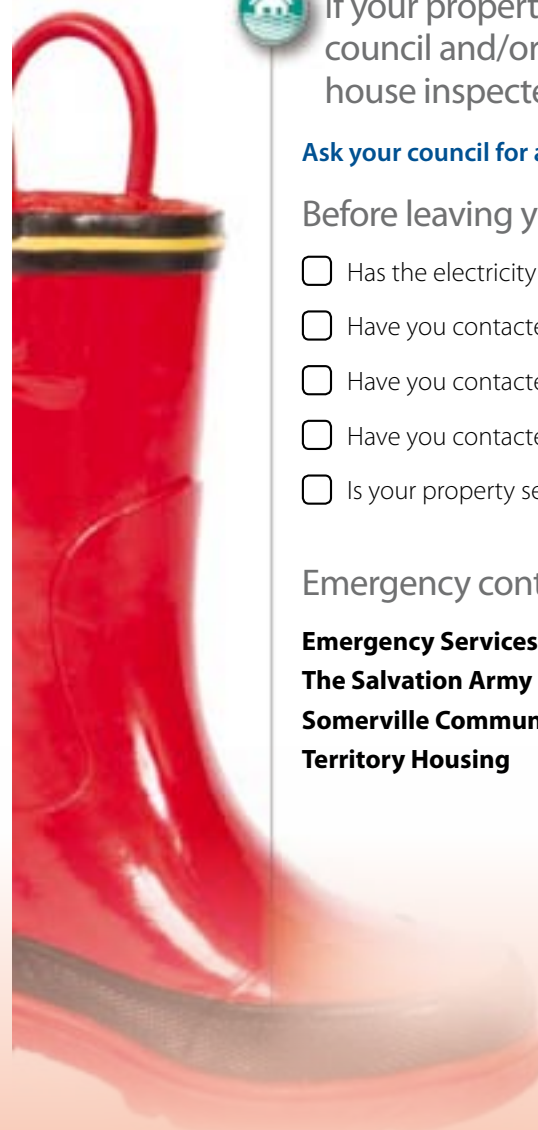
Ask your council for advice on cleaning up debris safely.

Before leaving your damaged home checklist:

- ☐ Has the electricity and/or gas been turned off?
- ☐ Have you contacted your insurance company (if you have one)?
- ☐ Have you contacted your landlord?
- ☐ Have you contacted people who can help you?
- ☐ Is your property secure?

Emergency contact details:

Emergency Services	8922 3636
The Salvation Army	8922 6000
Somerville Community Services	8920 4100
Territory Housing	8999 8860



Notes

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Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. At the bottom of the page, there is a solid orange-colored band or margin. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

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Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. At the bottom of the page, there is a decorative border consisting of a repeating pattern of orange and yellow squares. The overall appearance is that of a clean, unused piece of stationery or a template for writing.

Notes

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