



- 
- After a fire, items inside of the structure can be badly damaged and contain harmful contaminants. Also, floors and walkways may be weakened due to charring or water damage. Check with the fire department prior to reentering the building.
  - There are certain techniques used by professional fire fighters to ensure that a fire is fully extinguished. Holes in walls, the roof, and the ceiling, possibly in undamaged areas, are a few examples.
  - If you have insurance, whether it is homeowners or renters, you should call your insurance company as soon as possible and notify the landlord or property manager. If you are uninsured, you can obtain the phone number to the local Red Cross on the contacts page of this brochure. You may also want to contact the Salvation Army, religious organizations, community groups, and nonprofit crisis-counseling centers.
  - A copy of the fire incident report will help you in talking with your insurance company and landlord about the incident. A fire report can be obtained by calling Lexington County Fire Service Headquarters @ 803.785.8287.
  - You need to contact the mortgage company in regards to the fire.
  - During the course of a fire, the fire department may ask your utility services to come out and disconnect services such as water, electric, or gas. These services should not be reconnected without evaluation by a professional.
  - Any food, beverage, or medicine should not be consumed. The American Red Cross will assist in obtaining any emergency prescriptions.
  - Pets should be taken to a local veterinary office after a fire for a checkup to identify any hidden injuries or burns. If your pet was lost during the fire, obtain the phone number from the contacts page for the Lexington County Animal Control Service and advise them of the situation and a description of your pet.
  - The IRS may have special benefits for people recovering from fire loss. You can find their number on the contacts page. Also, keep any receipts that you obtain during your rebuilding phase. The IRS may need these to prove your loss on your tax return.
  - Try to find valuable documents and records. Copies can be obtained through either the state, county, or federal government.
    - Driver's License
    - Auto Registration
    - Bank Books
    - Insurance Policies
    - Military Discharge Papers
    - Passports
    - Birth, Death, Marriage, and Divorce Certificates and Papers
    - Social Security and Medicare Cards
    - Credit Cards
    - Titles to Deeds
    - Stocks and Bonds
    - Wills
    - Medical Records
    - Warranties
    - Tax Records
    - Citizenship Papers
    - Animal Registrations
    - Mortgage Papers