

Temporary Accommodation

If you have doubts about the suitability of your accommodation after the fire, contact your local housing and social services department regarding alternative accommodation, or your local Police who will endeavour to make contact on your behalf.

Insurance

At the earliest date

- Contact your insurance company, inform them of the incident, obtain and complete a claims form.
- They may wish to inspect your property before anything is moved.
- Return the form to the address shown on the claims form.
- If you are un-insured, you may be able to get financial help or furniture, from your local Social Security Office.
- If you have money that is partially burned, it can be taken to a bank for replacement.
- If you rent or lease the property, you may be required to contact the landlord or his agent.

Power Supplies

Electricity

If your internal supply has been affected, your Electricity Board will have to re-connect the supply after a qualified electrician has repaired it (even if only a temporary circuit) and notified the Board of completion. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RE-CONNECT OR TURN ON THE SUPPLY YOURSELF.**

Gas

If any of your gas appliances have been affected by fire, the Fire & Rescue Service or British Gas will turn off or disconnect your supply. It is important that either British Gas or an approved installer inspects and rectifies any problems in the system before any attempt is made to re-connect or turn on the supply.

Water

A plumber will be required if your water supply has been affected. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO TURN ON YOUR WATER UNTIL YOUR SYSTEM HAS BEEN ATTENDED BY THE PLUMBER.**

Temporary lighting or heating units are potentially dangerous, especially if they have been unused or stored for some time. Do not forget to have these units checked by the manufacturer or qualified dealer before use. If you are unsure of the precautions to take when positioning or filling these appliances, contact the Fire Safety Advisor at your local fire station. Don't forget when using these appliances to read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

The Clean up

Carpets & Rugs

A wet/dry vacuum or water extractor cleaning machine is excellent for this job. It can be rented from various shops - look at the Yellow Pages. Allow them to dry out thoroughly.

Clothing

ALWAYS READ THE LABEL. If the clothing can withstand bleaching it can be treated with the following mixture: half a cup of domestic bleach to 2 gallons of water. Rinse in vinegar (wear kitchen gloves). If the clothes require dry cleaning - contact a specialist shop for advice.

Smells

This is a complex problem due to the materials used in the home and those which have been involved in the fire. Contact a specialist cleaning company, or for less severe smells, use a room deodorising product.

Ceilings & Walls

Unpapered walls may be washed down using a mild soap or detergent. Wash a small area at a time. Rinse with clean water immediately. Wallpaper cannot be effectively cleaned unless it is washable. Use a cloth soaked in a mild detergent and wrung out. Clean with water and repaste edges of paper if necessary.

Furniture

For upholstered furniture, a wet/dry vacuum can be used or contact a specialist cleaning company from Yellow Pages. White spots on wood may be removed by turpentine or ammonia, then dry and polish.

Food

IF IN DOUBT - THROW IT OUT. Fresh food should generally be thrown out if contaminated by smoke. Food in glass jars should be discarded if the jar is cracked and has been subjected to heat. Tinned food should be thrown out if the tin has bulged or been subjected to heat.

The Red Cross

What is Fire Victim Support?

The Fire Victim Support Service is designed to meet the needs of people who have suffered damaged to their home following a fire, flood or similar incident.

This free service is delivered by specially trained British Red Cross volunteers, who work in co-operation with the Local Fire & Rescue Service. They use an adapted vehicle to assist them in providing practical and emotional support to the victims of the incident. They will arrive at the scene within 90 minutes of being called by the Fire & Rescue Service.

What Type Of Service Is Available?

Immediate temporary shelter in the Fire Victim Support Vehicle

Assistance in seeking temporary accommodation

Emotional Support

Sign-posting to other organisations

Support with the care of children and pets

Use of shower and toilet facilities

Provision of toiletries

Clothing

Light refreshments

Use of a telephone

Use of a camera to assist with insurance claims

First aid

The Fire Victim Support Service relies upon the generosity of the local community. If you would like to support the service by making a donation or becoming a volunteer, or want more information, please contact your local British Red Cross Branch.

Useful Numbers

Local numbers available in Yellow Pages or the Telephone Directory

Social Services

Department of Social Security

Your Insurance Company

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Salvation Army

Electricity Company

Gas Supplier

Water Company

Council Housing Department

Police

Age Concern