



# After we leave

Advice and guidance after an emergency in residential properties and commercial premises



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

We are sorry you have experienced an emergency. Please read this leaflet carefully as it contains information that you may find helpful.

**Alternatively, you can contact**

London Fire Brigade (LFB) on: 020 8555 1200

**For business continuity advice**

in commercial premises, ask to speak to someone from Regulatory Fire Safety.

**For advice on a fire or flood in your home**

ask for the contact details of your local fire station.

**Information is also available online at**

[london-fire.gov.uk](http://london-fire.gov.uk)

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## **YOUR HOME**

- If your home is unsafe for any reason, do not attempt to enter any restricted areas as it may be dangerous to do so.
- Follow any instructions given to you by officers in the local authority, the police or fire services.
- If anyone with authority has implemented restricted access to any part of your home, ask permission before entering those areas or removing any items.

## **COMMERCIAL PREMISES**

- Do not be tempted to use the premises until it has been cleared and made safe.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that fire alarms, fire doors and fire extinguishers have been checked or replaced and are in full working order.
- If you are still using the premises, you must have a means of escape in the event of another fire.
- Having a good business continuity plan will help to prepare you for emergencies. Further advice is available from: [www.london-fire.gov.uk/business-continuity-checklist.asp](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/business-continuity-checklist.asp). Inspecting officers from LFB's local fire safety teams can also provide you with detailed knowledge and advice on fire safety law and how to understand it.
- Please note, failure to comply with statutory legislation in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 may result in criminal proceedings.

## **EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION**

- If your home is very badly damaged it may not be safe to stay there. Contact your local housing or social services departments who may be able to arrange emergency temporary accommodation for you. If it is out-of-hours the local authority or council will have an emergency out-of-hours contact number.
- The LFB officer in charge of the fire can also ask the British Red Cross to provide a Fire Victim Support Vehicle with trained volunteers who will be able to give you immediate practical and emotional support.

## **CRISIS SUPPORT**

Local councils are now responsible for providing help and support if you are in a position of immediate hardship. You don't have to be claiming benefits to apply. The type of help can vary as there are no set rules about what they have to provide. Contact your local council for more information: [www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council](http://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council)

## **HEALTH**

- If you have concerns about your health or the health of anyone else involved in the incident, dial 111 NHS Choices non-emergency number for advice.
- Return any medicines that may have been damaged or contaminated to your pharmacy for disposal.

## **ELECTRICITY, GAS, WATER SUPPLIES**

- Tell your utility suppliers what has happened as soon as you can.
- Do not attempt to turn on any services that have been shut off until they have been checked by a qualified person and it is safe to do so.
- Do not use any electrical appliances that have come into contact with fire or water until they have been checked and approved for use by a qualified electrician.

## **SECURITY**

If you are not able to remain in your home, ensure that all windows and doors are locked. If it is safe to do so, remove valuables.

## **ARSON OR DELIBERATE FIRES**

- If it looks like the fire was caused deliberately, the police will be notified and specialist fire investigators may also attend the scene.
- Do not enter any sealed off areas.
- It is your responsibility to make the property or business premises secure once the emergency services have left. This will also help to reduce the risk of an arson attack.

## **CLEANING AND DAMAGE**

- Flames, hot gases, smoke and water can all cause damage. Smoke stains can be removed from some painted walls and ceilings using sugar soap. Specialist companies can help to provide equipment such as dehumidifiers or wet vacuum cleaners or arrange for help to recover documents and valuables.
- Check for details in your local phone directory or use internet services provided in your local library.
- Food may have been damaged or contaminated by the incident; if in doubt don't take any risks and dispose of it safely.

## **INSURANCE**

- Always contact your insurance company as soon as you can and follow their advice on the actions you need to take.
- If your policy has been damaged you can ask them to send you a replacement copy.
- You will need to complete a claims form and they may wish to inspect your home or business premises before anything is moved, cleaned up or thrown away.
- Keep receipts, make a list and if possible take photos of important damaged household items or stock and merchandise.

## **AFTER A VEHICLE FIRE**

- Some vehicle fires produce toxic by-products that are unsafe if they come into contact with the skin. Wear rubber gloves if you need to remove any items and remember parts of the vehicle may also be sharp and dangerous.
- Consult your insurers before arranging for disposal. Most councils offer a vehicle collection service.

## **AFTER A FLOOD**

- Our firefighters can use equipment to pump out water and do some salvage work, but the remainder of the drying and clearing up is your responsibility.
- The cost of on-going work may be covered by your insurance policy.
- Consult a qualified plumber if any water pipes have been damaged and need to be repaired.
- Flood water may be hazardous to health. Don't take risks, if you suspect that any food or medicines have been contaminated make sure these are disposed of safely.
- Contaminated water may make goods unusable, seek advice from your local authority environmental health department.

## **AFTER A CHIMNEY FIRE**

- Place a metal bucket, half filled with water, in the fireplace to catch any falling debris.
- Keep the fireguard in place.
- Leave for a minimum of 24 hours and ensure it is swept before re-use.
- Always fit a Carbon Monoxide detector in the room when using solid fuels.

## **FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL PREMISES**

Fire Risk Assessments should be reviewed regularly and especially after a fire or flood. Inform the person in control of the property if, for example, any of the following are of concern:

### **Means of escape**

- Escape routes may have been compromised and become unsafe to use due to a combination of fire, structural damage or obstructions.
- The alternative means of escape, (stairs/fire exits) have become insufficient for the number of occupants.
- Smoke detection systems are no longer working.
- There are not excessive travel distances with to places of relative safety (ie. lobbied areas etc).

## **Detection**

- Review if there were any contributory factors such as large amounts of combustible material.
- The fire developed unnoticed eg. inadequate means of detection and warning.
- Evidence of rapid fire growth or lack of separation of fire resisting walls/ doors, voids or unprotected vertical shafts.

## **Prevention**

- If there was inappropriate use of naked flames for any purpose including acts of arson.
- Signs that electrical installations or equipment are in poor condition, overloaded, inadequately ventilated or showing any signs of fire/water damage.
- Combustible materials likely to come into contact with an ignition source eg, hazardous chemicals or cylinders.

## **JUVENILE FIRESETTERS INTERVENTION SCHEME (JFIS)**

LFB work with children up to the age of 18 who have carried out any type of fire play or firesetting. To find out more information about the scheme, visit [www.london-fire.gov.uk](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk) or email [firesetters@london-fire.gov.uk](mailto:firesetters@london-fire.gov.uk).

## **LFB EQUIPMENT**

LFB equipment has been left at your home or business premises please contact the Brigade to arrange collection.

## **HOME FIRE SAFETY VISITS**

LFB offers a free home fire safety service to all residents, officers can visit your home and provide fire safety advice suited to your needs and your home. They can also fit smoke alarms if required, and specialist alarms for people with visual or hearing impairments can also be fitted. If you have not already had a visit please Freephone 0800 028 4428 or apply online at: [www.london-fire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit.asp](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit.asp)





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