What to Do in the First 24 Hours After a Fire

Emergency: 877 631 7576 mrrestore.com

Safety first: Only enter the property after the fire department declares it safe. If anyone has trouble breathing, chest pain, or dizziness, seek medical attention immediately. When in doubt, wait outside and call a professional.

RED — Immediate Actions

0–2 hours

- [ ] Wait for clearance from the fire department before reentry; watch for structural hazards, hotspots, and electrical risks.
- [ ] Call your insurer to open a claim and request your claim number. Ask about temporary housing coverage (ALE).
- [ ] Arrange emergency board up/tarping to secure doors, windows, and the roof to prevent weather and unauthorized entry.
- [ ] If safe, shut off utilities (gas/water/electric). Do not turn them back on until inspected by qualified personnel.
- [ ] Document the scene: take wide and close up photos/videos of all affected rooms, exterior, and personal property.
- [ ] Care for people and pets first: medication, food, water, warm clothing, and safe shelter; avoid smoke contaminated areas.
- [ ] Avoid touching soot covered surfaces. Soot is acidic and spreads; wear gloves/mask if you must retrieve essentials.

ORANGE — Next Steps

2–12 hours

- [ ] Contact a licensed restoration firm for emergency mitigation (water extraction, debris removal, odor/soot containment).
- [ ] Request initial written estimate + scope of work; confirm they are IICRC certified and can bill your insurance directly.
- [ ] Move unaffected valuables to a clean area; separate salvageable from non salvageable items for the adjuster.
- [ ] Ventilate when approved by firefighters/contractors; use air movers/HEPA filtration if provided by professionals.
- [ ] Do NOT wash painted walls, carpet, or upholstered furniture yourself—improper cleaning can set soot permanently.
- [ ] Secure critical documents: IDs, insurance policy, titles, financial records; store in a clean, dry folder.

YELLOW — Within 24 Hours

Within 24 hours

- [ ] Meet your adjuster (virtual or on site). Share your photos/videos and an initial itemized list of losses.
- [ ] Ask about approvals for packout/contents cleaning, textiles restoration, and electronics evaluation.

YELLOW — Within 24 Hours (cont.)

Within 24 hours

- ☐ Begin a loss journal: dates, calls, decisions, and expenses; save all receipts for meals, lodging, and supplies (ALE).
- ☐ Plan temporary housing if the home is uninhabitable (hotel/short term rental); confirm coverage limits with your insurer.
- ☐ Discuss deodorization and corrosion control timeline (soot can corrode metals and electronics within hours).
- ☐ Coordinate utility inspections before reactivation; schedule licensed electrician/HVAC/plumber as needed.

This checklist is general information, not a substitute for instructions from fire officials, licensed contractors, or your insurer. Follow local laws and safe
y guidance at all times.