

Cleaning and Salvage

► General

FOOD, BEVERAGES AND MEDICATIONS

Any food, beverages and/or medicines that were exposed to heat, smoke or fumes should not be consumed. Medicines, especially, can change strength by exposure to heat. Please check with your doctor first before taking these medicines.

If food was in tightly closed or sealed containers, or in airtight refrigerators or freezers, it may be salvageable.

Remember, it is better to replace these items than to jeopardize your health by taking a chance. When in doubt, dispose of food and medicines appropriately.

HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

- ❑ Go to www.portcoquitlam.ca/waste for information about disposal alternatives.
- ❑ ReGeneration provides information on special waste recycling, including flammable items and chemicals, at www.regeneration.ca.

► After a Fire

Your insurance policy will likely cover cleaning and restoration services. Some general cleaning and salvage tips are provided below.

While you are cleaning, seal off the room in which you are working with plastic wrap to keep soot

FIRE ODOUR

- ❑ Short of a good cleaning of everything in the house, try placing small saucers of household vanilla, wine vinegar, or activated charcoal around your home to help absorb odours.
- ❑ Restoration companies can also get rid of the odours for you. If insured, consult your insurance company for assistance.

If you don't know if your food or medicine is safe to consume, dispose of it appropriately

CHARCOAL

Charcoal briquettes may spontaneously ignite when damp. They should be disposed of or stored in a non-combustible container with a lid, away from other combustibles.

GENERAL DUST, SOOT AND MILDEW REMOVAL

- ❑ Vacuum all dry surfaces to loosen dirt.
- ❑ Change/clean air-conditioner/heater filters.
- ❑ Wash mildew stains with soap and water, rinse well and dry. If stains remain, use lemon juice and salt, or a solution of household chlorine bleach and warm water.

Warning: do not use gasoline or other flammable liquids for cleaning.

from moving from one location to another, and try to keep windows closed.

You are strongly advised to use a dust mask and other protection (e.g. gloves and glasses) before attempting the following.

- ❑ Remember that the smoke odour is also inside the heating and cooling ductwork, and you get a fresh blast of it when the air system is turned on.
- ❑ If the odour does not go away in about a week, you may want to contact a cleaning service specializing in fire damage. They have the equipment to scrub out the ductwork and deodorize everything in the house.

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Cleaning and Salvage (cont.)

HARD SURFACES

Cookware

- ❑ Wash pots, pans, flatware, etc. with soapy water and rinsed then polished with a fine-powdered cleaner.
- ❑ You can polish copper and brass with special polish, or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated in vinegar.

Doors

- ❑ Locks (especially if iron) should be taken apart and oiled. If locks cannot be removed, squirt machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole and work the knob to distribute it.
- ❑ Thoroughly clean and oil hinges.

Electrical Appliances

- ❑ Do not operate wet appliances. Have a service technician check them before use.

Furniture

- ❑ Do not use chemicals on furniture. Use oil soap or an equivalent for wood (including kitchen cabinets), vinyl or leather.
- ❑ Do not dry furniture in the sun as the wood will warp. Mop up excess water with a dry, clean cloth.

Walls – paint

- ❑ Mix together 4-6 tablespoons of tri-sodium phosphate (available at paint stores), 1 cup Lysol or chlorine bleach, and 1 gallon of water. Use rubber gloves and goggles, and **keep mixture away from children and pets.**
- ❑ Wash a small area at a time working from the floor up. Rinse thoroughly. Do the ceiling last.
- ❑ Do not repaint ceiling until completely dry.
- ❑ Use a smoke sealer before repainting.

Walls – washable wallpaper

- ❑ Heat and ventilate the room for several days to dry the plaster and the paper.
- ❑ Wipe wallpaper with a cloth and thick soapsuds. Rinse with clear water. Work quickly so paper does not get soaked, and work from top to bottom to prevent streaks.
- ❑ Once dry, paste edges or loosened sections.

Floors

- ❑ Wood or linoleum floors: Use oil soap or the equivalent. It will take four or five applications. Then strip and re-wax.
- ❑ For carpeting: Steam clean, shampoo and repeat steam cleaning.

Faucets & Chrome Trim

- ❑ Clean and protect chrome trim in the kitchen area, faucets, tub fittings and towel bars with a light coating of oil or Vaseline.

CLOTH OR ABSORBENT MATERIALS

Books

- ❑ Separate pages to air dry. If books are very wet, air dry until damp, sprinkle cornstarch between pages, wipe with a dry cloth and press together.

Clothes and luggage

- ❑ To remove odour or soot from clothes that can be bleached, add 1/2 cup ammonia to 2 gallons of water, then rinse in vinegar (use rubber gloves). **Warning: do not mix ammonia and bleach.**
- ❑ Take wool, silk, or rayon garments to the dry cleaners as soon as possible.
- ❑ Wipe leathers with a damp cloth and then a dry cloth. Stuff purses, shoes, etc. with paper first to retain shape.
- ❑ Use steel wool or a suede brush on suede.
- ❑ Leave suitcases open for airing.
- ❑ Contact a cleaning service for specific advice.

Mattresses and pillows

- ❑ Reconditioning the inner-spring mattress at home is almost impossible. If you must use your mattress temporarily, put it out in the sun to dry, then cover it with plastic sheeting.
- ❑ It is almost impossible to get smoke odour out of pillows.

Plants

- ❑ Wash plants with water on both sides of the leaves (water softeners help).