

Professional fire and water damage restoration businesses may be a good source of cleaning and restoration of your personal belongings. Companies offering this source can be located in the phone directory.

The following are tips only - for more information, please contact a professional cleaning and/or restoration service.

Clothing

Smoke odor and soot can SOMETIMES be washed from clothing. The following formula will often work for clothing THAT CAN BE BLEACHED

- 4-6 teaspoons trisodium phosphate (can be purchased in paint stores)
- 1 cup Lysol or any household chlorine bleach
- 1 gallon warm water

Mix well, add clothes, rinse with clean water, dry well.

To remove mildew, wash the fresh stain with soap and water. Then rinse and dry in the sun. If the stain isn't gone, use lemon juice and salt, or a diluted solution of household chlorine bleach.

An effective way to remove mildew from clothing is to wash the fresh stain with soap and warm water, rinse, and then dry in the sun. If the stain has not disappeared, use lemon juice and salt or a diluted solution of household chlorine bleach.

Cooking Utensils

Your pots, pans, flatware, etc., should be washed with soapy water, rinsed and then polished with a fine-powdered cleaner. You can polish copper and brass with special polish, salt sprinkled on a piece of lemon, or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated with vinegar.

Walls, Floors and Windows

To remove soot and smoke from walls, furniture and floors, use a mild soap or detergent or mix together the following solution:

- 4 to 6 tablespoons tri-sodium phosphate (can be purchased in paint stores)
- 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach
- 1 gallon warm water

Wear rubber gloves when cleaning with this solution. Be sure to rinse your walls and furniture with clear warm water and dry thoroughly after washing them with this solution.

Wash a small area of wall at one time, working from the floor up. Then rinse the wall with clear water immediately. Ceilings should be washed last. If the weather allows, open windows and use a fan to circulate air.

Do not repaint until walls and ceilings are completely dry.

Your wallpaper can also be repaired. Use a commercial paste to re-paste a loose edge or section. Contact your wallpaper dealer or installer for information on wallpaper cleaners. Washable wallpaper can be cleansed like any ordinary wall, but care must be taken not to soak the paper. Work from bottom to top to prevent streaking

Rugs and Carpets

Rugs and carpets should be allowed to dry thoroughly. Throw rugs can be cleaned by beating, sweeping, or vacuuming, and then shampooing. Rugs should be dried as quickly as possible - lay them flat and expose them to a circulation of warm, dry air. A fan turned on the rugs will speed drying. Even though the surface seems dry, moisture remaining at the base of the tufts can quickly cause the rug to rot.

For information on cleaning and preserving carpets, call your carpet dealer or installer or a qualified carpet cleaning professional.

Photographs

Preserving damage photographs is often very important to victims of fires, floods and other disasters. If photographs are not burned they can usually be saved. Never try to peel apart photographs that have stuck together. Always remember that photographs were originally developed in water solutions and then washed.

Soak the photos in clear, clean water and rinse carefully and thoroughly and let stuck photographs separate on their own. If they stay damp they can be damaged by mold. If you have quantities of wet photos, wrap them in plastic wrap and freeze them, then thaw them and wash a few at a time. After washing the photos, dry them image side up on a smooth hard surface like a glass table or kitchen counter.

Leather and Books

Wipe your leather goods with a damp cloth, then with a dry cloth. Stuff our purses and shoes with newspapers to retain their shape. Leave your suitcases open. Leather goods should be dried away from heat and sun. When leather goods are dry, clean with saddle soap. You can use steel wool or a suede brush on suede. Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry away from heat and sun.

Books can be dried by placing them on end with pages separated. Then they should be piled and pressed to prevent the pages from crinkling. Alternating drying and pressing will prevent mildew until the books are thoroughly dry. If your books are very damp, sprinkle cornstarch or talc between the pages, leave for several hours, then brush off. A fan turned on the books will help them dry.

Wood Furniture

Do not dry your furniture in the sun. The wood will warp and twist out of shape. Clear off mud and dirt.

Remove drawers. Let them dry thoroughly so there will be no sticking when you replace them.

Scrub wood furniture or fixtures with a stiff brush and a cleaning solution.

Wet wood can decay and mold, so dry thoroughly. Open doors and windows for good ventilation. Turn on your furnace or air conditioner, if necessary.

If mold forms, wipe the wood with a cloth soaked in a mixture of borax dissolved in hot water.

To remove white spots or film, rub the wood surface with a cloth soaked in a solution of 1/2 cup household ammonia and 1/2 cup water. Then wipe the surface dry and polish with wax or rub the surface with a cloth soaked in a solution of 1/2 cup turpentine and 1/2 cup linseed oil. Be careful - turpentine is combustible. Please remember, oily rags can start fires by spontaneous combustion. You do not want another fire. Put all used rags in an airtight metal container like a paint can and place outside away from your home.

You can also rub the wood surface with a fine grade steel wool pad dipped in liquid polishing wax, clean the area with a soft cloth and then buff.

Electrical Appliances

Please DO NOT use appliances that have been exposed to water or steam until you have a service representative check them. This is especially true of electrical appliances. In addition, steam can remove the lubricant from some moving parts.

If the fire department turned off your gas or power during the fire, call the electric or gas company to restore these services - do not try to do it yourself. Often a licensed plumber or electrician must make repairs before service can be restored.

