

FIRE
INFORMATION:
RECOVERY
EDITION



**WHAT TO DO BEFORE,
DURING & AFTER A FIRE**

MESSAGE

FROM THE CHIEF

Dear Community:

The Prince George Fire and Emergency Services Department strives to serve the Community of Prince George by saving lives and property. Your Firefighters are familiar with the devastation and trauma resulting from fire. Those who experience a fire often are not. The difficult period directly after a fire is confusing and traumatic. We recognize this and hope this manual will assist you.

While firefighters are on scene, they will attempt to assist you and your family as best they can. After they have left, many questions may be unanswered. This booklet may answer many of your concerns. We have provided a listing of essential resources and telephone numbers to assist in a quick recovery from this unexpected event.

If the Fire Department shuts off your electricity in Fire Suppression Operations, you will need to contact your electric company.

- Prince George Electric Cooperative: 804-834-2424
- Southside Electric Cooperative: 866-878-5514
- Dominion Energy Company: 866-366-4357

If there are further questions, please do not hesitate to call us:

- Prince George Fire Administration: 804-722-8614



Sincerely,
Chief Paul Beamon

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FIRE PREVENTION

TIPS



- ✔ Install and maintain smoke detectors. Follow the manufacturer's directions on locating your detector. Installing on the ceilings adjacent to sleeping areas is best. Check batteries every six months. If detector beeps periodically, the battery may need to be changed.
- ✔ Avoid overloading electrical outlets. This condition can cause fires due to an excessive amount (three or more) of appliances in an outlet.
- ✔ Have an escape plan for every person in the house. The recommendation is two escape routes, through either a door or window.
- ✔ Have a meeting place to go to if escaping a fire. For the children's sake, call it the "home base" or the "safe zone" because they respond to this and identify with the concept. This should be a place away from the home, preferably a mailbox, neighbor's porch, etc.
- ✔ If a fire occurs, get out! Call the fire department. Fires grow quickly! Within six seconds, a small fire can become a raging, choking inferno. Leave it to the professionals to extinguish the fire. In addition, often there will be less damage than if you and your neighbors attempt extinguishment.
- ✔ Post your address and telephone number by the phone or post on your refrigerator for babysitters, guests, and even yourself to use in case of emergency. Dialing 911 is uncomplicated, however, you may forget your name and address under extreme stress.
- ✔ If a pan fire occurs, put a lid or cover on it. Tip the lid, so it shields your arm from the flames as you place it. Turn off the heat. Avoid Water or application of any towel, wet or dry, on a pan fire, this may intensify and spread the fire. Call the fire department.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

WHEN A FIREFIGHTER IS AT YOUR HOME



**In an emergency,
DIAL 911.**

1. If it is a fire, stay away from the house or apartment on fire.

2. Tell firefighters if there are any other persons in the structure.

3. If an animal is still in the structure, tell the firefighter. Avoid saying only the animal's name or a particular term used for the animals. This leads to confusion resulting in firefighters looking for a human.

4. Remain as calm as possible. Stay with friends or other family members, but please do not leave the fire location to accompany a rescue vehicle.

5. If you accompany a rescue vehicle to a hospital via a private car, **DO NOT** speed or go through any red lights. The rescue drivers have special training and license. Another accident on the way to the hospital will not help a victim. Remember --- they are in qualified, caring, professional hands.

6. If it is an EMS type call, state any medications or medical problems the patient might have as clearly as possible. If you do not know the answers, say so! You are helping speed care by being clear and truthful.

7. If told not to enter a structure after a fire, heed this warning. The remaining smoke is a killer, along with the possibility of structural weakness and possible collapse in the building.

8. As much as you wish to assist emergency personnel physically, please avoid the temptation. This is a team effort at your service, and only a limited number of specially trained persons can make it work. Follow the previous steps, stay on the fringe, and we will assist you in the caring, professional manner for which we are equipped and trained.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

American Red Cross	800-733-2767
Columbia Gas	800-543-8911
Department of Children & Family Services	804-733-2650
Dominion Energy Virginia	866-366-4357
Drivers Licenses & Auto Registration / Prince George DMV	804-497-7100
Federal Information Citizen Center (passports)	800-333-4636
Internal Revenue Services	800-829-1040
Prince George County Animal Shelter	804-991-3200
Prince George County Building Inspector	804-722-8659
Prince George County Circuit Court	804-733-2640
Prince George County Code Enforcement	804-722-8659
Prince George County Fire / EMS (non-emergency)	804-722-8614
Prince George County Health Department	804-733-2630
Prince George County Police Department (non-emergency)	804-733-2773
Prince George County Public Information Office	804-722-8607
Prince George County Registrar's Office / Voter Information	804-722-8747
Prince George County Water / Utilities Department	804-722-8706
Prince George Electric Cooperative	804-834-2424
Social Security Administration	800-772-1213
Southside Electric	866-878-5514



ABOUT OUR OPERATIONS

Answering a few common questions

1

Why will windows be broken or holes cut in the roof?

As a fire burns, it moves upward then outward. Breaking the windows and/or cutting holes in the roof (called ventilation) stops that damaging movement and enables firefighters to fight more efficiently, resulting in less damage to the structure in the long run.

2

Why do fire engines respond to medical emergencies when there is no fire?

This allows faster response to an emergency; better use of manpower, and most importantly, expeditious care to patients. This program allows the nearest engine to respond quickly to a medical emergency and back up an ambulance.

3

Why are holes cut into walls?

We have to be sure that the fire is completely out, and that there is no fire inside the walls or other hidden places. We will do the least amount of damage necessary to insure everything is safe.

4

How do I obtain a copy of the fire report?

A fire report is a public document and is available by contacting the Prince George Fire/EMS Administration office at 804-722-8614, 7-10 business days after the incident. The property owner will need to complete a form in the Fire Administration Office and provide picture ID for issuance of the report at no cost. The owner's insurer can request the Fire Report in writing for a fee.

5

Who are public adjusters?

They are independent agents who offer their services in an effort to expedite your insurance claim. They work on a commission basis and handle the majority of the paperwork and research involved with filing your claim with your insurance company.

DISASTER ASSISTANCE



Contact your local disaster relief services agency such as the American Red Cross if you require temporary housing. They have other services to help fire victims, and give them a call to see if they can assist you.

If you have insurance under a package homeowner or tenant's policy, a section of your coverage may pay for temporary housing.

INSURED

After a fire, the first thing to do is contact your insurance company or agent as soon as possible. If you are renting the property, you must contact the owner also. Your insurance agent may be able to help you in making immediate repairs or help in securing your home. If you cannot reach your agent and need professional assistance in boarding up your home, call a general contractor or fire damage restoration firm.

Remove as many valuables as possible if you must stay elsewhere. Be sure to inventory the property you remove. Also, check for damages of any essential papers. Mobile home insurance coverage is similar to other forms of homeowner's coverage. Check with your agent for your coverage.

Insurance Company	
Insurance Agent	
Insurance Policy #	
Phone Number:	
E-Mail:	

UNINSURED

If you do not have insurance, your family and community might help you get back on your feet. You may have to depend on your resources and help from other agencies to recover your fire loss. Check with the American Red Cross, local church groups, or civic organizations for assistance. They will help you find food, clothing, medicine, and a place to stay.

IF YOU MUST LEAVE

This may be your decision or that of the Fire Department or Code Enforcement that the building is unsafe. If you must leave:

● **CONTACT THE LOCAL POLICE.**

The local police can keep an eye on the property during your absence.

● **TRY TO LOCATE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO TAKE WITH YOU:**

All important identification

Vital medicines such as insulin or heart medication

Eyeglasses, hearing aids, or other personal aids

Valuables including money, insurance policies, credit cards, jewelry, checkbook, etc.

Any pets

● **CONSIDER NOTIFYING THE FOLLOWING ENTITIES OF A PROLONGED RELOCATION:**

Post Office (to forward mail)

Your Bank(s)

Utility Companies

Social Security Administration

Insurance Company

Fire Administration Department

(if the fire is under investigation, call 804-722-8614)

Newspaper / Magazine Subscriptions

Relatives / Friends / Neighbors

If there is structural damage to your building, check with the County Code Compliance Office (804-722-8659) to see if there is a need for a permit before attempting repairs.

RECORDS

AND DOCUMENTS

Documents and records are very important to your well-being and can be damaged or destroyed because of a fire. For this reason, the Prince George Fire/EMS Department provides the following list of records and documents that should be located and/or replaced. Locating these documents will speed up the process of recovering from a fire. For a quick reference, fill out pages 17 through 18 with your pertinent information.

ITEMS	WHO TO CONTACT
Birth and Death Certificates	Prince George Health Department, Department of Motor Vehicles, VA Department of Vital Records 804-662-6200
Commissioner of the Revenue	804-722-8740
Divorce Papers	Circuit Court that issued decree
Driver's License	Department of Motor Vehicles
Income Tax Records (IRS)	800-829-1040
Marriage License	State where performed or local Circuit Court
Prince George Aging and Adult Services	804-733-2658
Prince George County Social Services	804-733-2650
Social Security Card	800-772-1213
Titles to property deeds	Prince George Circuit Court 804-733-2640

NOTE: It is wise to store all important documents and records in a specifically designed approved container for such purposes.

EXPENSES

Some losses due to fire are tax-deductible on your federal income tax. Be sure to keep receipts of money spent for repairs or replacing damaged property and to cover your living expenses. These receipts will help calculate the loss for your yearly tax return.

PERSONAL INJURY

If there are injuries to you or someone else as the result of the fire and the injuries require more than immediate first aid, contact your health insurance provider for further directions. Be sure the emergency personnel know your needs so they can administer immediate care.

SECURING THE SITE

The Fire Department will remove as much water and debris as possible before turning the building over to the owner. It is the owner's responsibility to see that the property is secure after the Fire Department leaves the scene. If Fire Department personnel feel the building is unsafe, they will secure the property as best as they can.

SALVAGE HINTS

The information on the following page was furnished by the Fire Center of the University of Minnesota as reprinted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Fire Administration.

These hints are an economical way to clean up or salvage items after a small fire. Contact your insurance company to see precisely what they will cover. Also, consider taking pictures of the damage.



CLEANING CAUTION



Several cleaning mixtures contain the substance Tri-Sodium Phosphate. Trisodium Phosphate is a caustic substance used commonly as a cleaning agent, and should be used with care and stored out of reach of children and pets. Wear rubber gloves when using, and read instructions before you start. You can purchase Tri-Sodium Phosphate in your local hardware or paint stores, such as Home Depot or Lowe's.

It is **STRONGLY** suggested to use rubber gloves and goggles.

- Vacuum all surfaces
- Change and clean air conditioner filters
- Seal off the room in which you are working with plastic to keep soot from moving from one location to another. Try to keep windows closed.

REFRIGERATOR DOOR CAUTION

When cleaning or discarding any refrigerator or freezer remove and secure doors to prevent children from being trapped inside!

FOOD

If your freezer has stopped running, you can still save the frozen food:

- Keep the freezer closed. Your freezer has enough insulation to keep food frozen for at least one day.
- Move your food to a neighbor's freezer or a commercial freezer firm. Wrap the frozen food in newspaper and blankets, or use insulated boxes.

If your food has thawed, observe the following procedures:

- **FRUITS** refreeze if they still taste and smell good. Otherwise, if the fruits are not spoiled, eat them.
- **VEGETABLES** do not refreeze if they have thawed completely. Refreeze only if they have ice crystals in the vegetables. Throw them out if your vegetables have thawed and not eaten soon after!
- **MEATS** refreeze if ice crystals remain, but cook thoroughly before tasting.

CLEANING TIPS



REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZERS

To remove odors from your refrigerator or freezer, wash the inside with a solution of baking soda and water or use one cup of vinegar or household ammonia to one gallon of water. You can place some baking soda in an open container or a piece of charcoal in the refrigerator or freezer to absorb odor.

THROW OUT any food that you suspect has spoiled. Do not wait for a foul odor! Bacteria multiplies rapidly and food that smells gross should be immediately tossed.

COOKING UTENSILS

Wash your pots, pans flatware, etc., with a fine-powder cleanser. You can polish copper and brass with special polish, or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated in vinegar.

MATTRESSES

Reconditioning an innerspring mattress at home is nearly impossible. You can renovate your mattress by a company that builds or repairs them. If you must use your mattress temporarily, put it out in the sun to dry, cover it with plastic sheeting. The foam and feathers hold the odor in.

WALLS AND CEILINGS

To remove soot and smoke from painted walls, mix:

- 4-6 tablespoons tri-sodium phosphate
- 1-gallon water

Wash a small area at a time working from the floor up. Do ceilings at the end. Rinse thoroughly. **DO NOT REPAINT UNTIL COMPLETELY DRY!** It is advisable to use a smoke sealer before painting.

LOCKS, HINGES, AND OTHER SMALL APPLIANCES

Steam from a fire removes lubrication from these items. Take them apart and oil. Take them to a repair shop. If you cannot remove locks, squirt machine oil through-bolt opening or keyhole and work the knob to distribute the oil. Hinges should also be thoroughly cleaned and oiled.

CLEANING TIPS



WOOD FURNITURE

Do not use chemicals on furniture. A very inexpensive product called FLAX SOAP (available in hardware and paint stores) is the most efficient product to use on wood, including kitchen cabinets. If you do not have Flax Soap:

- Wipe off with borax dissolved in hot water to remove mildew; and
- Rub the surface with a cloth soaked in 1/2 cup water and 1/2 cup vinegar solution to remove white spots or film. Then wipe dry and polish with wax.

You can also rub the wood surface with 4/0 steel wool in liquid polishing wax, wipe with a soft cloth, and buff.

Note: Wet wood can decay and mold, so dry well, BUT DO NOT DRY IN DIRECT SUNLIGHT as the wood may warp and twist out of shape.

WOOD AND VINYL FLOORS

Use Flax soap on wood and vinyl floors. It will take four to five applications. Then strip and re-wax. When water gets underneath linoleum, it can cause odors and warp the floor. If this has happened, remove your linoleum. Call your linoleum dealer for suggestions on loosening the adhesive without damaging the floor covering. Be sure to let the floor dry thoroughly before replacing.

CARPETS

Allow rugs and carpets to dry thoroughly. Clean throw rugs by beating, sweeping, vacuuming, and then shampooing. Dry rugs quickly as possible. Lay them flat and expose them to warm dry air circulation. With a fan turned on, the rugs will dry quicker. Make sure the rugs are thoroughly dry. Even though the surface seems dry, moisture remaining at the base of the tufts can quickly rot a rug. For more information on cleaning and preserving carpets, call your carpet dealer.



CLEANING

TIPS



CLOTHING

Wash clothing to remove smoke odor and soot. Hand-wash your clothes for the first two to three washes to prevent soot oils from contaminating the next few loads of laundry. If odors persist, soak the items that you can bleach in the mixture below:

- 4-6 teaspoons tri-sodium phosphate
- 1 cup Lysol or any household chlorine bleach
- 1-gallon warm water

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

Alternatively, consider washing clothes in cold water with your usual household laundry detergent, and adding one tablespoon of pure vanilla extract.

To remove mildew, wash the fresh stain with soap and water. Then rinse and dry in the sun. If the stain is not gone, use lemon juice and salt then rinse with water. Repeat until the stain has faded or completely disappeared.

Never mix an ammonia solution or any other cleaner with a chlorine product, for it may form toxic vapors.

Take wool, silk, or rayon garments to the dry cleaners as soon as possible.

LEATHER AND BOOKS

Wipe your leather goods with a damp cloth and then a dry cloth. Stuff your purses and shoes with newspapers to retain their shape. Leave your suitcases open. Dry leather goods 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.

Dry books by placing them on end with the pages separated. Then pile and press to prevent the pages from crinkling. Alternating drying and pressing will help prevent mildew from forming 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.

WARNINGS



A licensed electrician should check household wiring, which may have been water damaged, before turning the current back on.



Be watchful for any structural damage caused by the fire. The Fire Department will secure the property we believe to be a safety hazard.



Discard any food or beverages that had contact with smoke, soot, or heat. Wash your canned goods and jars in soapy water. If the labels come off, be sure only to remark them with a black marker if you know the contents! Do not use canned goods when they have bulged, dented, or show rust. If you are unsure... throw it out.



Throw out any medications that had contact with smoke, soot, or heat. If you are uncertain about the re-usability of the medications, discard it. Notify your physician and/or your pharmacist for a replacement.



If your power is turned off for a short time, **keep the refrigerator and freezer, doors closed!** Refrigerators and freezers left unopened will hold their temperature for a short time. If the doors stay closed, food will stay safe for up to: four hours in a refrigerator; 40 hours in a full freezer; 24 hours in a half-full freezer. If your food becomes spoiled or thawed, throw it out! For more information on saving foods, see salvage hints starting on page 12.



If you have a safe, **do not attempt to open it!** Wait until the safe has cooled; otherwise, there is a chance the contents of hot gases could burst into flames when the door is opened due to the introduction of fresh air into the safe.



The Fire Department will see that the utilities (water, electric, or natural gas) are either safe to use or are disconnected before leaving. The utility companies will not make repairs on the customer's side of the meter; therefore, contact a private contractor to make repairs. All repairs of this nature require permits and inspection by the proper building department. The utility companies will not restore your utilities until the building department approves the repairs. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RECONNECT UTILITIES YOURSELF!**

MEDICAL INFORMATION



HEALTH CONDITION(S):

PRIMARY DOCTOR:
SPECIALIST:
SPECIALIST:
PHARMACY:

PHONE:
PHONE:
PHONE:
PHONE:

MEDICATION LIST:

Prescription Medication	Dosage	Time(s) of Day	Special Instructions

DRUG ALLERGIES:

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:



IMPORTANT

PHONE NUMBERS

BANK:
BANK:
BANK:

PHONE:
PHONE:
PHONE:

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION:

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION:

MORTGAGE COMPANY:

POWER COMPANY:

MISCELLANEOUS:

FAMILY, FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS:

OUR TEAM



PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY FIRE & EMS



www.princegeorgecountyva.gov



804-722-8614



fireEMS@princegeorgecountyva.gov



6602 Courts Drive, 2nd Floor
Prince George, VA 23875