



A fire can be a devastating experience. This document, provided by Strathcona County Emergency Services (SCES), is an attempt to help you return to a normal lifestyle as quickly as possible.

This information package is intended as a guide only and does not necessarily relate to all your specific needs. You are encouraged to seek assistance from the persons or agencies directly related to these specific needs.

Why does there appear to be excessive damage in my home?

After a fire, you may notice damage such as broken windows or holes in the roof, walls and ceilings.

A fire produces very high temperatures (in excess of 500 degrees C). It is imperative that toxic smoke and super heated gases are eliminated from a structure. Fire fighters must also quickly ventilate the structure to help reduce the spread of fire and reduce smoke conditions. Fire often spreads into walls and ceiling spaces, so openings are made to stop the spread of fire.

To minimize the use of these standard firefighting techniques, SCES utilizes a thermal imaging device which can assist the firefighters with identification of concealed fires. We take care to ensure there is no unnecessary damage to your property.



- Return to a normal schedule as soon as possible but relax some rules for a while.
- Work with teachers, caregivers, babysitters and others who need to understand how the fire has affected your children.

If you continue to feel overwhelmed, can't shake off the feelings of despair or experience any of the signs of stress listed below, seek help through your family doctor, local clergy or local Victim Services (780-449-0153).

Signs of stress include:

- short tempers and frequent arguments
- increased nicotine or alcohol consumption
- excessive irritability
- difficulty sleeping or bad dreams
- unusual aches, pains or stomach problems
- apathy or loss of concentration or depression

It is very important to be sensitive to your children's reactions. They may become clingy and fearful, have unexplained aches and pains, nightmares or revert to thumb sucking and bed wetting. They may fight more with their siblings or they may withdraw and try to act brave to please you.



Taking care of yourself and your family

You have been through a lot, so don't expect to take it in stride. It is normal to feel helpless, confused, angry or worried.

Allow yourself to admit your feelings and express them to someone you trust to help you cope with the stresses you are facing. Be prepared for the recovery process to take time. You and your family may have disagreements and may have trouble communicating. Lack of sleep and focus will take a toll on your job. You may feel fatigued, depressed, disorganized or irritable. You need to take care of yourself during this difficult time.

Coping suggestions:

- Get enough rest – sleep as much as your body needs for a couple of days.
- Eat nutritious food regularly.
- Whenever possible, take time off and do something you enjoy.
- Accept help from others.
- Encourage your children to draw pictures of their experience and talk about it. Do not dismiss their fears. Admit to them you are afraid too but that you will work it out together.
- Give children factual information on what happened. When the time is right, discuss fire prevention and how to practice their escape plan.
- Remind your children that you are all safe. Repeat this assurance as often as necessary.
- Comfort your children.
- Expect aggressive behaviour and be tolerant of it. Be aware that smelling smoke or flames can trigger children's fears.
- Spend extra time with them, especially at bedtime.
- Allow your children to try and help by giving them jobs to do, even if it slows you down or causes you extra work later. Praise them for what they accomplish.

Important phone numbers

** please note that all phone numbers are subject to change*

In an emergency, call 9-1-1 (fire, medical assistance, police)

Poison control

1-800-332-1414

Distress and suicide line

780-482-4357

UPDATEline 1-866-653-9959

(phone if you hear, see or smell anything unusual related to an industrial incident around the County)

Strathcona County Alerts

www.strathcona.ca/scalerts

Alberta Emergency Alert

www.emergencyalert.alberta.ca

Strathcona County

Emergency Services (non-emergency, office hours only)

- General information
780-467-5216 ext. 4
- Fire prevention
780-449-9651 (inspections and investigations)

Distress assistance

- Victim services (RCMP)
780-449-0153
- County Clothesline
780-464-7786
- Strathcona County Health Centre
780-342-4600
- Strathcona County Family & Community Services
780-464-4044
- Strathcona County Food Bank
780-449-6413
- Complaint line (RCMP)
780-467-7741

- Information desk (RCMP)
780-467-7749
- Edmonton Social Services, income support
780-644-5135 or 1-866-644-5135
- Salvation Army
(24 hours) 780-441-6320
- Emergency Relief Services
(24 hours) 780-428-4422
- Red Cross (after hours emergency)
1-888-800-6493 (office) 780-423-2680
- Alberta Community & Family Services (child welfare, 24 hours)
780-427-3390

Utility services – 24 hour emergency numbers

- Electrical (Epcor)
780-412-4500
- Water and sanitation
780-467-7785
- Natural gas (ATCO)
780-420-5585
- Telephone
611 (trouble and repair)

Medical inquiries

- University of Alberta
780-407-8822
- Royal Alexandra Hospital
780-735-4111
- Misericordia Hospital
780-930-5611
- Grey Nuns Hospital
780-450-7000
- Strathcona Community Hospital
780-449-5380
- Personal medical records
Your doctor's office

Animals and pets

- Strathcona County Bylaw Services 780-449-0170
- Edmonton Humane Society 780-471-1774
- Edmonton pound 780-496-8860
- Edmonton Veterinarian's Emergency Clinic (24 hours) 780-433-9505

Inspections and permits

- 780-464-8080
- Buildings (structural)
Plumbing and gas
Electrical

Government agency information

- Strathcona County 780-464-8111
 - Government of Canada 1-800-622-6232
 - Government of Alberta 310-0000 (toll free)
 - Service Alberta 780-427-4088 or 310-0000 (toll free)
- Includes:
- Certificates (birth, death, marriage)
 - Drivers license and auto registration
 - Insurance policies
 - Military discharge papers
 - Citizenship papers
 - Passports
 - Income tax papers
 - Health insurance card
 - Social insurance card
 - Canada pension plan
 - Employment insurance
 - Land titles
 - Titles to deeds

- Insurance Bureau of Canada 780-423-2212
- Wills, divorce papers
Your lawyer

Money replacement

If your Canada Savings Bonds or any other government bonds have been mutilated or destroyed, contact:

Client Services, Government Securities Services
Bank of Canada
234 Wellington St.
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G9

Include name(s) and address(es) on bonds, approximate date purchased, denominations and approximate number of each. If bills or coins were kept in your home, take what is left of them, including ashes, to any chartered bank.

Be prepared to provide information about the circumstances of the loss.

CLOTHING

- Smoke odour and soot can sometimes be washed from clothing. The following formula will often work for clothing that can be bleached: 60 to 90 mL (four to six teaspoons) of tri-sodium phosphate, 250 mL (one cup) of Lysol or any household chlorine bleach and four litres (one gallon) of water

Mix solution well and add clothes to the solution. Rinse with clean water and dry well. To remove mildew, wash the stain with soap and water. Rinse and dry in the sun. If the stain is still there, try lemon juice and salt or a diluted solution of household chlorine bleach.

Caution: test coloured garments before using any treatment. Take wool, silk or rayon garments to the dry cleaners as soon as possible.

LEATHER CARE

- Wipe leather goods down with a damp cloth. Stuff purses and shoes with newspapers to retain their shape. Leave suitcases open. Leather and suede goods can be rinsed in cold water and should be dried away from heat and sun. When dry, clean with saddle soap. Use steel wool or suede brush on suede.

FOOD OR MEDICINE - IF IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

- Heat, smoke fumes and water can spoil food and medicine, making them dangerous to consume. Perishable food, packaged food or any food or medicine directly exposed to heat, smoke, fumes or water should be discarded.

If the temperature went above 4 degrees Celsius for any length of time in your refrigerator, discard its contents. If you are not sure about heat exposure, throw the food out.

Wash canned goods and home preserves in detergent and warm water. If labels come off, be sure you mark the contents of the can or jar. Discard canned goods if they are rusted, bulged or show signs of being heated.

It may be possible to salvage food from your home freezer even if it has stopped running, depending on the severity of the fire and its proximity to the freezer. Keep the freezer closed. It may have enough insulation to keep the food frozen for at least one day, perhaps longer. If necessary, move your food to a neighbour's freezer or to a commercial freezer firm. Wrap the frozen food in newspapers, blankets or place in insulated boxes to transport.

WALLS, FLOORS AND CEILINGS

- To remove soot and smoke from painted walls, mix 60 to 90 mL (four to six tablespoons) tri-sodium phosphate (can be purchased in paint stores), 250 mL (one cup) of Lysol or chlorine bleach and four litres (one gallon) of water. Keep this solution away from children and pets.

Wash a small area at a time. Since soot will deposit on the ceilings and upper portions of the walls, work from the floor up, doing the ceiling last. Rinse thoroughly. When completely dry, apply a smoke sealant (available at the paint store) before painting. Smoke sealant is highly toxic so be sure to wear proper personal protective equipment when using. Wallpapered walls usually cannot be restored. Check with your wallpaper dealer.

- Use flax or linseed soap on wood and linoleum floors. Apply four or five times, then strip and re-wax. For carpeting, steam clean, shampoo and repeat steam cleaning.

FURNITURE

- Do not use chemicals on wood-based furniture. Inexpensive cleansers such as flax soap or linseed soft soap (available in hardware and paint stores) are the most efficient products to use on wood including kitchen cabinets. Do not dry furniture in the sun because the wood may warp and twist. Furniture shampoos (available at any rental outlet) are recommended for upholstered furniture. Be sure to test the fabric for colourfastness before shampooing. Rinse out soap by sponging with the following mixture: 50 mL (two ounces) vinegar and four litres (one gallon) of water.
- Reconditioning an inner-spring mattress at home is very difficult. A company that builds or repairs mattresses can probably refurbish your mattress. It is almost impossible to remove smoke odour from pillows. Both feathers and foam retain the odour.

APPLIANCES

- Replace furnace filters. Have heating ducts replaced or cleaned by a professional furnace cleaning company.
- Do not operate appliances until you have had a service representative check them.
- To remove odour from your refrigerator or freezer, wash the inside with a solution of baking soda and water, or use 250 mL (one cup) of vinegar or household ammonia to four litres (one gallon) of water. Baking soda in an open container, or a piece of charcoal, can also be placed in the refrigerator to absorb odour.

Caution: when discarding any refrigerator or freezer, be sure the doors or locks are removed or secured to prevent a child or pet from becoming trapped inside. Call Utilities at 780-449-5514 for removal options.

Fire investigation

Under the Safety Codes Act of Alberta, every fire must be investigated as to origin, cause and circumstance. SCES has fire investigators and a Fire Marshal on call 24 hours a day. In most cases, the investigator will be the last person from the fire department with whom you have contact. The investigator is there for your protection and can provide valuable advice and assistance.

If you have not already provided a written statement to SCES, prepare one now. In your own words, describe what happened on the day of the fire. Written statements are essential for conducting an "origin and cause" investigation.

To obtain a copy of a fire investigator's report, please contact the Fire Prevention and Investigation branch. Request the report in writing, making sure to include your complete return address, postal code and phone number along with the file number and the date and time of the fire. A fee may apply.

If you are not the owner or occupant of the property where the fire started, you will be required to provide signed consent from the owner/occupant giving Strathcona County permission to release the information or report to you.

Any questions can be directed to the Fire Prevention and Investigation branch

Email: fireprev@strathcona.ca

Phone: 780-449-9651

Fax: 780-449-9652

Documents and records

Important documents can be damaged or destroyed as a result of a fire or other disaster. Access to these documents is often essential. Listed below are the recommended documents that should be located if possible as it will hasten the process of recovery.

Birth certificate	Drivers license
Credit cards	Bank book
Passport	Vehicle registration
Insurance policies	Citizenship papers
Stocks and bonds	Old age security ID card
Social insurance card	Marriage license
Divorce decree	Animal registration
Medical records	Income tax records
Death certificates	Land titles
Warranties	Wills
Title to deeds	

Social Services clients should notify their caseworkers if their ID card is damaged or destroyed.

Copies of marriage and divorce records can be obtained from the province in which the marriage or divorce occurred.

Copies of birth and death certificates can be obtained from the Provincial Division of Vital Statistics.

If you have a home safe, do not open it. Your safe can hold intense heat for several hours and the contents may burst into flames with the addition of oxygen when the door is opened.



Salvage hints

The following salvage hints may be of particular interest if the home is not insured or if trying to save sentimental momentos or possessions.

Before attempting any salvage in your home, ensure you will be safe from structural fire damage and toxic gas. Seal off the room in which you are working with polyethylene sheeting to keep soot from moving into other rooms.

Wear rubber gloves, goggles, respiratory protection and protective clothing. Do not mix ammonia or bleach with any other cleaning products.

GENERAL

- Vacuum all surfaces to loosen soot particles.
- Locks should be taken apart, wiped with kerosene and oiled. If locks cannot be removed, squirt machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole and turn knob to distribute the oil. Hinges should also be thoroughly cleaned and oiled.
- Your pots, pans and flatware should be washed with soap and water, rinsed and polished with a fine powdered cleaner. Polish copper and brass with a cloth saturated in vinegar and sprinkled with salt or with lemon juice.
- Dispose of hazardous materials such as solvents, garden chemicals and home cleaning products that have been exposed to heat, smoke or moisture. Contact your municipality to find out how to dispose of hazardous materials properly.
- Clean and polish chrome surfaces with a thin coat of Vaseline or other light oil.
- Books can be dried by placing them on end with the pages separated, then stack to prevent pages from crinkling. Alternate drying and stacking helps prevent mildew. If books are very damp, sprinkle cornstarch or talc between pages, leave for several hours and then brush off.
- Wash plants with water on both sides of the leaves (water softener helps).

- Children's schools and/or daycare
- Lawyer
- Post office
- Strathcona County Emergency Services
- Delivery services (newspaper, etc.)
- Credit card companies
- Utility company
- Health and Welfare Canada (if you receive benefits from Canada Pension Plan, Universal Child Credit or Old Age Pension)

Try to locate the following items to take with you in addition to important documents and records:

- Vital medicines (eg. blood pressure regulating drugs or insulin)
- Eyeglasses
- Hearing aids or other personal aids
- Aids to daily living

Property insurance

Contact your insurance agent as soon as possible. Your insurance generally includes coverage for emergency clean up and repair. If you must incur expenses for these purposes, keep receipts as your insurance adjuster will require them. If you cannot reach your insurance agent, a general contractor may be able to help secure your home. Refer to the YellowPages for an up-to-date listing.

If you are renting or leasing the property, contact the owner. They may be able to help make immediate repairs. Don't assume you are covered by the owner's insurance. In most cases, the tenant is obliged to provide his own coverage. If you do not have your own tenant's policy, check with the property owner. In some instances, there may be insurance coverage included in the lease.

Make a list of damaged contents and try to note the approximate replacement cost value for each item. Your insurance company will probably ask for this list. Be sure to save a copy for your records.

When you move back in, prepare a new inventory list (it may be written, recorded or photographed). Keep a copy outside your home or in a fire resistant safe.

Living expenses

The Insurance Bureau of Canada has advised emergency response departments that most homeowner and tenant insurance will pay for reasonable additional living expenses if the premise is unfit for occupancy or the occupant has to move out while repairs are being made because of a fire. Keep receipts for all expenses incurred as a result of the fire for review by adjusters. Reimbursement limits will vary from company to company.

Security

While SCES can advise when security will be necessary, it is your responsibility to secure the property to prevent further loss. Your adjuster can provide assistance in this regard. If you are unable to contact your insurance company, professional contractors can help. Check the Yellow Pages.

Your insurance includes coverage for emergency clean up and repair. If you must incur expenses for these purposes, keep receipts as your adjuster will require them.

Questions?

Insurance Bureau of Canada, 780-423-2212
Service Alberta, 310-0000

Returning to your home

You can return to your home once SCES has finished investigating the fire, unless the building inspector judges the house to be unsafe due to structural damage. Once a building has been damaged by fire, it is subject to regulations of the current Alberta Building Code. Before attempting any repairs or reconstruction, check with Strathcona County Planning and Development Services (PDS) to determine whether permits are required.

To expedite this process, SCES will notify the Planning and Development department if your home sustains damage as a result of a fire.

Although the fire may have been small, please be careful. Furniture, clothing, floor coverings and many common items found in the modern home are manufactured from synthetic materials. When exposed to high heat, these materials can give off invisible toxic gases which may be present for days and could be harmful to your health. Fire fighters will make every effort to ventilate your home, but this does not guarantee complete elimination of these gases.

Caution:

- Sometimes a small fire leaves a residual smoke odour that is annoying and lingering. Distribute small saucers of household vanilla, vinegar or activated charcoal throughout your home to help absorb odors until you or your restoration company can do a thorough cleaning of your household contents.
- Sometimes it is necessary to “smoke seal” a home. This is better left to restoration professional as materials used for this purpose are highly toxic until cured. Remember that the smoke odour is also inside the heating and cooling duct system. You may get a blast of smoke when the air system is turned on.
- Fire can rekindle from hidden remains. Be watchful for signs of heat or smoke.
- Household wiring may have suffered water damage and must be checked by an electrician before the power is turned back on.
- Be watchful for structural damage. Roofs and floors may be weakened.
- Discard food, beverage and medicines exposed to heat, smoke or soot.

Utilities

Utilities may have been shut off or disconnected as a safety precaution or as a result of fire damage. If the gas, water or power has been disconnected during a fire, call the appropriate utility company to restore services.

Damage to outside utility installations may be repaired by the utility company concerned, however, utility companies do not make repairs inside the house. This is your responsibility. Damage occurring to water, sewer, power or natural gas installations inside your home must be repaired in accordance to the requirements of a building permit and then inspected by the appropriate agency.

Be aware.

Broken power line on the ground (downed power line)? Keep away at least 10 metres (30 feet).

**Call Fortis at
780-310-9473 or
9-1-1 immediately.**

If you smell natural gas inside a building, leave the building immediately.

**Call 9-1-1 or
ATCO Gas 24 hour
emergency services from a
cell phone
1-800-511-3447**

For information or updates on something you might see, hear or smell related to an industrial incident in Strathcona County, call:

**NR CAER
UPDATEline
1-866-653-9959**

What about my pet?

If you are unable to locate your pet, contact Enforcement Services (780-449-0170) or the Edmonton Humane Society (780-471-1774). Dogs are impounded at the Edmonton Human Society for four days after which they become the property of the Society. If you've lost or found a dog, call 780-449-0170.

If your pet has suffered injury or severe stress, take them to your vet as soon as possible or the Emergency Veterinarian's Emergency Clinic (780-433-9505). If possible, take your pets with you if you have to move. Some pets may become aggressive after a fire – if you notice strange behaviours, be careful and keep children away.

If you cannot live in the house

Valuables

The fire investigator may limit or revoke access into the house until the fire investigation is complete and the structure is deemed safe to enter. The fire investigator will attempt to recover important papers, passports, jewellery, treasured mementos and keep sakes if and when possible. The fire investigator will work with the insurance company to ensure your property is secured before valuables are retrieved.

Emergency housing

If you cannot live in your home, you need to arrange for temporary housing which can include staying with family or friends. Try to keep your family together to provide mutual support. If your insurance does not cover temporary housing, there are agencies prepared to offer immediate assistance.

- Victim Services, 780-449-0153
- Community Housing Program, 780-644-5135
- Direct to Tenant Rent Supplement Program, 780-422-0122
- Co-op housing
Davidson Creek, 780-464-1013 Brittany Lane, 780-467-1379
- St. Vincent De Paul, 780-416-0931

If you are relocating, be sure to notify:

- Your insurance agent
- Mortgage company
- Employer
- Friends, family and neighbours