

# The First 24 Hours

## Securing Yourself and the Site

- Contact your local disaster relief service, such as the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army, to help with your immediate needs, such as:
  - temporary housing
  - food
  - medicine
  - eyeglasses
  - clothing
  - other essential items
- Contact your insurance agent/company.

## Cautions

Do not enter the damaged site. Fires can rekindle from hidden, smoldering remains.

- Normally, the fire department will see that utilities (water, electricity and natural gas) are either safe to use or are disconnected before they leave the site. Do not attempt to turn on utilities yourself.
- Be watchful for structural damage caused by the fire. Roofs and floors may be damaged and subject to collapse.
- Food, beverages and medicine exposed to heat, smoke, soot and water should not be consumed.

## Leaving Your Home

- Contact your local police departments to let them know the site will be unoccupied.
- In some cases it may be necessary to board up openings to discourage trespassers.
- Beginning immediately, save receipts for any money you spend. These receipts are important in showing the insurance company what money you have spent related to your fire loss and also for verifying losses claimed on your income tax.
- If it is safe to do so, try to locate the following items:
  - identification, such as driver's licenses and Social Security cards
  - insurance information
  - medication information
  - eyeglasses, hearing aids or other prosthetic devices
  - valuables, such as credit cards, bank books, cash and jewelry

- There are many people/entities that should be notified of your relocation, including:
  - your insurance agent/company
  - your mortgage company (also inform them of the fire)
  - your family and friends
  - your employer
  - your child's school
  - your post office
  - any delivery services
  - your fire and police departments
  - your utility companies
  
- Do not throw away any damaged goods until after an inventory is made. All damages are taken into consideration in developing your insurance claim.
- If you are considering contracting for inventory or repair services discuss your plans with your insurance agent/company first.