After we leave

Advice and guidance after an emergency in residential properties and commercial premises

LFB
LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

We are sorry you have experienced an emergency.

Please read this booklet carefully as it contains information that you may find helpful.

If you would like to speak to a member of London Fire Brigade (LFB) about a fire or flood in your home, please call **020 8555 1200** and ask to be put through to your local fire station.

You can visit our web pages for regulatory fire safety information, workplace advice and property management guidance.

Information is also available online:
london-fire.gov.uk/safety/

This incident was dealt with by:

Officer-in-charge:

Station(s):

Incident number:

Date:

Every care has been taken to provide information to help you deal with the after effects of a fire safely. However, LFB or its firefighters cannot be held responsible or liable for death or any injury that may occur now or in the future as a result of entering the scene of a fire or other emergency.

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YOUR HOME

We understand that this is a really difficult time for you, your children and your pets. Here is some advice that we hope will help.

After a fire or a flood, access to your home or part of it, may be restricted for safety reasons. Do not attempt to enter it for any reason as it may be dangerous to do so.

In cases of severe structural damage, a Local Authority Building Inspector may be required to advise on the safety of the building.

Follow any instructions given to you by the police or LFB staff.

The British Red Cross Fire and Emergency Support Unit offers free practical help and advice to help people who have suffered damage to their homes following a fire, flood, or similar incident. You can ask the LFB officer-in-charge of the incident to make a referral for you.

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

Where fire damage is extensive or if your home is damaged by flooding, it may not be safe to stay there. Check if your insurance policy includes the provision of alternative accommodation.

If you don't have insurance contact your local housing department as soon as possible for homelessness support. They can help to arrange temporary emergency accommodation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

To find your local authority or council contact details including out-of-hours emergency information go to:
gov.uk/financial-help-after-fire

CRISIS SUPPORT

A fire or flood can cause financial hardship, the local welfare provision scheme (LWP) can provide essentials and short-term financial help in a crisis. The amount of help that can be given will depend on your circumstances. You don't have to be claiming benefits to apply. The type of help can vary as there are no set rules about what they have to provide.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact your local council for more information:
gov.uk/find-local-council

HEALTH

If you or anyone else involved in the incident feel unwell at any time or have health concerns, seek medical advice online or on the phone:

- Call NHS **111**– available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

or

- Go to **111.nhs.uk** (for people aged five and over only).

- Call **999** in a medical or mental health emergency. This is when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life may be at risk. Contact your GP if you feel you would benefit from a counselling service.

Don't take chances. Return any medicines that may have been damaged or contaminated to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

AFTER A TRAUMATIC EVENT

If you, or someone you care about, has experienced a traumatic incident, knowing how and when to seek help to cope with the emotional effects of what has happened, and your personal wellbeing is important.

NHS ENGLAND

Provides advice about some of the feelings you may experience, things you can do to help, and useful links and leaflets.

- **england.nhs.uk/london/our-work/mental-health-support/help-and-support/**

THE MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

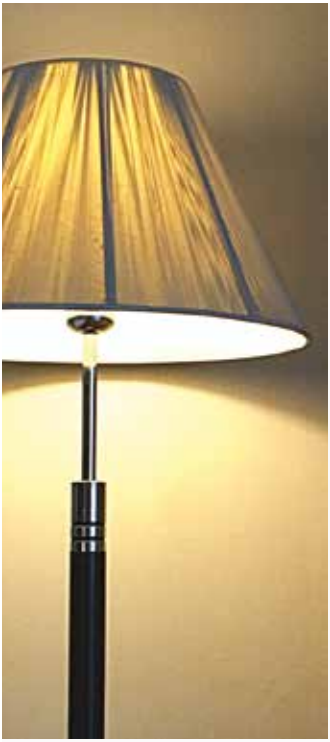
Provides information about what happens when a person experiences a traumatic event, what to do and where to seek help.

- **mentalhealth.org.uk/**

YOUNG MINDS

Offer advice and information to give young people the tools to look after their mental health.

- **youngminds.org.uk/**



ELECTRICITY, GAS, WATER SUPPLIES

Tell your utility suppliers what has happened as soon as you can. Do not attempt to turn on or reconnect any services that have been shut off until they have been checked and they or a competent tradesperson have confirmed that it is safe to do so.

Fire or water damage to electrical appliances can be dangerous don't try to turn them on unless they have been checked by a registered electrician.

If you live in social housing or rent privately, contact your landlord. It is often their responsibility to arrange any repair work necessary to gas, electricity and water supplies, and to ensure the property is safe and secure.

PETS

Injured animals, including those affected by smoke inhalation, should be taken to a vet for prompt treatment. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) or People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) charities can offer help and advice.

SECURITY

It is your responsibility to make the property secure once the emergency services have left. Doing so will also reduce the possibility of theft or vandalism.

If you cannot remain in your home and boarding up is required, specialist emergency contractors can be found online. If you are insured, the policy should cover the cost of this work.

If you live in social housing or rented accommodation contact your landlord or local housing department who can arrange this for you.

If you need to re-enter the property for any reason it is important to take appropriate safety precautions, a combination of toxic chemicals, contaminated water, fire debris (ash and soot) and sharp objects can all cause harm.

Wherever possible wear appropriate protective clothing and gloves to protect skin from absorbing contaminants and a respiratory mask to protect the lungs from gases and harmful particles in the air. See the next section on **Cleaning and Clearing Up** for more information.

Let the local police know your property will be empty to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour or vandalism.

CLEANING AND CLEARING UP

After a fire speak to your insurer or housing authority/landlord. They should be able to provide professional fire damage cleaning companies who have specialist equipment for pumping out water and drying the area, along with technicians who can safely clean the property and recover documents and valuables for you.

When you return to the property for whatever reason, it's essential to take extra care. Fire debris, smoke, and soot residues (or combinations of) can all contain harmful toxic chemicals, and exposure to them may cause short or long-term adverse health outcomes. Water from firefighting or a flood may also contain contaminants and there may also be broken glass or sharp objects amongst the fire debris.

Check that the property has been well ventilated to ensure hazardous gases and particulates, have dissipated. Anyone with health problems such as allergies, breathing difficulties or asthma should keep away from the property until the air quality has returned to normal.

Following a fire, surfaces may be contaminated. When cleaning surfaces it is advisable to wear appropriate protective clothing to include; respiratory protection such as a P3 dust mask, nitrile gloves and a paper suit to protect clothing. These can be bought in local hardware stores or online retailers.

If you handle or launder smoke or soot-stained clothes it's still important to wear protective clothing including rubber gloves and run the washing machine through a rinse cycle afterwards.

Don't be tempted to keep contaminated food or medicines always:

- throw out any damaged or contaminated food
- return medicines to the pharmacy for safe disposal.

REMEMBER!

Check for damage to smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide alarms – if they are not working or you have any doubts replace them.

If you are using a rubbish-removal company to clear items, ask to see their waste carriers' license. If you are unsure you can check their details on the Environment Agency website.

ARSON OR DELIBERATE FIRES

In the event of a serious or suspicious fire, we may send our specially trained officers from the Fire Investigation Team (FIT). They can provide extra support to the police investigation and help to determine the origin, development, and cause of a fire. Arson (deliberate fire setting) is a criminal offence.

Please do not enter the premises if there are sealed off areas as it may be unsafe and hinder the investigation – officers will keep you informed and you will be told when you are allowed to enter.

INSURANCE

Always contact your insurance company as soon as you can and follow their advice on the actions you need to take next and what your cover includes. If your policy has been damaged, you can ask them to send you a replacement copy.

Take photos and make a list of items damaged, include any valuable items. You will need to complete a claim form and they may wish to inspect your home (or business premises) before anything is moved, cleaned up or thrown away.

Keep receipts, they will be required by your insurance company.

REPLACING VALUABLE DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS

If important personal documents are lost or damaged you will need to contact a range of organisations to get replacements.

FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find help and online application forms and information at the following websites:

- Apply online to replace your driver's licence: **gov.uk/apply-online-to-replace-a-driving-licence**
- Replace a lost, stolen, or damaged passport: **gov.uk/report-a-lost-or-stolen-passport**
- Order a birth, marriage, or death certificate: **gov.uk/order-copy-birth-death-marriage-certificate**
- Divorce papers – contact the court where the decree was issued using the Court finder tool (**find-court-tribunal.service.gov.uk/search-option**), or use a Decree Absolute service.
- Benefits and social security payments. To search A–Z contact details for entitlements and benefits: **gov.uk/browse/benefits**
- Property titles or deeds – to contact Land Registry: **gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry**
- Income tax records – to contact the HMRC office where you filed your accounts or your accountant: **gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/income-tax-enquiries-for-individuals-pensioners-and-employees**
- Apply for a vehicle registration certificate: **gov.uk/vehicle-log-book**

AFTER A VEHICLE FIRE

All vehicle fires including electric vehicles can produce toxic by-products and chemicals that can cause harm if they come into contact with the skin or if they are breathed in.

A damaged vehicle is still your responsibility and cannot be abandoned in a public place, or on a highway. Removal of your damaged car and associated debris can usually be done under the terms of your breakdown recovery service or motor insurance policy.

Specialist recovery companies will provide trained technicians to safely deal with any salvage operations required.

Report the incident to the police if the fire was the result of a crash, suspected arson or if someone (or an animal) was injured.

AFTER A FLOOD

A flood in your home can be stressful and even the after-effects can still be dangerous.

Wear rubber boots and gloves in and around the affected property. Floodwater may be contaminated, especially by untreated sewage and remain even after the water has gone. Food or medicines that have been contaminated should be disposed of safely.

You should still contact your insurance company; they will help you with any claims you may need to make.

If you are in social housing or renting privately, let your landlord know what has happened so they can take any remedial action needed to the property to keep you safe.

REMEMBER!
Floodwater can damage buildings, especially if it has been flowing quickly, is over 1 metre deep or has been in the property for a long

time. Consult a plumber if any water pipes have been damaged and need to be repaired and don't turn on your electricity until it has been checked by a competent tradesperson or your utility supplier.

LFB firefighters will use equipment to pump out water and do some salvage work where they are able, but the remainder of the drying and clearing up is your responsibility.

If you're using a generator to dry out your property, never run a petrol or diesel-powered generator indoors. Be aware of the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning and always ensure that your property has a carbon monoxide detector.

In commercial premises, flood water may make goods unusable or unsellable. Seek advice from your local authority environmental health department.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For information about safety and carbon monoxide:
london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/carbon-monoxide-safety/

For further help and advice on before, during and after a flood:
london-fire.gov.uk/safety/flooding/flooding-advice/

AFTER A CHIMNEY FIRE

Place a metal bucket, half filled with water, in the fireplace to catch any falling debris. Keep the fireguard in place.

Leave for a minimum of 24 hours and ensure the chimney is swept before use. Fit a carbon monoxide detector in the room where solid fuels are used.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL PREMISES

After an incident, your Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) should be reviewed. Make sure that any new hazards and risks are documented within the FRA, along with the actions taken to reduce these risks.

You should also record information about fire detection and fire alarm provisions and include what actions any occupants need to take in the event of an emergency.

REMEMBER!
FRA reviews should be conducted regularly to take account of any changes in circumstance, such as the emergency evacuation plan for all people likely to be in the premises, including disabled people, and how that plan will be implemented.

The person in control of the property should be informed of any deficiencies identified so that remedial action can be taken.

Escape routes

Some commercial premises can still operate after a fire. If you're able to stay open, you should make sure that you provide alternative safe and accessible escape routes if the main one has been compromised due to fire, structural damage, or obstructions. Remember to take into account the number of people on site.

All fire doors should function correctly and have self-closing devices fitted or be locked shut and have the correct door signage.

Fire detection and alarms

It is important that, before reoccupying the building, the fire alarm system is tested to ensure it is properly working along with any secondary systems, such as automatic opening vents etc.

All functions of the system should be assessed to confirm that its properly working in the event of an alarm actuation. This includes lifts grounding, gas shut off and smoke control systems activating etc.

Any issues identified with the system should be resolved by a competent fire alarm engineer.

Emergency evacuation plans (EEP)

An EEP is used to document how people evacuate the premises when an alarm actuates.

A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is used to document how people will be evacuated when they have difficulty responding to a fire alarm or escaping from a building unaided, in the event of an emergency. This should be included as part of your FRA and regularly reviewed to ensure the information is current.

Commercial premises

Do not be tempted to use the premises until it has been cleared, cleaned, and made safe. Consult your insurer and before re-entering. See the **Cleaning and Clearing Up** section for further advice when handling fire contaminated or damaged items.

It is your responsibility to check fire alarm systems, fire doors, fire extinguishers, sprinklers and any other fire safety systems are in full working order and replaced if damaged or not working.

If the premises is still in use, escape routes must be available for occupants to use in the event of another fire or other emergency.

Having a good business continuity plan will help to prepare you for emergencies. Further advice is available from:
gov.uk/government/publications/business-continuity-planning

Inspecting officers and fire safety advisors from LFB can also provide you with advice on fire safety law and how it applies to you and your premises.

Prevention and identifying risk

After a fire, a fire safety advisor or inspecting officer from LFB will organise a time to conduct an inspection in order to make sure your premises is still compliant under fire safety law.

Your checklist should include things like:

- make sure your FRA is reviewed and up to date.
- make sure that ducting extract systems are adequately cleaned and maintained.
- check that appropriate doors are fire resistant and are installed correctly.
- check electrical and gas installations or equipment for signs of overloading, inadequate ventilation, or any signs of fire/water damage.
- check if combustible materials involved in the fire may have come into contact with an ignition source e.g. hazardous chemicals or cylinders.
- cylinders should be stored safely, and empties collected regularly.

FIRESETTING INTERVENTION SCHEME (FIS)

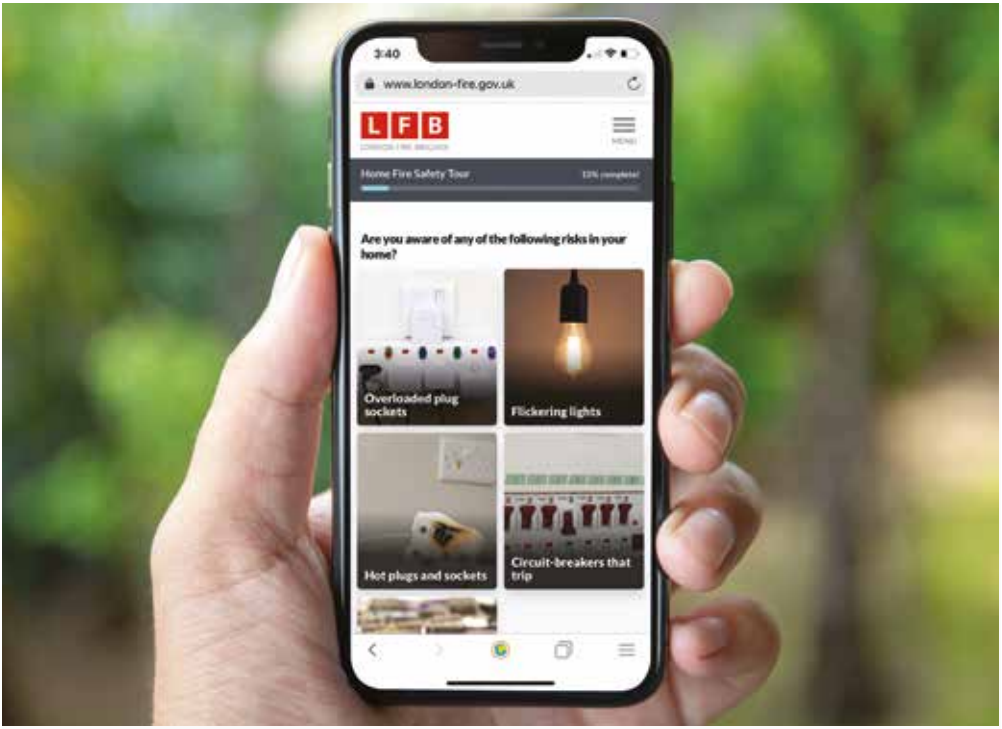
LFB work with children and young people up to the age of 18 who have carried out any type of fire play or fire setting. We support anyone who knows or works with a child or young person who needs help. Parents, carers, teachers, and social workers can contact us about a young person in their care and an on-line referral form is also available on our website. Ask your child's school to contact LFB regarding fire safety.

FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about the scheme go to:
london-fire.gov.uk/community/young-people/worried-about-someone-setting-fires/
or email:
firesetters@london-fire.gov.uk

LFB EQUIPMENT

If LFB equipment has been left at your home or business premises, please contact LFB to arrange collection on **020 8555 1200**.



HELP US TO HELP YOU – USE OUR ONLINE HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKER

- Scan this QR code:

- or go to: **london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/home-fire-safety-checker-hfsc/**
- or Freephone: **0800 028 4428**

IF YOU SPOT A SERIOUS FIRE RISK

In a building you visit, work or live in, speak to the person responsible for the fire safety of your premises first. If they won't take action immediately, or you don't feel comfortable raising this concern with them, contact us on **020 8555 1200 x89170** – during office hours.

Out-of-hours calls will go to our control centre. Or, if you prefer, you can make a report online. We'll ask for your details, but we will not share your identity.

For further details about serious fire risks, visit our website:
london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-workplace/have-you-spotted-a-serious-fire-risk/


TEST/RESET
ST-622
SMOKE ALARM

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