

Fire Recovery Center
Suggested Participants

Agency

Phone Number

Division of Motor Vehicles

Division of Emergency Services

Division of Insurance

Housing

Legal Services

Insurance Companies

FEMA Registration

FEMA Helpline

Governor's Office

Internal Revenue Service

Electric Company

Telephone Company

Red Cross

Social Security Administration

Vital Statistics

County Sheriff

Fire Department

Colorado State Forest Service

Colorado Division of Wildlife

USDA Forest Service

Natural Resource Conservation Service

USDI Bureau of Land Management

USDI National Park Service

USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs

Unified Fire Recovery
Command Center

SAFETY
TIPS

For
Returning Residents
of the

(Fire Name)



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the size and species of the tree, so check carefully to see if the fire or heat penetrated the bark. Where fire has burnt deep into the tree trunk, the tree should be considered unstable until checked.

- ❑ Check for burnt roots by probing the ground with a rod around the base of the tree and out away from the base several feet. The roots are generally six to eight inches below the surface. If you find that the roots have been burned you should consider this tree very unstable; it could easily be toppled by wind.

If the tree is scorched

A scorched tree is one that has lost part or all of its leaves or needles. Leaves will be dry and curled. Needles will be a light red or straw color. Healthy deciduous trees are resilient and may possibly produce new branches and leaves, as well as sprouts at the base of the tree. Evergreen trees, particularly long-needled trees, may survive when partially scorched. An evergreen tree that has been damaged by fire is subject to bark beetle attack. Please seek professional assistance from the Colorado State Forest Service concerning measures for protecting evergreen trees from bark beetle attack.

Seek professional assistance before felling trees near power lines, houses or other improvements.

A wildfire can be a very traumatic event. The following suggestions will help you

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please call your local fire department or one of the telephone numbers listed on the back page.

Insurance

It is critical that you protect yourself from additional losses in the aftermath of a fire. The fire department conducts investigations after any fire and, in cases where a great deal of damage is sustained, this may take several days. As soon as possible after the fire is under control, you may remove valuables to a safer location. A fire investigators will accompany you and take an inventory of items removed. (You

Miscellaneous Safety Awareness

Ash Pits

Holes created by burned trees and stumps create ash pits, which are full of hot ashes. Mark them for your safety, as they can stay hot for many days following the fire, causing serious burns. Warn your family and neighbors, especially children. Tell them to watch for ash pits and to not put hands or feet in these holes — *they are hot!*

Evaluation of Trees Damaged by Fire

The following information will assist you in evaluating any trees that have been scorched or burnt by the fire. Identification of the type of tree affected is important and can easily be done. Two basic types of trees exist this area: deciduous and evergreen. Deciduous trees are broadleaf trees that loose their leaves in the fall.

In this area we have _____ deciduous trees.

Evergreen trees have needles and in this area we have _____ .

First: Visually check the tree stability. Any tree weakened by fire may be a hazard. Winds are normally responsible for toppling weakened trees. The wind patterns in your area may have changed as a result of the loss of adjacent tree cover.

If the Tree Looks Stable:

- ☐ Visually check for burnt, partially burnt or broken branches and tree tops that may fall.
- ☐ Check for burns on the tree trunk. If the bark on the trunk of the tree has been burned off or scorched by very high temperatures completely around the tree's circumference, the tree will not survive. This is because the living portion of the tree (the cambium) was destroyed. The bark of the tree provides protection to the cambium layer during a fire. Bark thickness varies based upon

Fire Recovery Safety Tips

REMEMBER – *Use caution and good judgment. Hazards may still exist, even though the fire is controlled.*

Electrical Safety Facts

General

An important part of disaster recovery is hazard recognition. Should you come across damaged or fallen power poles or lines, contact _____ **immediately. Do not touch the downed wires.** In the cleanup area, be especially careful when cutting trees and operating heavy equipment around power lines. Vegetation and power poles may have lost stability due to fire damage.

If a power line or pole should fall next to you while working in the area, **do not walk — hop out of the area.** (Using this technique, you will be less likely to be a conductor of electricity.)

Electricity is always trying to go somewhere. It goes easily through conductors; it does not go easily through non-conductors.

Conductors

metal
water
wet things
things with water in them,
(including animals and people)

Non-Conductors

rubber
glass
plastic

One of the most important fixtures in the conduction of electric current are utility poles. Poles hold the wires high above the ground, out of the reach of people and livestock. The fire or fire suppression actions may have dislodged or broken some of these poles, causing the wires to sag or break, resulting in extremely hazardous conditions. If you find a damaged or fallen utility pole, contact _____ immediately. Meanwhile, **do not touch anything at the scene.** Crews will be dispatched at once to correct the situation. If possible, remain on the scene to warn others of the hazard until repair crews arrive.

Trees can also be dangerous conductors of electricity. When a tree falls or grows into contact with power wires, the electric power diverts and finds a path to the ground through the branches and the trunk. Anyone who comes into contact with these trees is subject to tragic consequences, since electric power can easily jump from the tree to the person.

Electrical Safety Tips

- ❑ Do not overload circuits; don't operate several large appliances at the same time on the same circuit.
- ❑ Do not use extension cords to plug in many items on one outlet.
- ❑ Turn off appliances when you finish using them. Provide adequate air circulation around all appliances to prevent over-heating. Keep appliances clean, repaired and serviced.
- ❑ Check wires and plugs regularly. Replace worn or frayed wires. Do not run cords under carpets or across doorways.
- ❑ Be careful when replacing fuses or breakers. Keep the area near the circuit box dry and turn the main switch off before changing the fuse/breaker.
- ❑ Temporary lines should be removed from service.

Electrical Locations to Avoid

- ❑ Electrical meters and service lines coming into the home or other out buildings.
- ❑ Any power supply line which appears to sag, show bare wire or have insulation missing.
- ❑ Secured power substations or any area identified as high voltage.
- ❑ Downed power lines.

HEATING FUELS

Checking Propane Tanks

Propane suppliers recommend that homeowners contact them for an inspection prior to reusing their system. If the fire burned the tank, the pressure relief valve probably opened and released the contents of the tank. Tanks, brass and copper fittings, and lines may be heat-damaged and unsafe. **Valves should be turned off and remain closed until the propane suppliers inspect the system.**

Checking Home Heating Oil Tanks

Heating oil suppliers recommend homeowners contact them for an inspection prior to reusing their system. The tank may have shifted or fallen from the stand and fuel lines may have kinked or weakened. Heat from the fire may have caused the tank to warp or bulge. Non-vented tanks are more likely to bulge or show signs of stress. The fire may have loosened or damaged fittings and filters. If the tank is intact and heating oil remains in the tank, the heating oil should still be good. If you have questions on the integrity of the tank, fuel lines, tank stand, or the fuel, or need assistance in moving the tank or returning it to service, contact your fuel supplier.

SOLID WASTE

Removing Debris

Cleanup of your property can expose you to potential health problems from hazardous materials. Wet down any debris to minimize health impacts from breathing dust particles. The use of a two-strap dust particulate mask with nose clip and coveralls will provide the best minimal protection. Leather gloves should be worn to protect your hands from sharp objects while removing debris.

Items such as outhouse remnants, plumbing fixtures and sewer piping can contain high levels of bacteria. Rubber gloves should be worn.

Hazardous materials such as kitchen and bathroom cleaning products, paint batteries, contaminated fuel and damaged fuel containers must be handled properly. _____ can accept certain types of hazardous waste, including: (waste oil, batteries, paints, etc.) _____ can also provide advice about how other types of hazardous materials can be disposed. Hazardous waste disposal is (free or _____ [list cost]) to owners of private residences. Businesses should inquire with landfill staff regarding fees.

All hazardous materials should be labeled as to their contents if known! If you can't identify the product, *PLEASE* let the personnel at the collection site know!

Special Information on Fuses & Circuit Breakers

Fuses and circuit breakers shut off the current whenever too much current tries to flow through a wire because of

- 1) a short circuit, possibly caused by a bare wire touching the ground;
- 2) overloading, possibly caused by too many lights or appliances on one circuit; or
- 3) by defective parts in an appliance.

Know where the main circuit or fuse box is located in your house. Be sure you can locate the main switch; it controls all the power coming into the house and is usually inside the circuit box. In some cases, however, it may be located outside the house. Fuse or circuit boxes generally are labeled to designate which area of the house the circuits or fuses serve.

Emergency Procedures for an Electrical Fire

- ☐ Call the Fire Department.
- ☐ Shut off power supply at the breaker if possible.

Restoring Electric Power

If, upon returning to your residence, there is no electrical power, please check to make sure the main breaker is on. If the breakers are on and power is still not present, please call _____ at _____ to report the power outage. Reporting problems like a down or broken wire will speed the process of power restoration.

- ☐ Stand off to one side of the breaker box when turning on the main breaker. ***Do not stand directly in front of box.***
- ☐ If any smells of hot electrical insulation or sparking occurs, ***turn off the breaker immediately and call an electrician.***
- ☐ If electrical lights or appliances appear brighter than normal, turn off main breaker. ***The service entrance needs to be checked.***

To Change A Fuse

Try to find the cause of the blown fuse, and correct it by disconnecting the defective appliance or appliances causing the overload or short circuit. Shut off the main power switch when you change the fuse.

Do not replace fuses with a higher amp rating fuse than you removed

Turn on the main switch to restore the power.

If the fuse blows again, leave it alone and contact a certified electrician. Other problems may exist and should be investigated to remove the possibility of an electrical fire.

To Reset a Circuit Breaker

Try to find the cause of the overload or short circuit and correct it by disconnecting the defective appliance or appliances. Turn the switch to “on” to reset and restore power. If breaker trips again leave it alone, and contact a certified electrician. Other problems may exist and should be found to remove the possibility of an electrical fire.

Drinking Water

Restoring Water Systems

Unless impacted by a fuel spill, the fire should not have affected wells at undamaged homes. If your house was damaged, your water system may potentially have become contaminated with bacteria due to loss of water pressure. In this case, the _____ recommends that the well be disinfected and the water tested before consumption. To disinfect your water system, pour ½ - 1 cup of chlorine bleach inside the well casing and turn on all faucets until a chlorine scent is noticed. Allow the chlorine solution to remain in the system overnight. The following morning, open all faucets and flush the system until free of chlorine smell.

If you have a public-use well or water system (such as a church or trailer court) _____ requests that you have the routine 3-month bacteria/water sample collected and tested before consuming any water.