

After the Fire

The Next Steps

Grayslake Fire District

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Value Property

Lost goods are hard to measure for people that are recovering from a fire. Some of these items could have sentimental value to you, but you have to measure them correctly. Here are some ways to measure them correctly:

Your Evaluation:

1. Cost when purchased: This is needed to get a final value on an item. Also, a receipt can help verify the cost price.
2. Market value before the fire: This is a good way to tell the price of an item. It is the original cost of the item minus the wear and tear that it has sustained thus far.
3. Cost after the fire: This is better known as “salvage value.”

Salvage Tips

There are companies that are willing to help you with restoration of items. However, if they can't help you out then here are some helpful hints.

Clothing

Read the tags very carefully and wash them accordingly if you are washing them yourself. The exposure of oxygen is also a great way to get rid of smell.

Cooking Utensils

Wash with soapy water, clean, and polish. Copper and brass can be polished with a special cloth. You can use salt on a piece of lemon or use salt on a cloth covered in vinegar.

Electrical Appliances

Do not use any of these appliances or utilities until they have been checked by a service representative. Also, if gas and water have been turned off then let it stay that way until a utility company turns it back on. **DO NOT DO IT YOURSELF.**

Rugs and Carpets

These should be allowed to dry completely. Throw rugs can be cleaned by sweeping or vacuuming and then shampooing. Rugs need to be dried as quickly as possible; expose them to warm, circulating air. For more information, call a service that cleans rugs and carpets to get tips.

Leather and Books

Wipe leather with a damp cloth and then with a dry cloth after. Stuff leather items with newspaper to maintain shape. Leave suitcases open. Leather goods should not be dried with heat and sunlight. When these leather goods are dry, clean them with saddle soap.

A way to save wet books is with a vacuum freezer. This will remove the moisture without damaging the pages. If there is no vacuum freezer, place in a normal freezer until a vacuum freezer can be obtained.

Locks and Hinges

Locks should be taken apart and wiped out with oil. If they can't be removed, spray machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole, and work the knob to distribute the oil. Hinges also need to be cleaned and oiled.

Food

Wash any canned goods and food in jars with detergent and water. If the label comes off, then mark the can or jar with a grease pencil. Don't use any cans that are deformed or rusted. Watch expiration dates, and don't refreeze food that has been thawed. There may be an odor in the fridge or freezer. To remove, wash the inside with baking soda and water. Baking soda in an open container or a piece of charcoal can be placed inside to help absorb odor as well.

Walls., Floors, and Furniture

To remove soot and smoke from walls, floors, and furniture, use a mild soap or detergent, or mix together the following solution:

- 4 - 6 Tablespoons of Tri-sodium Phosphate (TSP)
- 1 cup of household cleaner or chlorine bleach
- 1 - gallon warm water

Wear rubber gloves when using this solution. Rinse all walls and furniture with clear warm water and dry thoroughly after washing. Wash small areas at a time, floor to ceiling. Then rinse the wall and clean the water immediately. **DO NOT** repaint until the walls and ceilings are completely dry.

FAQs

Q. Why are windows broken or holes cut in the roof?

As a fire burns, it moves upwards and outwards. Breaking the windows and cutting holes in the roof slows down the damaging movement due to ventilation. Also, it gets rid of smoke that decreases visibility, and allows for the firefighters to work more efficiently. This ends up being less damaging in the long run.

Q. Why are holes cut in walls?

This is done so that the fire department knows that the fire is completely out. To make sure there is no fire in the walls or other hidden places.

Q. Is it possible to obtain a copy of the fire report?

In most places, a fire report is public documentation, and it is available at the fire department or fire marshal's office.