

Fire Department Activities

While on the scene of a fire incident, the Fire Department will be observed doing a variety of activities. Many of these activities may seem foreign to you, however, these procedures and practices follow local, state, and national standards for the mitigation of the emergencies the Fire Department was called to the scene and presented with. Below are just a few explanations of these activities.

Ventilation

Fires can vary in size; even small fires can rapidly fill a structure with heat, smoke, and toxic gases. This can create a toxic environment that can endanger trapped occupants, cause damage throughout the structure, and hinder firefighting operations. To help alleviate the heat and smoke in this environment, firefighters will open windows and doors, use large fans many times observed at the front of the structure, remove skylights, or cut holes in roofs. These methods aid in controlling the fire and minimizing damage to your home and possessions.

Locating Hidden Fires

While inside a dwelling, firefighters will often remove sheetrock or paneling covering interior walls to inspect for the fire that has spread inside of the wall. If this is not done, fires can go undetected and result in more extensive damage than the original fire. Unfortunately, to properly extinguish a fire, fire crews may cause some damage to the structure. We take as many precautions as possible to protect your property and limit the amount of damage done.

We are always available to answer any questions you may have about the incident.

Leaving The Scene

Depending on the amount of damage done during the fire, firefighters can radio dispatch for a board-up company to respond to the scene to secure the premises. The fire department does not insure that the structure is safe for habitation before leaving.

Investigation

The Gastonia Fire Marshal's Office works to determine the Origin and Cause of every fire inside the city limits of Gastonia. Fires that are suspicious in nature are investigated in conjunction with the Gastonia Police Department. The primary purpose of a fire investigation is to determine the cause of the fire, and your assistance during any fire investigation is important and always appreciated.

Fire Reports

For assistance in obtaining a fire report of your incident, please call **Gastonia Fire Department Station #1 at 704 866 6807**. If requested, a fire report can be sent via email when a valid email address is provided. Your insurance company (if applicable) may require you to submit a copy of the incident as a part of your claim process. Please allow up to 24 hours for the report to be finished.

Red Cross

If the fire incident caused the dwelling to be considered unsafe, the Gaston County Chapter of the Red Cross may be able to assist. They can be reached at (833) 583 3111. The determination of assistance that can be provided is up to the discretion of the Red Cross, not the Gastonia Fire Department.

The following departments can be contacted to provide additional information or assistance:

Gaston County Building Inspections
(704) 866 3155

Gaston County Health Department
(704) 853 5000

Gaston County Social Services
(704) 862 7500

Gastonia Police Department
(704) 866 6880

Homeowner Activities

Smoke Alarms

After a fire, once the structure is safe to occupy it is very important to assure that all smoke alarms are in good working order. If your smoke alarm is damaged, or you need a smoke alarm please call 704 866 6807, or make your request online at: Gastoniafire.org.

Chimney Fires

If a chimney fire has occurred at your residence, you should not use the fireplace or wood stove until the chimney has been professionally cleaned and inspected by qualified personnel.

Food

If the fire resulted in you losing power, make arrangements as soon as possible to move frozen foods. Many freezers will stay cold enough to keep food for up to 24 hours. Once the food is out, rinse the freezer and prop the door open with a rolled towel or foam padding block to assure ventilation and prevent mildew. Refrigerators should be emptied, cleaned, and propped open as well. Food that is in cans or jars should be washed in detergent and water.

Insurance

If you have insurance on your property, you should contact your agency or agent as soon as possible to report the fire. The agent can assist with advice on securing your home and beginning the restoration process if applicable. The agent can also be a valuable resource by informing you of the expenses your insurance company will and will not cover before you begin any work. The insurance company will most likely require an itemized list of contents and personal belongings. Do not throw anything away until you have been advised by your insurance company.

Cleanup

Whether your property is insured or not, consider engaging the services of a reputable

commercial firm that specialized in the after-fire cleanup. We recommend choosing contractors and service firms that are licensed and insured and can provide customer references and give a complete written description of the work to be done.

Damaged Documents and Records

Copies of birth certificates, marriage or divorce records, deeds, plats, and other important documents can be obtained from the Gaston County Register of Deeds. They can be reached at 704 862 7680.

Take Measures to Prevent Additional Damages

If the damage from the fire is so severe you must make arrangements to live elsewhere and secure your property before leaving. As previously stated in this pamphlet, the fire department will notify a board-up company for you if requested while on the scene. If doors and windows are intact, properly close and lock them to prevent unauthorized entry into the property. Doors and windows that have been burned should be boarded up.

Restoring Utilities

Utilities, whether electric or gas should only be restored by qualified personnel. If power is disconnected due to a fire, an electrical inspection must be conducted and approved by Gaston County Building Inspections for power to be restored.



AFTER THE FIRE

A guide to assist the citizens of Gastonia after a fire

HELPFUL INFORMATION FROM THE GASTONIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

This pamphlet has been prepared by the Gastonia Fire Department, to assist the citizens of Gastonia who have had a fire take place. This information is provided to help you to understand the procedures used by the fire department, and to assist during this difficult time.



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