

After a Fire

Fires are destructive to property. Some of the physical issues can be dealt with by knowing the appropriate procedures for cleaning and preserving damaged materials. Some of these are listed in Table 10-4. For property losses owners may also consult IRS Publication 547: *Tax Information on Disasters, Casualty Losses and Thefts*, for information on dealing with these losses at tax time. This publication has recommendations and procedures for filing tax returns after a major fire.

Table 10-4 Some remedies for fire-damaged items

Problem	Solution
Mild smoke odor or soot staining	Use a mixture of 4-6 tablespoonfuls of trisodium phosphate and 1 cup of domestic bleach in 1 gallon of water to wash items
Mildew contamination	Use soap to clean
Bulging, dented, or rusting canned goods	Discard
Thawed frozen goods	Do not refreeze; discard if not suitable for consumption
Burned or molten cash	Consult with local bank or U.S. Treasury for refund

Fires also affect the psyche. It is not uncommon for fire victims to seek and benefit from mental health counseling.