



# American Red Cross

Central Iowa Chapter

## Your Road to Recovery



After A Fire

# **The American Red Cross Pledge of Service**

**American Red Cross assistance is intended to meet your immediate, emergency, disaster- caused needs, and provide a basis of support for your recovery.**

We will work with you to help determine your needs and help you plan your recovery based on:

- Your specific damage impact and needs
- Your personal resources
- Resources in the community

## **The American Red Cross pledges that:**

- You will receive assistance and services that are flexible and tailored to meet your disaster-caused basic needs and recovery priorities.
- You will be assisted and served in a timely manner.
- You will receive excellent service from your first contact with the Red Cross until your last.
- All Red Cross Disaster Services staff will treat you with respect and dignity at all times and protect your confidentiality.
- We will be empathetic and listen to your individual needs and recovery plans.
- We will make every effort to provide our services in a manner that respects both individual and cultural differences.

## **The Red Cross will provide assistance to meet your disaster-caused basic needs.**

We recognize that your needs may be different from those of your neighbors and friends. Based on the disaster's impact and your resources, the Red Cross may provide you and your family:

- Meals and a safe place to stay
- Crisis counseling and information to help you and your family cope with emotional trauma
- The means to obtain clothing, essential medications and disaster –related health care
- Other essential items you can use immediately in your recovery
- Referrals to community partners and government resources
- Financial assistance to purchase items or services to promote your recovery

**For further disaster information, assistance or to comment on our service,  
Please call the Central Iowa Chapter of the American Red Cross  
in Des Moines, IA at 515-243-4054**

**All Red Cross disaster assistance and services are free, provided through donations made by the American people and are provided without regard to citizenship, race, religion, age, culture or creed.**

The Red Cross provides assistance to meet immediate disaster –caused needs, and ensures accountability with you, our donors, and the American Public. American Red Cross assistance is not an entitlement and is not intended to:

- Replace all disaster-caused losses
- Replace or reimburse wages
- Duplicate government and personal resources or other community assistance and services.

## Vital Documents and Whom to Contact About Replacement

<b>Driver's License</b>	Department of Motor Vehicles
<b>Government Issued ID</b>	Contact the issuing authority
<b>Insurance policies</b>	Your insurance agent or company
<b>Military discharge papers</b>	Department of Veterans Affairs, <b>1-800-827-1000</b> or <b>TDD/TTY 1-800-829-4833</b>
<b>Passports</b>	State Department—Passport Services, <b>202-955-0430</b> (24 hours)
<b>Birth, death and marriage certificates</b>	Bureau of Records in the appropriate state State of Iowa - 515-281-4944
<b>Social Security or Medicare cards</b>	Local Social Security office <b>1-800-772-1213</b> or <b>TDD/TTY 1-800-325-0778</b>
<b>Credit cards</b>	The issuing companies as soon as possible  Mastercard, contact issuing financial institution VISA, contact issuing financial institution American Express, <b>1-800-441-0519</b> Discover, <b>1-800-DISCOVER (1-800-347-2683)</b> , <b>TDD/TTY 1-800-347-7449</b>
<b>Titles to deeds</b>	Records department of the area in which the property is located
<b>Stocks and bonds</b>	Issuing company or your broker
<b>Wills</b>	Your attorney
<b>Income tax record</b>	The IRS center where filed, your accountant or <b>1-800-829-1040</b>
<b>Citizenship papers</b>	Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, <b>1-800-375-5283</b>
<b>Mortgage papers</b>	Lending institution

## Helping Pets

If you have pets, try to find and comfort them. A scared animal may react by biting or scratching. Handle animals carefully and calmly. Pets can become upset and react in unusual ways, such as spraying urine, defecating on floors or scratching/biting furnishings. Since pets will need regular care and attention to help them calm down, try to leave pets with a family member, friend, veterinarian or boarding facility while you are cleaning up your home. Animals are naturally inquisitive and could be injured if they are brought back to a damaged home.



- **Use toys, a blanket or favorite human's unsoiled clothing to comfort pets.**
- **Make sure pets are fed their usual diet, and have plenty of water.**
- **Visit your pets regularly, speak calmly and take some time out to play with them. Doing so can also help you in your recovery, as well.**

---

## Cleaning Up and Removing Smoke Odor

- **There are some products available for reducing odors in fabrics.**

These products will list these properties on the label. A product with tri-sodium phosphate (TSP) is a common cleaning agent. It can be purchased under the generic name TSP. It is a caustic substance and should be used with care. Use and store it out of reach of children and pets. Read the label for further information and safety instructions. Any product that is not clearly described as suitable for use on personal clothing or fabrics that come in contact with skin should never be used for the removal of smoke odors from clothing.

- **Test garments before using any treatment, and follow the manufacturer's instructions.**

Smoke odor and soot can sometimes be washed from clothing that can be bleached with 4 to 6 tbsp. Tri-Sodium Phosphate, 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach, to every gallon of warm water. Mix well, add clothes and rinse with clear water. Dry thoroughly.

Alternatively, consider washing clothes in cold water with your usual household laundry detergent, and adding one tablespoon of pure vanilla extract. This solution also has been shown to remove smoke odors on kitchen surfaces and washable furniture. To remove soot and smoke from walls, furniture and floors, use a mild soap or detergent or mix together 4 to 6 tbsp. tri-sodium phosphate and 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach to every gallon of warm water. Wear rubber gloves when cleaning with this solution. Be sure to rinse your walls and furniture with clear warm water and dry thoroughly after washing them with this.

## Cleaning Up and Removing Smoke Odor (...continued)

- **Pots, pans, flatware, etc., should be washed with soapy water, rinsed and then polished with a fine-powdered cleaner.**

You can polish copper and brass with salt sprinkled on a piece of lemon, or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated with vinegar.

- **Wipe leather goods with a damp cloth, then a dry cloth.**

Stuff purses and shoes with newspaper to retain shape. Leave suitcases open. Leather goods should be dried away from heat and sun. When leather goods are dry, clean with saddle soap. Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry away from heat and sun.

- **Washable wallpaper can be cleansed like painted walls, but do not wet through the paper.**

Work from bottom to top to prevent streaking. Use a commercial paste to repaste any loose edges or sections.

Wash a small area of the walls at a time, working from the floor up. Then rinse the wall with clear water immediately. Ceilings should be washed last. Do not repaint until walls and ceilings are completely dry.

Reduce the chances of growth of mold and mildew by wiping down all surfaces that had gotten wet with a solution of one cup of liquid household bleach to a gallon of water. Test painted, textured or wallpapered surfaces to ensure that the bleach solution will not discolor these surfaces. To conduct this test, wipe a small area of the surface with the bleach solution, and allow it to dry at least 24 hours.

- **Consult a professional about replacing drywall and insulation that has been soaked by water from fire hoses.**

Water-damaged drywall and insulation must be replaced. It can not be dried out and maintain structural integrity or resistance to mold and mildew.



©Tim Leverett

# TAKING CARE OF YOUR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

## After a Disaster



Each positive action you take can help you feel better and more in control

Disasters can bring about significant stress. This is especially true if you have experienced a previous disaster. The good news is that many people have experience coping with stressful life events and are naturally resilient—meaning we are designed to “bounce back” from difficult times. In the days following a disaster, it is common for you, your family and friends to experience a variety of reactions. Feelings of exhaustion, worry, and anger can surface, especially if you’ve had to leave your home or have had to contend with the frustrations of having no electricity, have had to clean up disaster debris, or have had to wait in long lines for disaster assistance... Here is some information on how to recognize your current feelings and tips for taking care of the emotional health of you, your family and friends.

### What You May Be Feeling Now

When we experience a disaster or other stressful life event, we can have a variety of reactions, all of which may be common responses to difficult situations. These reactions can include:

- Feeling physically and mentally drained
- Frustration occurring more quickly and more often
- Feeling tired, sad, numb, lonely, or worried
- Having difficulty making decisions or staying focused on topics
- Arguing more with family and friends
- Experiencing changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- Becoming easily frustrated, on a frequent basis

*Most of these reactions are temporary and will go away over time. Try to accept whatever reactions you may have. Look for ways to take one step at a time and focus on taking care of your disaster related needs and those of your family.*

### Taking Action

Getting ourselves and our lives back in a routine that is comfortable for us takes time. Each positive action you take can help you feel better and more in control. Here are some helpful tips that may help put your priorities in place and help you take care of yourself and your loved ones:

- **Take care of your safety.** Find a safe place to stay and make sure your physical health needs and those of your family are addressed. Seek medical attention, if necessary.
- **Eat healthy.** During times of stress it is important that you maintain a balanced diet and drink plenty of water.
- **Get some rest.** With so much to do, it may be difficult to have enough time to rest or get adequate sleep. Giving your body and mind a break can boost your ability to cope with the stress you may be experiencing.
- **Stay connected with family and friends.** Giving and getting support is one of the most important things you can do.
- **Be patient with yourself and with those around you.** Recognize that everyone is stressed and may need some time to put their feelings and thoughts in order.
- **Set priorities.** Tackle tasks in small steps.
- **Gather information** about assistance and resources that will help you and your family members meet your disaster-related needs.
- Finally, **stay positive.** Remind yourself of how you’ve successfully gotten through difficult times in the past. Reach out when you need support, and help others when they need it.

### If You Still Don’t Feel Better

Many people have experience coping with stressful life events and typically feel better after a few days. Others find that their stress does not go away as quickly as they would like and it influences their relationships with their family, friends and others. If you find yourself or a loved one experiencing some of the feelings and reactions listed below for two weeks or more, this may be a sign that you need to reach out for additional assistance.

- Crying spells or bursts of anger
- Increased physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomachaches,
- Feeling guilty, helpless or hopeless
- Difficulty eating and sleeping
- Fatigue
- Avoiding family and friends
- Losing interest in things

For additional resources, contact your local Red Cross Disaster Mental Health or community mental health professional.

*Please seek **immediate** help if you or someone you know is feeling that life isn’t worth living or if you are having thoughts of harming yourself or others. You can also call the national suicide hotline at **1-800-273-8255**.*