

## Cleaning up after a fire

Smoke, odours and soot can last a long time and you will probably need to re-clean everything in your homes more than once. Small dishes of vinegar, vanilla, or activated charcoal can be placed in different rooms to help absorb odours. Commercial products are also available. As rooms are cleaned, seal them off with plastic sheeting to keep soot from travelling from room to room. Vacuum all surfaces with both a dry and wet vacuum where possible.

If you cannot remove the smoke odour, contact a professional.

### Walls, floors and furniture

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

- 4 to 6 tablespoons of tri-sodium phosphate (available at hardware stores)
- 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach
- 1 gallon warm water

Wear rubber gloves when cleaning, and be sure to rinse your walls and furniture with clear warm water, and dry thoroughly. Wash a small area of wall at a time, working from the floor up. Then immediately rinse the wall with clear water. Ceilings should be washed last. Open windows and use a fan to help circulate the air.

Do not repaint until walls and ceilings are completely dry.

### Clothing

Smoke odour and soot can sometimes be removed from clothing. The following may help clean clothing that can be bleached:

- Soak clothing in a solution of 125 ml of household ammonia and 8 litres of water and rinse in a separate solution of vinegar and water. You may need to repeat this several times.

Garments made of wool, silk or rayon should be sent to a dry cleaner as soon as possible. Consult a professional cleaning service if you have further questions about cleaning clothing.

### Cooking utensils

Cooking utensils, such as pots, pans and flatware can be cleaned with hot, soapy water, rinsed and then polished with a fine-powdered cleaner. Copper and brass can be polished with specialty polish, with salt sprinkled on a piece of lemon, or with salt sprinkled on a cloth that has been soaked in vinegar.

### Leather goods

Leather goods can be wiped with a clean cloth and then dried with a dry cloth.