

3 Common Complications After House Fires

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What's the worst thing that can happen to your home after a fire? The answer is complicated. A house fire is a serious event, so it's important to know what you should do after such an incident occurs. Here are three common complications that may occur after a house fire: structural damage, water damage, and air contamination.

Hidden Structural Damage

In some cases, a house may not appear to have extreme fire damage even though it may have structural damage in walls, floors, and ceilings. This can be caused by the fire and by methods used to *fight* the fire. Some fire damages, such as a collapsed roof or fallen walls, are easy to see. But, other damage is often concealed behind walls and below floors. Structural damage may present significant safety and health risks after house fires, which must be addressed promptly to protect the occupants of your home.

Be sure to have your home inspected after a fire. Signs of structural damage from a fire may include:

- Cracks or chips in the foundation
- Weakened floors
- Thoroughly charred drywall on walls or ceiling
- Wet insulation in walls due to fire fighting
- Soot damage near electrical outlets
- Sagging in the ceiling drywall
- Water dripping from ceiling lights or vents

Water Damage from Fighting the Fire

Water damage is common after a house fire because great amounts of water often must be used to put out a house fire. Typical damage due to water used to fight a fire can include:

1. *Structural damage* — Using water to fight a house fire can cause structural damage. The water may saturate wood studs, rafters, trusses, drywall, plywood roof decking, floor underlayment, joists, siding, and other structural components.
2. *Electrical issues* — Water damage to wiring, outlets, and appliances are common during house fires. Insulation may also be water damaged and continue dripping water. This can lead to the rotting of structural components and mold growth.
3. *Mold spread* — Without prompt and thorough structural drying, water from fire-fighting can cause widespread mold growth, promoting dry rot of the structure. It can also cause health issues, such as breathing difficulties, various allergic reactions, and numerous others. Especially for people already struggling with respiratory problems, mold growth can present a potentially serious, even life-threatening, health hazard.

Dangerous Indoor Air Pollutants

Smoke and soot that continue to fill the air inside a home after a fire can cause significant effects for people inside the living spaces. This severe indoor pollution problem is usually due to mold or burned drywall, carpeting, furniture, and other porous building materials and home contents. These can retain soot and smoke even after the flames and dense masses of smoke are gone from the interior.

At a minimum, the indoor air pollution left by a fire can leave a strong foul odor and leave the interior appearance in bad condition, with smoke and soot stains covering areas of walls, ceilings, floors, and contents.

- *Short-term effects* — Exposure to lingering smoke and a layer of soot after a house fire can cause respiratory difficulties, including breathing problems, coughing, bronchitis, and asthma attacks. It can also cause throat and/or eye irritation and other health effects.
- *Long-term effects* — Prolonged exposure to smoke and soot can lead to serious health consequences, such as stroke, heart attack, and cancer. These are due to the hazardous chemicals released in a house fire from construction and finish materials, such as plastics, foams, and fabrics.

What To Do After a House Fire

The first action you should take after a house fire has been extinguished is to ensure that everyone is safe and does not have any serious physical effects from the fire. After the fire has been put out, inspect for major damage.

You should immediately begin cleaning up after a house fire, correcting serious safety issues promptly, and beginning necessary fire damage restoration processes. These prompt actions can help prevent further damage to your home. It also removes safety and health hazards to make your home habitable and comfortable again. If you find signs of significant damage, contact your local disaster response and restoration team at Utah Flood Cleanup disaster restoration services for help as soon as possible.

For the Best Solutions to House Fire Damage

If your home has been damaged by fire or smoke, contact the experts at Utah Flood Cleanup for help right away. We can start making things better and get you back on track as quickly as possible! We provide 24/7 emergency service with a 1-hour response time.

We are the top disaster cleanup and restoration professionals in Utah. We specialize in fire, flood, and mold restoration. Our disaster cleanup response and restoration experts diligently conform to all guidelines in IICRC S-500 and S-520. We guarantee all our workmanship quality. Our company holds numerous industry licenses, affiliations, awards, and certifications, including ASD, CDS, and IICRC WTR.

Call Utah Flood Cleanup for the best fire damage cleanup service in Utah or contact us online to schedule a FREE inspection of your property. We'll be happy to provide an assessment and timeline on how we can help get your home back into shape after this unfortunate experience.