

# AFTER THE FIRE: CLEANING UP

You've suffered through a fire and now it's time to recover. The structural damage can be devastating, but the emotional damage can also be traumatic. It's time to take the first step because you need to begin the process of recovery.

## BUT WHERE TO START?



# FIRST THINGS **FIRST:**

Do not enter your home until the fire department gives you explicit permission. Fires may easily re-ignite. Even seemingly cosmetic fire damage may go deeper than you realize.

# CONTACT YOUR **INSURANCE AGENT.**

Contacting your home and auto insurance agents is the first step toward obtaining the money for restoration. Agents can also recommend lodging, a restoration company to assess fire damage, and provide you with instructions to minimize damage and maximize safety.



A black and white photograph of a hand being washed under a stream of water. The water is falling from the top left, creating a clear, dynamic stream that splashes around the hand. The hand is positioned in the lower center of the frame, with fingers slightly curled. The background is a plain, light color, making the water and the hand stand out.

# UTILITIES

Do not turn on electricity or gas. Do not turn on and consume water, nor use it to wash your hands. Contact your local utility companies to inspect and reestablish safe services.

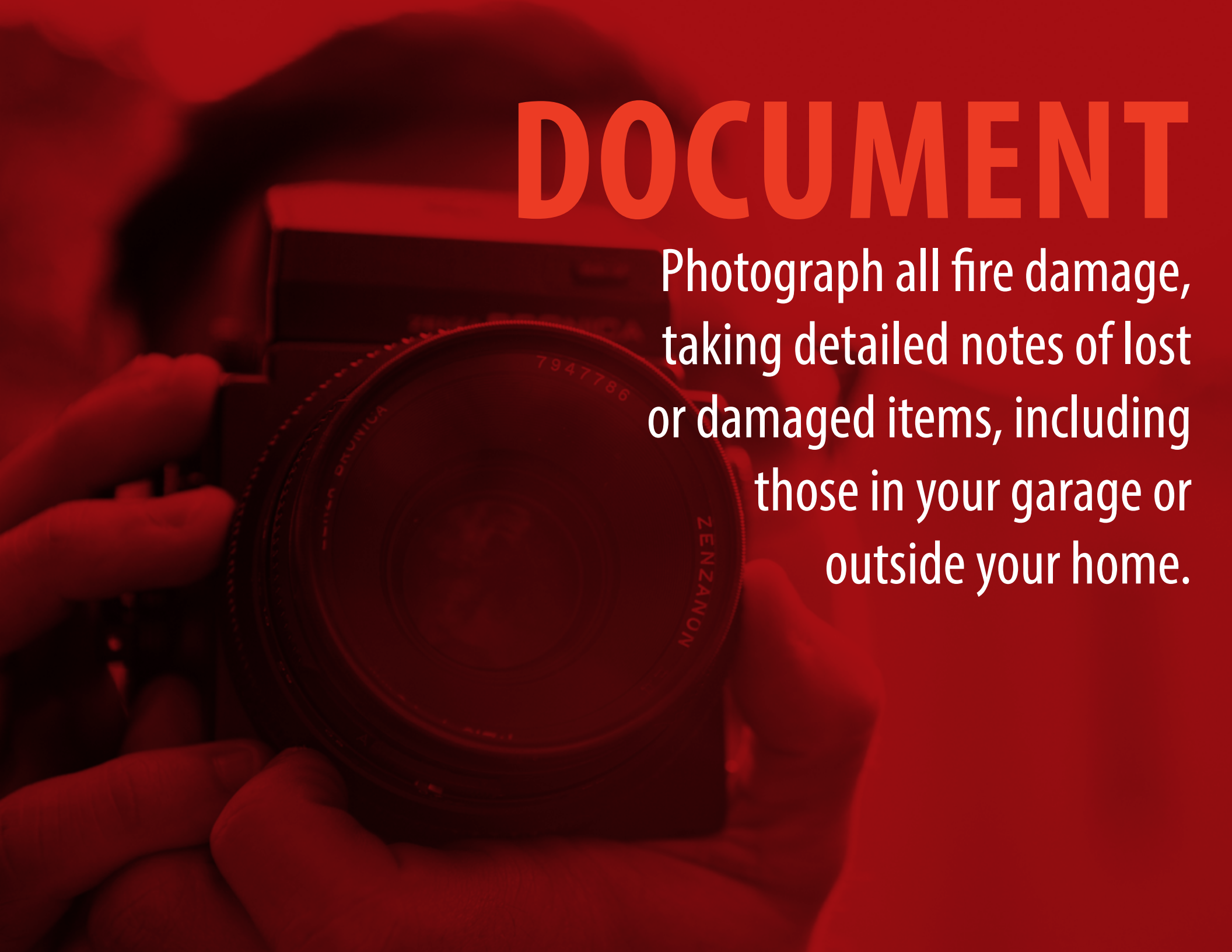
# ATTEND TO **PETS**

Handle scared pets carefully and calmly – they may bite or scratch. Leave pets with a family member, friend, or vet until cleanup is complete.



# DOCUMENT

Photograph all fire damage, taking detailed notes of lost or damaged items, including those in your garage or outside your home.



# RETRIEVE

If you are unable to stay, quickly gather essential documents and irreplaceable photos, heirlooms, and valuables.



# BOARD UP

Cover all holes, including broken windows and holes in the roof or walls from firefighting efforts. This will protect your home against further damage and vandalism. Your insurance company may also require it. Don't have the materials or know-how? Contact Rainbow International® for 24/7 emergency board ups and tarp overs.





# MAKE CONTACT

Contact local police and advise them if your home will be vacant. Notify your children's school, your lender, the post office, utility companies, credit card companies, and any business or organization you've borrowed from. They may be able to lower or defer payments until life returns to normal. Additionally, check with the IRS regarding possible benefits available to individuals recovering from fire loss.

# REPLACE

Contact the necessary agencies to replace documents lost in the fire, such as licenses and passports, checks, credit cards, birth certificates, social security cards, marriage certificates, vehicle titles, school and military records, stocks and bonds, wills, and more. Contact your regional bank reserve to replace damaged currency.



# GET ASSISTANCE

Contact your local Red Cross and Salvation Army for disaster relief assistance including shelter, food, water, and medication. Take care of emotional needs as well, scheduling counseling through the Red Cross or your local church.



# SMOKE DAMAGED **ITEMS**

Restoration techniques may be available  
to salvage the contents of your home.

Ask Rainbow International<sup>®</sup> about our  
contents clean-up services.

# REMEMBER, CLEANING AFTER FIRE DAMAGE DIFFERS FROM **“NORMAL” HOUSE CLEANING.**

Soot and dirty water left behind could harbor dangerous contaminants that can make you sick. When cleaning, wear the appropriate gloves – disposable for dealing with contaminated items, and thicker, leather gloves for sharp items and construction debris. Thick-soled shoes and a two-strap dust particulate mask are also essential for safety.

A black and white photograph of a man in a striped Rainbow International shirt shaking hands with a woman. In the background, a white van with the Rainbow International logo and text '24/7 EMERGENCY SERVICE' is parked in front of a brick house. The man's shirt has a logo and a name tag that says 'John Smith'.

# GET ADVICE

Before you start, ask your insurance agent, fire department, or Rainbow International® restoration specialist for advice on safely cleaning up and making repairs, such as if it's necessary to wet down debris to minimize dust particles.

# **FOLLOW THESE POST-FIRE CLEANING TIPS...**

- **Ventilate damaged areas with fresh, dry air.**
- **Immediately replace your A/C filter.**
- **Don't walk on or touch sooted surfaces – this includes carpet and furniture.**
- **Be wary of using electrical devices - including lights - until they are professionally cleaned. Acidic soot can damage sensitive materials.**
- **Don't clean affected clothing, drapes, or upholstery – they could be ruined. Professional cleaning is needed.**
- **Chrome or plated surfaces can be addressed with mild detergent and a soft cloth, then lightly coated with petroleum jelly for protection.**

**Rainbow International® provides comprehensive fire restoration services, including board-up and tarp over, smoke and soot cleanup, as well as content cleanup and storage. Contact our IICRC accredited fire restoration professionals for a free, no obligation quote today.**

# RAINBOW INTERNATIONAL® INDUSTRY LEADER AND INNOVATOR



*Rainbow International* provides “best practices” with integrity and the highest of standards in restoration and cleaning services. Utilizing the most advanced equipment, innovative technologies and a built-in accountability system, our professional emergency crews complete every job rapidly to assure an uncompromising commitment to service excellence and customer satisfaction. Ultimately, we don’t just restore homes and businesses; we restore value, stability, and peace of mind.

Established in 1981, *Rainbow International*, a subsidiary of The Dwyer Group®, offers over 300 global service locations. As a premier provider of restoration and cleaning services, *Rainbow International* deploys professional emergency response crews with advanced equipment, state-of-the-art technology and training to restore property, contents and ultimately, peace of mind. Insurance, commercial and residential customers depend on *Rainbow International* to mitigate damage and restore contents for businesses and homes suffering from water, fire, smoke, odor and mold situations.

For more information please visit [www.rainbowintl.com](http://www.rainbowintl.com). For additional white papers or to offer suggestions for future topics, please visit [www.rainbowintl.com/best-practice](http://www.rainbowintl.com/best-practice) or join our “*Rainbow International* Restoration and Cleaning” group on LinkedIn.

**855-RAINBOW**  
**rainbowintl.com**

We Restore,  
You Recover™