

Knowing what to do after a fire can be overwhelming. Santiam Disaster Services in Oregon wanted to share some lessons learned from their own experiences.

1. You just experienced a traumatic event, it's ok to ask and receive help.
2. Sign up with local emergency alert systems so you know when it is safe to return to your property.
3. Recovery may take several years, and available housing will be absorbed quickly. Secure temporary housing as quickly as possible.
4. Make a list of important documents to replace. (IDs, social security cards, insurance cards, birth certificates, etc.)
5. Collect your income verification, such as details from your employer, retirement, Social Security, and unemployment.
6. Compile a list of lost items for insurance as soon as possible. (ex. electronics, vehicles, furniture, etc.)
7. Keep every receipt (food, personal items, lodging, fuel, etc.) and any documents starting from the day you evacuate, continuing until the rebuild is complete. Get a file box to stay organized. You will need them later when applying for state/federal funding.
8. Take photos and videos of any damaged or destroyed property. Ask friends and family for old pictures of your property. You can also search Google Images for photos of your address. Keep all this documentation for future use.
9. Homeowners should gather proof of occupancy, such as home insurance, property deeds, tax records, and any relevant documents (e.g., marriage or death certificates). Renters should obtain documentation from their landlord or property management company.
10. Get a notebook- When contacting agencies like FEMA, non-profits, medical providers, or insurance companies, note the name of the person you spoke with, the date, time, and a summary of the conversation or outcome. Save any emails for reference.
11. Research your contractor and get multiple bids. We recommend not paying more than 10% down and require inspection/ milestone check offs before additional payments are made.
12. If you make a cash payment for property, for example a trailer, create a written agreement between the parties involved to serve as proof of the transaction. You will need this when applying for funding opportunities.
13. Check with your local CA, Department of Social Services office to see if you are eligible for benefits such as food and nutrition, cash aid, etc.

YOU ARE A SURVIVOR, YOU ARE RESILIENT

