



**St. Petersburg
Fire and Rescue**

Cleaning Procedures

General

Vacuum all surfaces.

Change and clean air conditioner filters.

Use plastic to seal off the room in which you are working to keep soot from moving from one location to another.

Try to keep the windows closed.

Walls and Ceilings

To remove soot and smoke from painted walls, mix together the following:

- 4-6 tablespoons trisodium phosphate
- 1 gallon water
- Only wash a small area at a time and work from the floor up. Do ceilings last.
- Rinse thoroughly. **DO NOT REPAINT UNTIL COMPLETELY DRY!** It is advisable that you use a smoke sealer (available at a paint store) before painting.
- Walls that have been covered with wallpaper usually cannot be restored. Check with your wallpaper dealer.

Wood Furniture - Do not use chemicals on furniture. Flax soap can be used to clean wood furniture and kitchen cabinets; it is inexpensive and can be purchased at hardware or paint stores. If you do not have Flax soap: To remove mildew, clean surface with borax dissolved in hot water. To remove white spots or film, rub the surface with a cloth soaked in a solution of ½ cup water and ½ cup vinegar. Then wipe dry and polish with furniture wax. You can also rub the wood surface with 4/0 steel wool and liquid polishing wax; wipe with a soft cloth and then buff. Note: Wet wood can decay and mold, so dry well - **BUT DO NOT DRY IN DIRECT SUNLIGHT**, as the wood may warp and twist out of shape.

Wood and Vinyl Floors - Flax soap will clean wood and vinyl floors. It will take 4 or 5 applications. Then strip and wax. When water gets underneath linoleum, it can cause odors and warp the floor. If this has happened, remove linoleum. Call a linoleum dealer for suggestions on how to loosen the adhesive without damaging the floor covering. Let the floor dry thoroughly before replacing it.

Carpets and Rugs - Allow rugs and carpets to dry thoroughly. Throw rugs can be cleaned by beating, sweeping, or vacuuming, and then shampooing. Rugs should be dried as quickly as possible. Lay them flat and expose them to a circulation of warm, dry air. A fan blowing on the rugs will speed drying. Make sure the rugs are thoroughly dry. Even though the surface seems dry, moisture remaining at the base of the tufts can quickly rot a rug. For more information on cleaning and preserving carpets, call your carpet dealer.

Mattresses - Reconditioning an inner spring mattress at home is nearly impossible. Mattresses may possibly be renovated by a company that builds or repairs them. If you must use the mattress temporarily, put it out in the sun to dry; then cover it with plastic sheeting. It is impossible to remove the smoke odor from pillows because foam and feathers hold the odor.

Locks, Hinges, Typewriters, Sewing Machines, and Other Small Appliances - Steam from a fire removes lubrication from these items. They should be taken apart and oiled. It is suggested that these items be taken to a repair shop. If locks cannot be removed, squirt machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole and work the knob to distribute the oil. Hinges should also be cleaned and oiled thoroughly.

Cooking Utensils - Wash pots, pans, flatware, etc. with a fine-powdered cleanser. You can polish copper and brass with a special polish or with salt sprinkled on a cloth that has been saturated in vinegar.

Refrigerators and Freezers - To remove odors from a refrigerator or freezer, wash the inside with a solution of baking soda and water or use one cup of vinegar or household ammonia mixed with one gallon of water. Baking soda in an open container or a piece of charcoal can also be placed in the refrigerator or freezer to absorb odor.

Caution: When cleaning or discarding a refrigerator or freezer, secure or remove the doors so they will not close on a young child.

Food - If your freezer has stopped running, you can still save the frozen food: Keep the freezer door closed. Freezers have enough insulation to keep food frozen for at least one day, maybe longer. Move your food to a neighbor's freezer or a commercial freezer firm. Wrap the frozen food in newspaper, blankets, or insulated boxes. If your food has thawed, observe the following procedures:

FRUITS - can be refrozen or eaten immediately if they still taste and smell good.

VEGETABLES - should not be refrozen if they have thawed completely. Refreeze only if there are ice crystals in the vegetables. If vegetables have thawed and cannot be used soon, throw them out. If you have any doubts whether vegetables are spoiled, throw them out. Do not wait for a bad odor. **MEATS** may be refrozen (if ice crystals remain) but cook thoroughly before tasting. If there is a bad odor or if you question the freshness of these foods, throw them out as bacteria multiply rapidly.