

## **Provided By Operation Recovery & the Malibu Times**

**For Further Assistance Please Call 310-456-5507 Ext 101**

### **Advice and Counsel is Available from Survivors of the '93 Fire**

#### What To Do If Your House Burned Down

Dear Neighbor - Arnold and I, along with over 400 other families, lost our homes in the Malibu Fire of 1993. We formed a group that became known as Operation Recovery. Below is some of the wisdom from the O.R. group - the first steps to take after you lose your home:

1. Drive Carefully and Move Slowly - many accidents happened after the fire as everyone was so busy and distracted
2. Carry a note-book and write EVERYTHING down - everyone you speak to and everything they say PLUS their contact information
3. Keep your cell phone and computer charged. Back up your computer to the cloud
4. Do not make any major decisions for at least a month
5. Consider using an Independent Insurance Adjustor to represent you.
6. You may have to provide detailed substantiation of the contents of your home. Start listing the contents of everything you lost. Room by Room, Drawer by Drawer, Cabinet by Cabinet (don't forget the garage and garden - including plantings). You can add values later. Create a spread sheet. If you haven't yet mastered Excel, this is the time.
7. Take photos of all damage to property and cars before and after demolition/clearance
8. Initiate replacement of important documents - insurance, passports, birth certificates, important papers
9. ORGANIZE - get together with your fire victim buddies/neighbors at least weekly - To assure you have the clout you need for proper representation to group to city, county, FEMA and to your insurance carriers.
10. Get help- Accept Assistance - don't be proud - you need help, take it! Physical help, childcare, animal care and counseling. This is a hugely traumatic time. Expect to be disoriented, angry, frustrated and exhausted. Make a list of what friends CAN Do for you when they ask and be prepared to give assignments (childcare, clerical support, errands, shopping...). - they REALLY want to be useful and you NEED their help.
11. Get plenty of rest. Eat healthy. Limit smoking/drinking if possible. Try not to go overboard on comfort foods. You need to be strong, alert and healthy

11. Rent a place of your own - staying with friends and family is good for a short time, but you need your privacy and space even more than they do. Set up a desk and "business" area. You will now have a full time job recovering. Get organized with all correspondence, insurance papers, notes. Being able to put your hands on important papers/contact info, etc. as you need them is a great stress reliever.

12. Socialize. Take in a movie. Walk on the beach. Hang with others who are dealing with fire loss - your mutual support really helps.

13. You WILL get through this with your physical and mental health intact although it will take some time and lots of energy.

14. Call us if you need help. The Operation Recovery alumni are at your disposal and can be reached by calling Arnold York at The Malibu Times (310) 456-5507 ext 101.