

FIRE DAMAGE REPAIRS & REBUILDS DEMOLITION/ RECONSTRUCTION

The Planning & Building Department has created this handout to help property owners understand the process to repair or rebuild after a fire or other damage from impact or collapse. Many of these items also help for general demolition and reconstruction of existing structures as well. These sorts of projects are complex, and the information contained here may or may not apply to your situation.

I just had a fire – what do I need to do immediately?

In the immediate aftermath of a fire, we recommend you review the FEMA document *After the Fire* to help prioritize your first few days. This can be found here:

https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa_46.pdf

What is the difference between something being “red tagged” versus a “Do Not Occupy” order?

The Code Officials may determine an appliance may be *red tagged*, which means it cannot be used until evaluated by a professional and certified as being ready for use. They may also issue a *Do Not Occupy* order, which means a building, or portion of a building, is not fit for occupancy until evaluated by a professional, a permit is issued, and repairs are completed.

When should I call my insurance company, and what role do they play?

You should call your insurance company as soon as possible, and follow their processes and directions. We recommend you keep records of any expenses you incur and document any interaction with them.

I was told to “secure” my property? What does this mean?

After the fire department and/or code enforcement official completes any necessary investigations and declares the scene stable, the disposition of the building is the property owner’s responsibility. Part of that responsibility is to ensure the public cannot access the building. Securing the property may include locking or boarding up doors and windows or installing a temporary fence. The decisions of how to complete this and who should do it falls to the property owner; your insurance company may have specific guidance.

When can I start work?

Unless specifically ordered by the Planning & Building Department, work – including removing damaged elements or commencing repairs – cannot begin until a building or demolition permit is issued.

When can I get back into my property? When can I reoccupy?

Unless declared an imminent hazard, once emergency crews leave the site, the property is under the control of the property owner. Unless directed by your insurance adjustor, you can remove personal property as necessary and have building professionals begin the process of evaluating the conditions and securing necessary permits to commence repair. Until the *Do Not Occupy* order is removed by the Planning & Building Department, or a new certificate of occupancy is issued, the building or affected portions of the building cannot be occupied.

What permits are needed?

Damaged buildings require a demolition permit to remove the building or the portion(s) remaining. In order to repair, rebuild, or replace the building, or portion(s) remaining, a building permit is required. If the demolition is part of the building permit application, a separate demolition permit is not required.

Where can I find the necessary permit applications, and what must be provided?

All forms and permit applications can be found at <http://www.victorny.org/index.aspx?nid=158> or by stopping by the Planning & Building Department during regular business hours.

Are third parties such as technicians, architects, and engineers involved?

Only registered design professionals (architects, engineers) can evaluate structural stability or design adequate repairs. It is to your benefit to contact them early in your process for guidance.

What things do I have to be aware of with demolition?

Depending on the age of your home, lead and asbestos abatement – including dust control -- may be required. Ensuring compliance of the laws is the sole responsibility of the property owner. You can find more information on lead abatement at: <http://www.nyshcr.org/AboutUs/Lead/> or https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/laws_and_regulations/ and asbestos abatement at: <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/asbestos/laws.htm>

Is my property grandfathered?

The Victor Zoning laws allow pre-existing, non-conforming uses and structures to be re-established in their same dimensions if restored within 12 months. The NY State Fire and Building Codes require any work is done to the current codes. It is possible that additional approvals beyond a building permit may be required.