

Sevier County, City of Gatlinburg, Tennessee Emergency Management Agency Joint News Release

Resource information for City/County property reentry

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Gatlinburg, TN - On Wednesday, December 7, property owners, business owners, renters and lease holders are allowed to return to full-time occupancy of their properties. Federal, State and local officials have worked hard to make sure that areas affected by the wildfire will be safe for reentry. As citizens transition back into areas affected by wildfires, please be aware of the following safety tips and resources available.

Personal Safety

As you return home you may find debris, exposed electrical wires, smoldering materials, unstable structures, and other hazards. Please examine all areas of your property before allowing children and pets into those areas. More tips can be found at #ChimneyTops2Fires and #cobblynobfire Facebook page.

Clean Up

Ash from structure fires can contain hazardous materials. Tips for cleaning up ash include: To avoid spreading ash in the air wet down ash before attempting removal or use a HEPA-type vacuum cleaner to clean dust contaminated surfaces. Do not use leaf blowers, a shop vacuum or wash ash into storm drains. Ash can be placed into garbage bags or other containers that prevent it from being disturbed. You may want to wear an N95 face mask to protect exposure to ash particles and wash exposed skin thoroughly afterwards. For more information about ash cleanup and other potential hazards:

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/cleanupworkers.html>

Sanitation Service

Gatlinburg residential and household waste pickup is running as scheduled in accessible areas.

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Water

Water supplies have been greatly affected by firefighting activities. The substantial loss of water in certain storage tanks and water lines may cause water to appear cloudy or discolored for a period of time. Running a substantial amount of water through all outlets in the plumbing system should expel the discoloration. If you have questions about your water service, please call the Gatlinburg Water Department 436-4681. County water customers on Birds Creek who have questions about their water service can call Sevier County Water Department at 865-744-3852.

Electricity

The Sevier County Electric System has worked hard to reinstate power and continues to reconstruct destroyed power systems in some neighborhoods. While many areas have been cleared of downed power lines and had power restored, new situations may arise where power has been lost or lines come down. **Remember: never cross downed powered lines.** Please report downed powerlines to Sevier County Electric system at 865- 453-2887.

Gas

If you smell gas on your property, call Sevier County Utility District immediately. Be aware that damaged propane tanks could be leaking after a fire. Do not transport leaking propane tanks in your car or dispose of the tank in the trash. If you smell gas or detect a leaking propane tank call 911 or report the leak to the Sevier County Utility District 24-hour emergency line 865-453-3272.

Food Safety

Loss of power to refrigeration and freezer units can cause food to spoil. Immediately discard cooked and uncooked foods that may have spoiled. If food looks bad or smells bad, throw it out. When in doubt, throw it out. For more information, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/>

Animals

Please beware that lost pets may be in the area. They may be frightened and possibly dangerous. The Sevier County Human Society has set up an animal care center at the Sevier County Fairgrounds. To report lost or missing pets call the Sevier County Humane Society at 865-453-7000.

Safety and Security

The Department of Safety and Homeland Security is dedicated to providing assistance to those impacted by the unfortunate disaster.

The Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP) will continue to assist local law enforcement and state agencies in the recovery process. Currently, we are providing public safety to the residents as they re-enter the Gatlinburg area. Please be mindful for the potential of looters. If you detect criminal activity call 911.

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Replacing Lost Driver licenses or State issued Identification

Tennessee Driver Services Division continues to work with residents who lost their license or identification card. Tennessee citizens can apply for a duplicate license at the Sevier County Driver Services Center. The center is open Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The center is located at 1220 Graduate Drive, Sevierville, TN.

The driver services mobile unit will be parked at the Coordination Center located at The Boyd's Bear Distribution Center at 149 Cates Lane in Pigeon Forge, TN on Wednesday, December 7 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Boyd's Bear Distribution Center Resources

The Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance and the Department of Labor continue to provide consumer information at Boyd's Bear Distribution Center at 149 Cates Lane in Pigeon Forge, TN. Citizens can speak with representatives about filing insurance claims, building permits, unemployment benefits and replacing lost driver's licenses and State issued ID's.

Local Recovery Website and Hotline

Sevier County has launched an official recovery website, www.mountaintough.com and a hotline to serve as a single resource for information related to the recent wildfires in Sevier county. The hotline number for local residents is 2-1-1 and 865-215-4211 for callers outside the local area. The call center is open Monday – Friday 7:00am to 6:00pm.

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