



Five questions to ask when choosing a fire restoration company - by Ron Fanish

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Ron Fanish

In the aftermath of a fire, building owners and property managers are overwhelmed. There's a seemingly endless number of tasks to stay on top of, from communicating with insurance and emergency responders to finding temporary new space for tenants.

It's crucial, however, that owners and managers take extra time when choosing a fire restoration company. Selecting the right professionals will make this overwhelming time far more manageable. On the other hand, selecting a poor provider will make an already taxing period even more challenging.

If your building has been damaged in a blaze, be sure to ask these five key questions when vetting and selecting a fire restoration company:

What credentials do you have? When you're hiring any professional, it's essential to do your due diligence — and hiring a fire restoration company is no different. Inquire about which industry credentials and certifications the company holds. Several key certifications are provided by the nonprofit Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification (IICRC), and range from Fire and Smoke Damage training to Health and Safety courses. When a company's team holds these IICRC certifications (and various others), you can be sure you're working with trained and knowledgeable professionals.

How long has your company been in business? In the fire restoration trade, few things are more valuable than experience. Ask any potential company how long they've been in business, and more specifically, how long they've been restoring structures damaged by fires. Fire restoration is a complicated trade, so building owners and property managers should seek out companies and professionals who have many years, if not decades, of experience. It's also important to ask how many jobs they've completed that are similar to yours — do they have experience working on certain types of structures?

Will you work with my insurance provider? Physically rebuilding and restoring a fire-damaged property is one challenge. Navigating the insurance is an entirely separate one. The right fire restoration company will do both. Ask potential companies if they've worked with your insurance provider in the past. How hands-on will they be in the insurance process? An accomplished fire restoration company will bring lots of expertise to the table and engage with the insurer directly on your behalf, saving you time and also maximizing your policy's coverage.

What is your restoration strategy? Be sure to ask for an in-depth look into their restoration plan. True, most building owners and property managers are not fire restoration experts also — but you still deserve transparency into how and why the company is doing what they do. A trustworthy

company will explain how they assess the damage, how they determine which tools and techniques are needed, and also the price and materials necessary for the job.

What is your timeline? Before partnering with a fire restoration company, it's essential to gain insight into their timeline — and to make sure that their timeline also works with yours. Be clear about what you need... and ask thorough questions to determine if the company can meet those needs. The right fire restoration company will be transparent and do their best to expedite the process. If a company isn't forthright about the time required to do the work, it's best to keep looking.

Recovering from a fire is one of the most challenging ordeals that building owners and property managers can experience. For this reason, it's vital to ask the right questions to determine which fire restoration company is best qualified. The right partner can make all the difference in restoring your property and getting things back to the way they were as quickly as possible.

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