



## **IICRC Offers Tips for Safe Wildfire Smoke Damage and Ash Cleanup in California**

*Not-for-profit offers advice for home and business owners affected by fire, smoke, char and ash*

LAS VEGAS— November 19, 2018 – In the wake of recent wildfires that have damaged, destroyed and permeated hundreds of homes and businesses in California, it’s important for residents to be aware of the many dangerous health effects caused by returning to smoke-salvageable and smoke-damaged buildings. To help home and business owners in affected areas, the [Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, Restoration and Certification](#) (IICRC), a non-profit standards-setting organization for the inspection, cleaning and restoration industry, is providing home and business owners with tips for cleanup and deodorization of fire-damaged, smoke-contaminated buildings.

“Once officials determine it is safe to return to a home or business after a wildfire, it’s important for property owners to assess physical damage impacting structures before cleaning up heat, char, ash and smoke-odor impacted buildings,” said Pete Duncanson, chairman of the IICRC. “It’s imperative that fire and smoke odor cleanup be performed correctly and safely to stave off any ill health effects and permanent property damage.”

To help home and business owners returning to fire and smoke damaged properties, the IICRC offers the following tips:

- Safety is most important. Wear an N-95 ANSI-approved dust mask (like a painter’s mask) and work gloves during cleanup.
- Ventilate the home. Place a box fan in an open window to draw smoke-odor laden air and char out of the building.
- Replace ventilation filters as soon as possible, then run the ventilation system to filter-out smoke-related particles.
- Clean the exterior of the building of fire-damaged debris, smoke and char particles. Exterior cleaning includes washing off the building, sidewalks, driveways and decks with detergent and fresh water scrubbing followed by rinsing.
- Clean the interior by dry HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air), vacuuming the ceiling, upper and lower walls and then flooring. In some situations, detergent wet cleaning must be applied to remove a smoke film which impacts and absorbs onto surfaces.
- Vacuum contents and upholstery. Make sure your house or building vacuum is HEPA rated, otherwise, you risk blowing smoke and soot into the air.
- Draperies, clothing and machine-washable items such as towels may be dry cleaned or laundered.

- Unless the upholstery manufacturer says otherwise, use a mild alkaline cleaner to neutralize acid in smoke, soot, char and ash.
- When smoke and soot damage and residue is moderate or heavy, or you cannot complete smoke and soot odor removal on your own, consider hiring a professional who is certified in fire and smoke damage restoration to cleanup and restore your home or business and belongings. To find a trained and certified professional in your area, visit the IICRC website at [www.iicrc.org](http://www.iicrc.org) and select “Locate a Certified Pro.”
- Check with your insurance provider to determine if smoke damage from outdoor sources is covered under your policy. Insurance companies can often provide a list of credible restoration companies from which property owners can choose.
- If the fire has warped or distorted the structure, consult a general contractor who can also be found in the IICRC list of approved restorers.

When hiring a fire and smoke removal professional in your area, make sure that the technician is a certified Fire and Smoke Restoration Technician (FSRT) to ensure they are educated on the latest techniques for proper remediation. In some cases, a mold remediator may also be necessary as the volume of water used to combat fires can result in an abundance of standing water within a property, leading to mold growth.

To find certified restorers in your area or to confirm the certification of any company that has contacted you, call the IICRC at 1-844-464-4272 or visit [www.iicrc.org](http://www.iicrc.org) and select “Locate a Certified Pro.”

### **About IICRC**

The IICRC is a global, ANSI-accredited Standards Developing Organization (SDO) that credentials individuals in 20+ categories within the inspection, cleaning and restoration industries. Representing more than 54,000 certified technicians and 6,000 Certified Firms in 22 countries, the IICRC, in partnership with regional and international trade associations, represents the entire industry. The IICRC does not own schools, employ instructors, produce training materials or promote specific product brands, cleaning methods or systems. For more information, visit [www.iicrc.org](http://www.iicrc.org).

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