



Fire Recovery for Childcare Providers: What you need to know about Air Quality Alerts and Cleanup

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What we will cover today



Air quality protection tips and how to monitor air quality



How to safely cleanup your ECE site post fire



Opportunity for Q&A



Public Health Acknowledgement

- Acknowledge the unimaginable loss, stress, fear, and personal challenges so many of you are facing.
- Our hearts go out to everyone impacted by these devastating fires.
- We wish everyone safety and healing in the challenging days ahead.
- Your safety and well-being are our top priorities.



Air Quality Concerns

The LA County Health Officer issued several smoke advisories.

These advisories provide public messaging on reducing exposure to smoke and unhealthy air.

Wildfire smoke is a mixture of small particles, gases and water vapor. The primary health concern is the small particles, which can cause burning eyes, runny nose, scratchy throat, headaches and illness (i.e., bronchitis).

People at higher risk, children, the elderly, those with respiratory or heart conditions, and people with compromised immune systems, may experience more severe effects such as difficulty breathing, wheezing, coughing, fatigue, and/or chest pain.

Recommendations When Air Quality is Unhealthy

Keep children indoors to limit exposure.



Keep indoor air clean by closing windows and doors. Use air conditioners that recirculate air to filter out harmful particles.



Monitor children for symptoms and contact parents as necessary. For life-threatening symptoms, call 911.



Wear an N95 mask if you/children must go outside.



Air Quality Alerts from the Air Quality Management District (AQMD)

- Go to AQMD.gov, click on “Air Quality”. This will bring up a map showing air quality throughout the South Coast Air Basin. Zoom in to see specific areas.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION
Green (Good)	No problems
Yellow (Moderate)	Unusually sensitive people should limit outdoor activity
Orange (Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups)	Sensitive groups (such as children) shorter and less strenuous activity outside
Red (Unhealthy)	Avoid long outside activity or move activity indoors
Purple (Very Unhealthy)	Avoid outside activity
Deep Red (Hazardous)	Warning of Emergency. Everyone should avoid all activity outdoors



Air Quality Alerts and Advisories

- How to sign up to receive air quality alerts from AQMD
 - Go to <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/air-alerts>
 - Download the App for Apple or Android Devices (click on link)
 - Can also sign up to receive Air Quality Advisories via email

Preparing for Fire Related Cleanup

- 1st priority: Your safety
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - ✓ **Wear a tight fitting respirator (N-95, N-100, or P-100)**
 - ✓ **Long sleeved shirts, pants, shoes and socks**
 - ✓ **Gloves appropriate for the tasks (leather work gloves, rubber kitchen gloves, nitrile)**
 - ✓ **Goggles**
 - ✓ **Bring bottled water for hydration**
 - Assess the situation before taking any action. If it isn't safe alone, come back later with additional assistance

Cleanup Process Following a Fire



Ventilate the Property. Open windows and doors to allow the smoke smell to dissipate.



Wear PPE and wash off any ash that is on the skin regularly. All clothing should be washed at the end of each day cleaning.



When cleaning, try not to get the ash into the air. Misting an area with water before wiping, sweeping or mopping will help prevent ash getting airborne.



Shop-vacs and non-HEPA vacuum cleaners are not recommended.



Wash all toys and items that will be used by children.

If they cannot be submerged in water they should be wiped with a cleaning wipe



DO NOT USE leaf blowers.

Specifics About Fire Ash

Fire ash can be toxic especially when from burning household items or structures.

Ash may contain heavy metals, chemicals, asbestos or other harmful substances.

These toxins can irritate the skin, eyes, nose, throat, and when inhaled can cause respiratory issues.

Esposure to fire ash should be minimal and proper cleanup procedures should be followed.

Windblown ash particles may be too large to be detected by air quality instrumentation and will not influence Air Quality Index(AQI) levels. However, ash particles are typically visible to the naked eye either in the air or on outdoor surfaces.

Cleanup Process Following a Fire (Continued)

- To remove soot and smoke from walls, furniture and floors, use a mild soap or detergent or mix 4 to 6 tbsp. of tri-sodium phosphate with 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach to every gallon of warm water.
- Be sure to rinse surfaces with warm water and dry thoroughly.
- Wash walls one small area at a time, starting from the floor up to prevent streaking. Immediately, rinse with water.
- Wash ceilings last.



For additional information:

<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/safety/how-to-clean-up-smoke-soot-from-fire-en.pdf>

Cleanup Process Following a Fire (continued)



If there are burned items on the property, they should be placed into a garbage bag and disposed of in the regular trash.



Any fabric items that are small should be laundered before children are able to interact with them again.



Larger fabrics, or other more difficult to clean items: refer to LA County Public Health Cleaning Guidance found at:
http://ph.lacounty.gov//eh/safety/returning-home-after-fire.htm#clean_up

Cleanup Process – Food Item

Much of the evacuation areas have been without power for several days. Perishable items in refrigerators without power should be disposed of.

Open containers of shelf stable food: Open boxes of things like pasta should be disposed of due to the possibility of ash contamination.

Sealed containers of shelf stable food: Wipe the outside of the container and keep the food (for this purpose treat drink containers as food)



Resources:

Safe cleanup and handling of ash and debris to avoid skin irritation and respiratory issues

<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/safety/how-to-clean-up-smoke-soot-from-fire-en.pdf> (available in multiple languages)

Returning Home After a Fire

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/WildFire/docs/returninghome/returning-home-after-fire.pdf> (additional languages pending)

Fire Safety and Health Information

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Wildfire/#protecting>

AQMD Air Quality

Advisory updates: <http://www.aqmd.gov/advisory>

Current air quality: <http://www.aqmd.gov/aqimap>



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