

AFTER THE WILDFIRE

Indoor smoke residues and cleaning considerations



Wildfire smoke pollutants can get into indoor environments and land on surfaces, be absorbed into common household materials.

Indoor surfaces and materials can collect settled dust and adsorb pollutants that can later be released back into indoor air over time. Without proper cleaning, some pollutants can remain indoors for weeks or even months after a wildfire.



CLEANING TIPS

Studies indicate that wiping, laundering, vacuuming, and mopping can reduce concentrations of dangerous chemicals on surfaces and in indoor air.

- Use wet mopping and wiping (*avoid dry wiping and sweeping because this can resuspend particles*), and HEPA-filtered vacuuming.
- Use mild diluted detergents (*avoid using bleach as it can react with smoke pollutants and create toxic and harmful chemicals*).
- Increase ventilation and/or air filtration to remove airborne pollutants, especially during cleaning activities that can disperse dust.
- Rinse off HVAC air intakes and air conditioning units and replace air filters prior to use.
- Use activated charcoal or similar odour absorbent media in air filters to remove VOCs.
- Launder, wash, clean (dusting items outdoors if possible), or replace home items such as clothing, furniture, and toys.

Source: National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health