



Facility Repair and Re-Entry after Wildfires Guidance and Checklist

Administrators

Wildfires can create many hazards within clinics. Hazardous smoke, ash and chemical residues can be deposited in buildings and HVAC systems. Flames can make building structures unsound. They can also break pipes and water valves and activate sprinkler systems, which all can flood buildings and promote mold outbreaks or make potable water supplies unsafe. Broken sewage pipes can make for unsanitary conditions, too. Fires often result in power outages that can lead to spoilage of food and medicine as well as disrupt computer systems and access to back-up medical records.

If your clinic building(s) has been damaged by a fire, DO NOT enter the building until a proper safety inspection has been completed to ensure structural integrity. Fires can cause more structural damage than meets the eye. A professional inspection can also help identify and remediate hazards from fire ash and chemical residues in buildings that fires can deposit in buildings, even if there is no structural damage to the building.

Key points of inspection for building structural integrity after fire damage:

- Roof
- Load bearing beams and walls
- Stucco, siding, and concrete
- Structural metals
- Windows
- Interior walls and framing

Note: As of 2019, no best practice guidance exists for fire structural damage. FEMA recommends using the post-earthquake safety evaluation of buildings document in the interim (ATC-20-1).

Awareness for smoke, ash and chemical contamination of buildings after fires:

- Ash and other fire generated particulate matter can infiltrate a building during fires, even when windows and doors have been closed, through ventilation systems, gaps in window and door frames, or other openings in the building's exterior. Have this professionally assessed and cleaned as needed.
- Fires may result in chemical exposure indoors from heated plastics, melted/damaged containers, (e.g., hazardous waste) that contain toxic substances (e.g., lead, mercury, cleaning products), and other sources. Once the building has received structural safety clearance (if needed), use appropriate protection when entering the building.
- Ash and other particulate matter can continue to settle after a fire has been extinguished. Take this into consideration when planning re-opening for clinical operations.

Awareness for water damage:

- Fires can activate building sprinkler systems and damage water pipes and valves and result in flooding within buildings.
- Water release in buildings can contribute to mold growth, damage medical equipment, and mobilize chemical hazards (e.g., in waste containers, medications).
- Drywall and insulation that has been soaked by water from fire hoses may need to be replaced as it cannot be dried out and maintain structural integrity or resistance to mold and mildew.

Post-Wildfire Checklists

General Inspection Checklist



Done	Task	Assigned to
✓	Call the clinic's pre-identified assessment team(s) to inspect the building. The results of this inspection will determine what steps to take for building restoration.	
✓	Contact the clinic's pre-identified restoration team to prioritize and begin work.	
✓	Work with the assessment and restoration teams to identify if some sections of the clinic may be able to open before others. This will help with planning a staged re-opening.	

Exterior Inspection Checklist



Done	Task	Assigned to
✓	When evacuation zones are reopened, inspect the clinic from the outside to look for any residual smoke, embers, or fires. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact local fire department immediately if any are observed.	
✓	Look for heavily damaged trees that could fall and harm people or structures. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact a tree removal company for management of debris.	
✓	Look for downed or damaged power and communications lines. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact utility company immediately if any are observed.	
✓	Check for the smell of natural gas. If any is detected, then: <input type="checkbox"/> Evacuate the area <input type="checkbox"/> Contact 911 or the gas company per local standards <input type="checkbox"/> Shut off the gas supply if safe to do so	

Interior and Systems Inspection Checklist



Done	Task	Assigned to
✓	Assess functionality and safety of: <input type="checkbox"/> Water system <input type="checkbox"/> Sewage system <input type="checkbox"/> Exam room equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Medical gas and suction systems <input type="checkbox"/> Furniture <input type="checkbox"/> Computer systems <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration systems <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy equipment	
✓	If clinic has water damage conduct mold inspection and remediation as needed. Minimize spore dispersion during cleaning process.	
✓	If the clinic uses paper documentation, check for damage to patient and pharmacy records.	

Interior and Systems Inspection Checklist (continued)



Done	Task	Assigned to
✓	Launder all linens.	
✓	Discard damaged or contaminated medications and medical supplies.	
✓	Flush, clean, and disinfect ice machines.	
✓	Test indoor surfaces chemical residue contamination.	
✓	Inspect and clean HVAC ductwork.	
✓	Obtain all necessary certifications for re-entry in accordance with local regulations.	

Adapted from guidance from the [CDC](#)ⁱ, [FEMA](#)ⁱⁱ, and [AIHA](#)ⁱⁱⁱ.

Notes:

i. https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/reopen_healthfacilities_checklist.html
 ii. https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema_p-2055_post-disaster_buildingsafety_evaluation_2019.pdf
 iii. <https://www.aiha.org/public-resources/consumer-resources/disaster-response-resource-center/wildfire-disaster-recovery-center>