

Smoke Removal and Fire Cleanup In the Home

The good news is you did not lose your home, but evidence of the wildfire is all through your belongings. Below are some actions you can take to get things back to normal.

- ✓ Work closely with your insurance company, making sure to document the damage.
- ✓ Change all heat and air conditioning filters when you first return and at least once a month for the first year.
- ✓ Commercial cleaning is recommended, if possible. Keep a record of all cleaning contracts, expenses incurred in cleaning, and other damage (for insurance purposes).
- ✓ Use water and detergent (pressure wash or scrub) to wash the structure exteriors.
- ✓ Wash and disinfect all interior walls and hard surfaces with mild soap. A white vinegar solution should handle most areas. Use bleach sparingly, only in extreme cases, and make sure you follow the directions on the bleach bottle to dilute appropriately.
- ✓ Wash the inside of drawers, closets, cabinets, etc.
- ✓ Smoke gets into all textiles. Follow cleaning instructions recommended by manufacturers.
- ✓ Launder all textiles that are washable. Add 1 to 2 cups of white vinegar with each load. Realize items may need to be washed 3 to 5 times.
- ✓ Disinfect and deodorize all carpets, window coverings, upholstered furniture and mattresses with steam or other appropriate equipment.
- ✓ Upholstery, fabric window treatments, etc. can be spray treated with deodorizing products available at most supermarkets (such as baking soda), but do **not** use odor-masking sprays.
- ✓ A bowl of baking soda or activated charcoal in powdered form can be left in a bowl in each room.
- ✓ Have heating, venting, and air-conditioning units and all ductwork professionally cleaned to remove soot, ash and smoke residue.

- ✓ Wash with soap and water, dust or otherwise thoroughly clean all household items, including dishes, knick-knacks, shoes, books, picture frames, etc.
- ✓ Ash and soot on the ground and outside plants will continue to produce smoke odors and airborne particles when disturbed by wind. Indoor air cleaners may help you're your home's interior. Change or clean filters often (following manufacturer's recommendations).
- ✓ Use walk-off mats at all entrances to avoid tracking in ash residue on shoes.
- ✓ Computers and other electronics can be impacted by heat, smoke, water, and fumes. Check with manufacturer before operating.

**For your own health and protection while cleaning, wear N95 masks and gloves.
They are available at most paint and home improvement centers.**

Resources: FEMA, Arizona Dept. of Health Services, California Dept. of Public Health

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