

Tips On Smoke Removal And Fire Cleanup

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends that residents perform a few basic clean-up procedures to remove smoke and to clean up in and around the house. Even if your house didn't suffer actual fire damage, smoke from the fire can create problems in your house and on your property. As a precaution, residents may also want to consult a professional in smoke and damage restoration.

Some helpful tips:

- Pressure wash, scrub or disinfect all exterior surfaces including walls, walks, drives, decks, window and deck screens, etc.
- Wash and disinfect all interior walls and hard surfaces with mild soap or other appropriate cleaning solutions or products, and rinse thoroughly. Don't forget inside cabinets, drawers and closets.
- Launder or dry clean all clothing.
- Wash, dust or otherwise clean all household items, including knick-knacks.
- 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, but do not use odor-masking sprays.
- Have heating, ventilating and air-conditioning units and all ductwork professionally cleaned to remove soot, ash and smoke residue. Change filters when you first return to the premises and at least once a month for the first year.
- If aerial fire retardant or firefighting foam residue is present on the house and/or automobiles, use a mild detergent and brushes to scrub and dilute the dried residue and flush it from the surfaces; rinse with clean water. A follow-up with pressure washing may be beneficial but will not replace scrubbing to remove the residue.
- Ash and soot on the ground and vegetation in the vicinity will continue to generate smoke odors and airborne particles when disturbed by air movement. Until the ash and soot are diluted and absorbed by the environment, indoor mechanical air filtration may help minimize the uncomfortable and potentially health-threatening impact of these pollutants.