

Wildfires Come to AIHce 2016

We had a great discussion of the concerns, challenges, and evaluation tools at the wildfire round table (RT 247-Wildfires: Resolution of Indoor Environmental Quality Concerns) at the recent AIHce 2016 in Baltimore. As we all know, wildfires (and fires in general) are complex and wide-reaching with many different aspects that could cause problems for investigators, laboratories, remediators, and most importantly - the occupants.

The outcome of an assessment depends on several aspects which were key areas during the round table discussion (see below). All these come together at the end to contribute to the recommendations for further action.

- * Purpose - damage assessment, remediation strategy and effectiveness, insurance
- * On Site - visual, odor, extent of damage, environmental conditions, type of materials
- * Testing - visual, particulate (optical and SEM microscopy), corrosivity (pH), chemical (volatile and semi-volatile organics)
- * Data Interpretation - below/above background or "normal" levels, specific composition of particulate and chemical contamination
- * Recommendations - remediation effectiveness (remaining visual, particulate, chemical contamination); assessment of health or odor potential

There were a number of questions regarding criteria to allow re-occupancy, specifically relating to the extensive Fort McMurray fires. Cleanup criteria were also discussed as a related topic - since the burned material outside, as the primary source, will be present and blown around for quite a while the buildings are likely to experience repeated contamination after they have been cleaned through normal air movement and people tracking soot/ash/char indoors. Ongoing, or chronic, health hazard evaluation is also a concern but the differences in composition makes an effective evaluation difficult.

These are just a few of the highlight - I'd love to hear your opinions and experiences!

About Prism Analytical Technologies, Inc.

Prism Analytical Technologies, Inc. is a leading consultative air testing laboratory in the United States that is devoted to the chemical identification and analysis of contaminants in the air. We are a recognized leader in the development and deployment of ambient air testing methodologies for Fortune 100 and 500 companies, industrial hygienists, and environmental consultants. Prism's science-based technologies and wide range of air testing support help clients solve indoor air quality, process control, industrial, and environmental challenges.