



Weather Alert



Monday, June 30, 2025

Wildfires - Building Air Quality Mitigation

Massachusetts has faced increasingly active wildfire seasons recently, driven by drought conditions and human activity. While the impact on property is a concern, the more significant consequence is the effect on public health. The harmful particles released during wildfires can cause respiratory issues, particularly affecting vulnerable populations.

To better protect air quality within our municipal buildings and prepare for extreme weather events, municipalities should consider incorporating relevant technologies into their planning processes.

To proactively safeguard Indoor Ventilation Air Quality (IVAQ) in buildings equipped with a Building Management System (BMS) during wildfire events, municipalities can take the following measures:

Ask your BMS provider to create an easily accessible emergency response button within the graphical interface, specifically for wildfire events. Activating this button would promptly adjust all IVAQ components to pre-set configurations designed to minimize the infiltration of airborne particulates resulting from wildfires or poor air quality. These BMS controls should be programmed to:

- Maintain positive pressure within the building
- Maximize the efficiency of air filtration systems
- Optimize return air settings
- Reduce or completely close fresh air intakes
- Reduce and balance exhaust venting settings

For buildings without BMS controls, enhancing IVAQ relies on physical barriers and personal protective equipment. In such cases, please consider implementing these best practices during wildfire events:

- Ensure all windows and doors are tightly closed and locked
- Close all interior doors
- Securely close all wall openings, such as bay doors and garage doors
- Close any ceiling openings, including skylights and access hatches
- Use portable air filtration devices to further improve indoor air quality

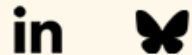
By taking these important measures, cities and towns can help maintain safe building air quality for both municipal staff and the public. This is particularly critical because municipal buildings may serve as emergency shelters during wildfire events.

Disclaimer: The material contained herein is intended for general informational purposes only. It is not intended as legal advice and should not be construed as such. Any inquiries concerning Massachusetts law should be directed to a city solicitor, town counsel or other licensed attorney.



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