

Wildfires And Coronavirus Shine Spotlight On Iaq Compliance



Wildfires don't just burn things down; they pollute the air. That includes the air inside buildings. So, if your facility is in BC, chances are that your workers are feeling the ill effects of smoke in their nostrils, eyes and lungs right about now. Of course, indoor air quality (IAQ) is a major health concern anywhere in the world, especially since the advent of the coronavirus.

While wildfire and coronavirus infuse it with a new urgency, IAQ is a perennial compliance challenge for safety coordinators. In addition to posing health hazards, IAQ problems can lead to work refusals and safety violations.

The OHS laws require you to ensure that the air in your indoor workplace is properly ventilated and kept free of contaminants in concentrations that can inflict harm. Such contaminants may come not just from the outdoors but carpets, chairs and HVAC systems. Essentially, there are 9 things you must do to comply:

1. Furnish an adequate supply of fresh air;
2. Ensure ventilation equipment meets specific design and air supply standards;
3. Ensure that ventilation and HVAC work is done by a 'competent person';
4. Inspect ventilation systems;
5. Regularly clean ventilation systems;
6. Perform routine maintenance on ventilation systems;
7. Keep vents free of obstructions;
8. Keep maintenance records; and
9. Investigate workers' IAQ complaints.