



Kia ora, and welcome to Week 4 of our Schools Newsletter

We are now more than halfway through our newsletter series and the feedback continues to be positive. We also want to thank everyone who has submitted questions for the final FAQ's issue that will end out this series, keep them coming!

You can find the previous newsletters [here](#).

Flood & Fire: the long-term hazards

Everyone knows who to call in an emergency. New Zealand's Fire & Emergency Services (FENZ) are among the best in the world and consistently rank as New Zealand's most trusted public sector organization.



But what is the next step? When the fire has been extinguished, the floodwaters have receded, and you're faced with the daunting task of clean-up? The 'emergency' may have passed but the dangers are still present and will require professional decontamination and remediation.

Fire damage:

Smoke & soot residue can contain microscopic particles filled with carbon, acids & heavy metals that are released when materials burn. The sooty residue that is left behind is often toxic and trying to remove it with common cleaners can spread the contamination and embed these harmful particles deeper into walls and fabrics.



Flooding:

A flooding event may involve Clean Water, Grey Water or Black Water ([click this link to understand these categories](#)).



Regardless of the origin however, you need to act with urgency to reduce the risk from harmful bacteria and viruses and to prevent mould, mildew and the associated musty odours from taking hold and spreading. Surface drying or running a fan will not solve the underlying problem, this requires professional extraction of moisture and targeted drying to prevent rot and mould from returning.

If your school is faced with a flood or fire event, it is not recommended that you undertake any DIY clean-up. Protect your staff, your tamariki and your facility by engaging a professional decontamination company.

Your Recommended Action Plan:

- Make sure you have an Emergency Plan with clear roles and responsibilities.
- Have a site map readily available showing water shut offs, electrical isolation points, fire alarm panels and high-risk areas if any.
- Have an IICRC Certified Flood and Fire remediation specialist in your Emergency Plan and engage their services as quickly as possible.
- Restrict access to the fire/flood affected area/s.
- Seal smoke/fire affected areas i.e. close doors and windows.
- If you must enter the affected area/s, wear the correct PPE (personal protective equipment) as recommended by [WorkSafeNZ](#). This includes gloves, coveralls, eye protection and respirator.
- If HVAC / AC systems are still functional, ensure they have been shut down to the affected area/s to prevent the airborne spread of contaminants.
- Be mindful that soot can get into computers and electronics through cooling vents and fans settling on circuit boards with the potential of causing short circuiting in the future.
- If you are making an insurance claim, ask your chosen Flood or Fire remediation specialist to provide photographs of these items before disposal. Electronic equipment should have serial numbers photographed.
- Where a property has experienced a serious flooding event, we recommend that surfaces are tested for E.coli post remediation.

It is the goal of CSS to support our schools and their communities in better understanding common risks and to plan ahead with confidence. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to CSS on 09 828 1731 and one of our team will be happy to assist you today.

Next Week... Lead: the hazard & the health risks.

Protect your property. Protect your people. Stay compliant with CSS.

 **CSS Emergency Response: 09 828 1731**

 **Learn More:** <https://cssnz.co.nz/health-safety-excellence/>

Stay Safe,
The CSS Team



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