

# IEQ Global Alliance

*For better indoor environment quality*



## **IEQ-GA – Presidential Column (October 2023)**

It has been a busy couple of months regarding indoor environmental quality (IEQ) since the last Presidential Column in July 2023. As I mentioned in my previous column, there have been climate-related issues throughout the world that have led to IEQ problems, such as hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, and earthquakes. And, of course, there is the continuation of the spread of COVID-19. According to the latest statistics from CDC, the number of tests that are 'positive', emergency visits, and hospitalizations have gone down in the last months. However, the number of deaths continue to rise (8%). It should also be noted that October is the month when the number of infectious diseases such as influenza and pneumonia begin to rise into the winter. The newest vaccinations that will be effective against the latest variants are expected to be available by the end of October 2023.

One of the hazards of concern is the elevated air temperatures worldwide that have been recorded throughout the summer and now are continuing into autumn in North America, Europe, and other geographic areas of the world. The record for the world's hottest day was broken numerous times during the summer of 2023. The heat has led to many people, particularly the elderly, becoming ill and dehydrated during their outdoor workday and over many nights. The elevated temperatures will also result in failed crops, desert conditions, and reduction in water resources. According to reliable sources, Europe and the Arctic are warming fastest, but there are many more people in parts of the Middle East, India, and East Asia that may also warm faster than the rest of the globe. As the planet grows warmer because of climate change, it will not happen evenly. IEQ-GA members as researchers and practitioners will be at the forefront of this issue worldwide.

As noted in previous Presidential Columns, the wildfires in North America originating in Canada and other forested areas such as Washington state are dramatically affecting the health of many elderly people as well as those who are living with pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma. Currently, there are warnings about elevated airborne levels of smoke, dust and other potentially toxic materials in the New York and New England areas.

The annual outbreak of wildfire is likely to be a yearly hazard that will affect the lives of millions, and it is expected to cost billions in cleanups and medical costs. It is expected that IEQ-GA researcher members of the various professional organizations worldwide will be researching this hazard. Other practitioner members will be monitoring the levels of PM10, PM2.5, PM1.0, soot and other airborne contaminants that are associated with the smoke from wildfires. Beginning in March 2023, and with increased intensity starting in June, Canada has been affected by an ongoing, record-setting series of wildfires. All 13 provinces and territories have been affected, with large fires in Alberta, British

Columbia, The Northwest Territories Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec. The 2023 wildfire season has seen the most area burned in Canada's recorded history, surpassing the 1989, 1995, and 2014 fire seasons, as well as in recorded North American history, surpassing the 2020 Western US wildfire season.

There have been many other weather-related problems worldwide, including floods in Europe and North America, elevated water temperatures surrounding Florida, and a deadly wildfire in Hawaii. There are other disasters such as earthquakes in north Africa that result in building damages and occupant exposures to unhealthy environments. These disasters are often related to climate change can result in long-term building repair and restoration and can lead to adverse health symptoms for the inhabitants in these areas. Member organizations of IEQ-GA and their members can be of assistance where needed during these difficult times by providing proper and adequate information about asbestos, lead paint and mold.

Please note that all member organizations, as well as other related organizations, that are holding conferences in 2023-4 that are focused on IEQ issues, are invited to submit information about the conference to IEQ-GA's Secretariat. The IEQ-GA Board of Directors will review the info and then decide regarding IEQ-GA's endorsement of the conference.

If there are any efforts being undertaken by IEQ-GA's member organizations regarding the pandemic, please post an update on IEQ-GA's website under the heading 'News' so that all members can benefit from the current research, data collection, and information about Standards and Guidelines regarding the pandemic.

Personally, I want to thank the IEQ-BOD members, all of our full and affiliate members, and all of the individual members of the organizations that support the work of IEQ-GA. We are all looking forward to a bright future for IEQ-GA!

Please stay safe and healthy.

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