ANSI/IICRC **S700**

ANSI/IICRC S700-2025

STANDARD FOR PROFESSIONAL FIRE AND SMOKE DAMAGE RESTORATION

First Edition

Approved American National Standard
ANSI

IICRC®
Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration Certification

RIA
Restoration Industry Association

ANSI/IICRC S700
Standard for Professional Fire and Smoke Damage Restoration

First Edition

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The first edition of ANSI/IICRC S700 Standard for Professional Smoke and Fire Damage Restoration (the "Standard" or the "S700"), as published by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC), is intended to provide information about the restoration of fire and smoke-damaged structures and contents and to assist individuals and entities working in the fire and smoke damage restoration industry in establishing and maintaining their professional competence. Users of the S700 must keep abreast of the rapid developments in the field of fire and smoke damage restoration, implement changes in technology and procedures as appropriate, and follow applicable federal, state, provincial, and local laws and regulations. **Furthermore, the Standard is not intended to be either exhaustive or inclusive of all pertinent requirements, methods, or procedures that might be appropriate for a particular fire and smoke damage restoration project. The information upon which the S700 is based is subject to change, which may invalidate any or all of the information contained in the Standard.** Therefore, restorers must use their professional judgment throughout each and every project, as a project may have unique circumstances that require a deviation from the S700.

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The S700 is No Substitute for Training.

The S700 does not attempt to teach fire and smoke damage restoration procedures, but rather provides the principles and foundation for understanding proper restoration practices. The Standard is not a substitute for restoration training and certification programs that are necessary to attain competence in the field of fire and smoke damage restoration and proper application of the S700.

The S700 Does Not Establish Procedures or Criteria for Assessing Contamination in an Indoor Environment.

The Standard is not intended to establish procedures or criteria for assessing contamination in an indoor environment. These issues are most appropriately addressed by professional organizations and other relevant specialized experts. The S700 does not specifically address the protocols and procedures for restoration when potentially hazardous, regulated materials are present or likely to be present in fire and smoke-damaged structures, systems, and contents. Such potentially hazardous, regulated materials include, but are not limited to asbestos, silica dust, lead, arsenic, mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, fuels, solvents, radiological residues, and other chemical and biological contaminants. The S700 also does not address mold remediation; please reference the latest version of the ANSI/IICRC S520 Standard for Professional Mold Remediation for information directly related to mold remediation.

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The IICRC makes no claim to patent rights for any information, technique or equipment in this document which is subject to a presently existing patent. The IICRC is not responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights and has not conducted an inquiry to identify such rights.

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Foreword

Fire, as old as the Earth itself, seems to be a simple and understandable phenomenon at first glance. In reality, fire is a highly complex reaction in which variations of fuel, heat, available oxygen, and other factors produce distinctively different scenarios. Fires can inflict a full spectrum of damage from very light coatings of minute smoke particles to total destruction of wood, masonry, and steel. Fire residues, smoke odor, heat, water, and corrosion are some of the mechanisms involved in fire damage and they arise in varied combinations. The performance of fire restoration requires that the restorer understand the various modes of damage in order to evaluate their effects on building surfaces, assemblies, systems, and the personal property within (referred to in this document as contents).[1]

The term '*restoration*' was adopted by the fire damage repair industry over the years to describe the specialized knowledge, techniques, and equipment required for the removal of smoke residues and smoke odor from building surfaces. Professional fire damage restoration is performed in a manner distinctly different from other commercial activities. It is these skills that separate the professional restorer from other contractors such as residential cleaning, janitorial services, and remodeling contractors.[2]

Damage resulting from a fire or smoke event is best described as an alteration (from the pre-damage state) that results in a loss of appearance, utility, or value to the building itself and the contents. Suspended fire residues are malodorous, compromise indoor air quality, can pose health risks to occupants, and can render buildings uninhabitable (loss of use). Settled fire residues often contain chemical compounds that can alter the appearance, performance, and serviceability of components, including systems, surfaces, materials, and items which can render buildings uninhabitable (loss of appearance and use). Buildings and contents impacted by fire residues that result in loss of use or appearance translate into loss of value, in monetary terms.

The S700 is presented with additional information the user may find helpful when reading the Standard. The first is an informative guide titled "Appendix A Fire and Smoke Restoration Theory." The S700 Consensus Body strongly recommends that the user of this Standard reads this guide prior to reading the standard. This information is intended to provide the reader with a better understanding of the distribution and deposition of fire residues, fire residue characteristics, and visual and olfactory detection process, including surface characteristics that are impacted by these residues.

The remaining appendices, B through F, are referenced to specific sections of the Standard. Though not considered part of the Standard, the appendices are meant to be informative and educational and not a standard of care. The section each appendix is referenced can be found under the heading.

The S700 Standard for Professional Fire and Smoke Damage Restoration consensus body based the writing of this document on over a half-century of industrywide experience assessing and restoring hundreds of thousands of fire losses. Furthermore, the consensus body also utilized diverse industry input and performed an extensive literature review to attain consensus on the current standard of care for fire and smoke damage assessment and performance for the restoration industry. This Standard of care is based on the following foundational principles:

1. Chemicals from a combination of indoor and outdoor sources are ubiquitous and present in background soils and dust found on the interior of buildings. There are no standards to distinguish concentrations measured in fire-damaged homes from normal background levels. Without pre-loss baseline testing of a property to establish which contaminates were present prior to the fire, it is not possible to determine the specific contaminates created and deposited directly as the result of the fire.

[1] Adapted from; Martin L. King, CR, ASA, RIA Guidelines for Fire and Smoke Damage Repair 2nd Edition Chapter 9.
[2] Adapted from; Martin L. King, CR, ASA, RIA Guidelines for Fire and Smoke Damage Repair 2nd Edition Introduction.

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2. Restorers use targeted sampling (e.g., wipes, cellular sponges, or cosmetic sponges) combined with an olfactory inspection to rule-in or rule-out the presumptive presence or absence of fire-related residue and odor and to establish the boundaries of fire-related damage in a building.

3. Restorers use pilot test cleaning of fire residues on surfaces to determine the most effective cleaning products and processes that yield the most successful results.

4. The project-specific combination of restorative cleaning products and processes is designed to effectively remove fire-related residues and odors in addition to pre-existing residues, and dust. These products and processes generally leave conditions better than pre-loss. As restorative cleaning physically removes soils and fire-related residues; Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and other fire-related contaminants residing in smoke residues are also removed.

5. While there is a known association between firefighting and occupational disease in firefighters; there is no known association between fire and smoke damage restoration work and occupational disease in restorers working in cold fire scenes. As documented in this Standard, restorers are required by Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) to provide employees with appropriate training, PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), and engineering controls to reduce risks from hazardous substances which may be released during and after a fire. Restoration firms have a long history of managing occupational exposures and have earned commensurate rates with workers' compensation insurers.

6. Indoor air typically contains chemicals from occupant activities, consumer products, building materials, and outdoor (ambient) air. Indoor air samples collected for site-specific assessment after a fire will detect chemicals from these sources as well as temporary off-gassing from products used during restoration and reconstruction activities (e.g., new building products, paints, etc.). Therefore, chemical or VOC air sampling following a fire for fire-related contaminates cannot be relied on to draw conclusions with respect to restoration, ongoing exposure, and health risks.

7. Development of disease is multi-faceted, and the relationship between environmental contamination, exposure, and disease is complex. The presence of a contaminant in the environment alone does not mean disease will occur. Therefore, basing project clearance on contaminant-measured concentrations is inconclusive and *should* be considered arbitrary.

8. The criteria for post-restoration evaluation (PRE) of the project is that surfaces and materials are free and clear of visible fire residues and no fire-related odors are detectable. Quality control is achieved through periodic (unaided) visual and olfactory inspection of the work performed on the building and contents and supplemented by client participation at critical phases and at the end of the project. Satisfactory completion of a project is based on confirmation that the scope of work has been completed and client acceptance.

9. Well-trained and experienced restorers with a history of past performance obtaining satisfactory results are qualified to develop and manage a restoration work plan (protocol). In contrast, third-party individuals are not as effective in this role unless they are specifically trained and experienced in fire damage assessment and restoration methodologies.

The objective of the S700 is to describe the practices and procedures used by qualified restorers to properly investigate and document the boundaries and level of fire and smoke impact on a building and the contents associated with it. It describes the process of how the restorer assesses fire scenes in order to create an enumeration of tasks, referred to as the Restoration Work Plan (RWP), to be performed to remedy the fire and smoke damage. It describes methodologies proven to be effective in the removal of fire residues and odor management techniques used to restore appearance, utility, and value to a building and the contents following a fire or smoke event. The S700 is an evolving document since it reflects current practices by qualified restorers and is subject to further revision as developments occur in science, technology, and procedures.

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The S700 does not attempt to teach fire and smoke damage restoration procedures, but rather, provides the principles and a foundation for recognizing fire and smoke-impacted surfaces and areas, as well as an understanding of proper restoration practices. The S700 is not a substitute for restoration experience, training, and certification programs that are necessary for restorers to attain competence in the field of fire and smoke damage restoration.

The S700 does not address worker or occupant health and safety or the protocols and procedures when potentially hazardous, regulated materials may be present in fire and smoke-damaged structures. This Standard also does not specifically address incidental or secondary damage in the form of water damage or biological activity (microbial growth) caused by moisture; reference the latest versions of the *ANSI/IICRC S500 Standard for Professional Water Damage Restoration* for information directly related to water damage and the *ANSI/IICRC S520 Standard for Professional Mold Remediation* for information directly related to mold remediation.

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Acknowledgments

This publication is the result of a collaborative effort involving industry experts and trade associations, educational institutions, training schools, and other organizations. The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) is the ANSI Secretariat of the document and would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Restoration Industry Association (RIA) for providing invaluable resources and references to the ANSI/IICRC S700 Consensus Body.

In particular, the IICRC S700 Consensus Body would like to acknowledge the published works of the late Martin L. King, CR, ASA, known as “Marty,” to his friends and colleagues, made available to the Consensus Body by the RIA, as well as his many private and personal contributions.

In 1997, through The Association of Specialists in Cleaning and Restoration (ASCR), now RIA, Marty wrote and published the Guidelines for Fire and Smoke Damage Repair. Although it was not published by an accredited standards publisher, for the last 25 years this publication was often called “the de facto standard for fire and smoke damage restoration”. Much of the writing that appears in the IICRC S700 is based on that document.

The development of an industry fire and smoke damage restoration standard began as the RIA Fire Standard (FS) #1 ‘Characterizing and Documenting the Presence of Combustion Particles Related to a Fire or Smoke Event on Buildings and Personal Property’ in March of 2012 and was paused in August of 2013. The follow-up document, the RIA Fire Standard (FS) #2 ‘Standard for Restoration of Buildings Impacted by Combustion Particles’ began in February 2014 and was paused in December of 2017. The Consensus Body of the S700 would like to recognize the volunteers who participated in drafting those documents, several of whom are current members of the IICRC S700 Consensus Body.

The existence of a nearly completed RIA fire and smoke damage restoration standard was integral to the formation of the strategic partnership between RIA and IICRC in 2019, when collaborative work began on the IICRC S700. The two not-for-profit organizations’ collective goals were to complete and publish the industry’s first fire and smoke damage repair standard, and to further provide industry education, training, and certification by combining the knowledge and expertise of individuals in both organizations.

The S700 Consensus Body would like to acknowledge the work of the leadership of the individuals who helped forge the agreement that helped unify the fire and smoke damage restoration industry sector. Recognition is given to former IICRC Chairman Pete Duncanson; former RIA President Lee King, CR; former IICRC Marketing Chair Craig Kersemeier, WLS; and in particular, former RIA President Mark Springer, CR; and former IICRC Chairman Kevin Pearson for their collaboration to establish the strategic partnership between RIA and IICRC.

Finally, the IICRC S700 Consensus Body would also like to recognize one of its own CB members, Clifford B. (Cliff) Zlotnik CR, WLS, CMH, for his numerous and ongoing contributions to the fire and smoke damage restoration industry for the past 45 years. Cliff’s participation in and contributions to the S700, combined with a determination to advocate for professional restorers by freely sharing his knowledge and experience, was an immeasurable asset to the development of the S700.

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Important Definitions

Throughout this document, the terms "*shall*," *should*," and "recommend" are used to compare and contrast the different levels of importance attached to certain practices and procedures.

***shall*:** When the term *shall* is used in this document, it means that the practice or procedure is mandatory due to natural law or regulatory requirement, including occupational, public health, and other relevant laws, rules, or regulations, and is, therefore, a component of the accepted "standard of care" to be followed. **To further indicate when this term is used in this document, that it carries this specific definition, it has been italicized**.

***should*:** When the term *should* is used in this document, it means that the practice or procedure is a component of the accepted "standard of care" to be followed, while not mandatory by regulatory requirements. **To further indicate when this term is used in this document, that it carries this specific definition, it has been italicized**.

recommend(ed): When the term *recommend(ed)* is used in this document, it means that the practice or procedure is advised or suggested but is not a component of the accepted "standard of care" to be followed.

In addition, the terms "may" and "can" are also available to describe referenced practices or procedures, and are defined as follows:

may: When the term *may* is used in this document, it signifies permission expressed by the document, and means that a referenced practice or procedure is permissible within the limits of this document, but is not a component of the accepted "standard of care" to be followed.

can: When the term *can* is used in this document, it signifies an ability or possibility open to a user of the document, and it means that a referenced practice or procedure is possible or capable of application but is not a component of the accepted "standard of care" to be followed.

For the practical purposes of this document, it was deemed appropriate to highlight and distinguish the critical restoration methods and procedures from the less critical, by characterizing the former as the "standard of care." The IICRC S700 Consensus Body interprets the "standard of care" to be practices that are common to reasonably prudent members of the trade who are recognized in the industry as qualified and competent. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this Standard is not intended to be either exhaustive or inclusive of all pertinent requirements, methods, or procedures that might be appropriate for a particular fire and smoke damage restoration project.

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S700 Standard for Professional Fire and Smoke Damage Restoration

A Scope, Purpose, and Application

A1 Scope

This Standard describes the principles, processes, and procedures for assessing the presence, intensity of impact, and boundaries of fire residues and odors affecting a building, building systems (e.g., Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning [HVAC]), and contents after a fire event. The fire event can occur within the building, an adjoining building(s), or building(s) in the vicinity impacted by an external or internal fire, other than wildfires. This Standard also describes the practical principles, methods, and processes including equipment, tools, and materials, for the restoration cleaning, and fire odor management of buildings and contents. This Standard also addresses contractor qualifications, administrative requirements, procedures, development of the Restoration Work Plan (RWP), documentation of project-related events, and compliance with Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).

This Standard does not comprehensively address:

- building demolition other than for Fire and Smoke Damage (FSD) assessment, mitigation, or as a source removal procedure;
- reconstruction;
- issues occurring from certain situations such as wildfires, chemical fires, or industrial fires that pose environmental hazards;
- buildings (e.g., healthcare, laboratory facilities, clean rooms, life science facilities) with special requirements;
- occupants with special requirements (e.g., immunocompromised, respiratory diseases, heightened sensitivities, elderly, infants); and
- exposures impacting occupants.

This Standard does not address all safety concerns associated with performing restoration work. Restorers *should* establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices to determine the applicability of regulations established by AHJ prior to the use of this Standard. It is recommended that restorers utilize a specialized expert to assist in the development of their company-specific health and safety program.

Restorers *shall* be aware of the potential for regulated hazardous materials to be present in buildings. When hazardous regulated materials are suspected to be present, restorers *shall* perform their work in a manner consistent with regulations established by the AHJ.

When required by AHJ, a specialized expert *shall* be used to perform an assessment to determine the presence of regulated hazardous materials.

A specialized expert may be engaged to perform an assessment of the absence or presence of fire residues when:

- an evaluation is inconclusive, ambiguous, or results in a dispute and needs verification, or
- the use of a specialized expert is requested by the client or other appropriate Materially Interested Party (MIP).

A2 Purpose

The purpose of this Standard is to describe criteria for the restorer to conduct an FSD assessment and the methodologies for the removal of fire residues and related odors from building surfaces, systems, and contents. The Standard also addresses the improvement of the indoor built environment following a fire

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