

Questions from ATA Local 48 - Catholic Schools Response

1. Have all classroom resources been bagged? or are some materials still in classrooms?

Although the level of exposure may vary from school to school, all facilities and the classrooms including their content were contaminated by smoke. Therefore, all surfaces and the contents in all facilities must be either decontaminated/cleaned or removed from the premises. The decontamination method follows industry standards and varies depending on the type of surface or the type of content. The decision to clean and retain or to dispose of an item is based on various factors. Most importantly it depends on the type of surface, the replacement value, the use of the item and the time/cost that would be required to restore it.

A few examples are provided below in regards to content restoration or disposal:

- Most hard non-porous surfaces and items are being cleaned and retained. This includes non-porous wood surfaces, electronics and metal and most of the athletic equipment;
- Porous surfaces that can be cleaned at minimal cost or that have a high value are also being cleaned and retained where possible. This would include school athletic gear and uniforms, mascots, items of high artistic or cultural value, textbooks, chairs, and specialized equipment. For example, the football uniforms and equipment were shipped to Edmonton to be steamed cleaned.
- Example of items identified for removal/disposal include stationary, most paper and cardboard products, toys and manipulative items made in plastic and non-specialty clothing and carpets, etc...

Except for personal items, the content of the school not retained is being listed and will be adjusted by the insurance company. Personal items include mostly the content of the teacher desk, personal clothing, pictures and other similar items. Personal items are placed in plastic bags to be returned to the teachers. Teacher can take the bags home although it is recommended they do not open those bags inside their house as it could re-introduce contaminants. The remaining content of the school that is listed for disposal is also put in clear plastic bags and is being removed from the premises. In most schools, they are temporarily stored in Sea-Cans outside the school. Whether it is personal or not, all contents removed from the schools cannot be brought back in the facilities.

The first retrieval day was held at St. Anne School on August 9th for staff and parents. The contents of the Sea-Cans were sorted and placed outside on the pavement. Staff and parents were given an opportunity to either retrieve their personal items if they choose to or leave them on site for disposal. Retrieval days in the remaining elementary schools took place over the last few weeks. Some personal items from Father Beauregard and Good Shepherd have also been returned to teachers.

The process at Father Mercredi was somewhat different. In mid-August,, the Site Superintendent agreed to provide an advanced opportunity for staff to be escorted to their classroom to retrieve their personal items before the classroom content is moved outside the premises. This short window was only made possible due to the status of the restoration work at the school and arrangements made by the school administration. Another retrieval days was held later in August for Father Mercredi HS.

The process at Holy Trinity HS is also different due to the fact the content of the school had to be stored in Sea-Can while sections of the ventilation system had to be replaced throughout the school. I

2. Have classroom resources already been thrown out?

Teachers were given an opportunity to review the content of the clear plastic bags before classroom resources are disposed of. They can retrieve some items of personal value such as intellectual property (e.g. lesson notes, binders) or identify items of high value that should be restored and retained.

3. Some teachers have up to many thousands of dollars of their own resources in their classrooms. Some teachers fear that resources etc have already been discarded.

As indicated above, teachers were given the opportunity to review the content of the clear plastic bags before disposal.

4. What is the criteria as to what is to be thrown out? Is the criteria the same for each school - does it depend on the exposure to the smoke etc in each classroom?

See answer to question # 1.

5. Teachers will be returning on August 29 and the task of going through the bags will be a huge job. Some teachers are worried or have been informed that all bagged items will be disposed of before they return.

The retrieval of personal items and listed resources had to take place before the return to work of teachers. In many cases, staff were eager to retrieve their items so that they could gain early access to their classroom. Retrieval days for staff and parents were scheduled by School Principals.

6. Have resources in school libraries been saved? If books in libraries are okay to share with students, shouldn't classroom books also be safe?

Except for schools in Abasand and Beacon Hill, most books in libraries and classrooms were cleaned and retained.

7. Are teacher owned resources being covered under district insurance? If so, what does this process look like?

Most of the learning resources were classified as being owned by the District to maximize the insurance coverage. It would also be impossible for restoration crews to differentiate between items purchased by teachers and those purchased by the District.

The schools are purchasing current learning resources required for teachers in their classroom irrespective of what was in the classroom before the fire. In consultation with staff, common learning resources list are being developed and are used for purchasing replacement items.

The Board's insurance policy has a limit of \$150,000 for the replacement of loss property owned by staff or students. The Board is not planning to adjudicate any individual claims from staff for the lost of personal items. Our intention is use the personal content insurance amount to provide a lump sum payment to staff which will equate to approximately \$ 220 per person. Details of the program and the eligibility criteria will be finalized in the September.

8. What classroom materials can be brought into the classroom? Teachers often purchase garage sale items for their classes- such as games, books, puzzles. Can these items be brought in?

Used items that were in Fort McMurray during the wildfire cannot be brought back in the school as they may have been contaminated by smoke.

9. What grounds does the board have to throw away our personal items without our consent, especially if it is being covered under our personal insurance and not district insurance?

As indicated in the response to Q-1, items deemed to be personal include mostly the content of the teacher desk, personal clothing, pictures and other similar items. Personal items were placed in plastic bags to be returned to the teachers. Teacher can take the bags home although it is recommended they do not open those bags inside their house as it could re-introduce contaminants.

10. If items are going to be thrown out without teachers seeing them, how can we possibly get a list of the things we own? We can't be expected to remember the contents of our classrooms.

The content of schools is being listed by a company subcontracted by the insurance adjuster. The lists will be posted in the fall when they are completed and reviewed.

11. Teachers from Beacon hill school have been able to go to their building and retrieve their items - why can't we? (from Father Beau/Good Shep)?

Father Beauregard, Good Shepherd (and Ecole Boreal) are still unsafe for re-entry. We are still working on a retrieval plan for these schools.

12. Why hasn't there been a meeting called with Father Beau and Good Shepherd staff to answer our questions and ease our extremely high anxiety?

The communication with staff is done mostly through the Principals of Father Turcotte School who were Principals at the two affected schools. In consultation with Principals, we want to minimize the number of District meeting to leave teachers in their schools to prepare for the new school year. It is suggested that teachers ask their Principals to invite District Staff a staff meeting if they so desire.

5) My insurance isn't covering my things and I have 10 years of materials. What am I supposed to do?

See response to Q-7