

GUZI-WEST INSPECTION & CONSULTING NEWSLETTER | Q1 2025

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Greetings from Guzi-West Inspection and Consulting! We apologize for being slightly delayed in this quarter's release, but we are thrilled to present our first quarterly newsletter of 2025. We hit the ground running to start off this quarter, and we haven't looked back since!

First, we are proud to announce that another one of our team members, Taylor Bradley, recently earned the certification as a California Site Surveillance Technician (CSST). Her efforts will help us continue to deliver top-tier environmental inspection and consulting services.

In this edition, we explain our company's shift to assessing fire damaged communities in Los Angeles County. Guzi-West has been able to deploy a rotating team of certified asbestos consultants to assist with fire damage assessments in the impacted areas. With over 16,000 structures destroyed in Los Angeles County, the post-fire cleanup process has required long weeks and long work days from all crews involved in supporting the recovery efforts to ensure thorough and safe assessments.

Not only were these wildfires catastrophic in the number of buildings destroyed, but also for the buildings that survived the fires, smoke damage is a real and major concern that could impact areas even well outside of the actual burn zone. Guzi-West is conducting comprehensive smoke damage assessments, developing mitigation plans, and providing post mitigation clearances for properties affected by wildfires across the Pacific Northwest. In this edition, we highlight our expanding role in conducting smoke damage assessments throughout Los Angeles and beyond.

Guzi-West extends our heartfelt gratitude to all the firefighting teams who protected our community during these fires—especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice to keep us safe.

We hope you enjoy this inside look at the work Guzi-West has been involved with this quarter, including our ongoing contribution to the Los Angeles County wildfire recovery efforts. Thank you for trusting us with your environmental consulting needs, and we look forward to staying connected in the months ahead.

Warm regards,

Clay Guzi
President/CEO
Guzi-West Inspection and Consulting, LLC



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2025 Los Angeles Wildfire Response: Fast, Coordinated Action

This January began a trying time for southern California as two major fires engulfed over 37,000 acres of land. The Eaton and Palisades Fires destroyed more than 16,000 structures, completely devastating multiple communities in the Los Angeles area. The extent of damage caused by these fires resulted in an expected \$75 billion in insured losses, making them the most expensive fire to ever occur in the United States, with more than four times the amount previously set by the 2018 Camp Fire which reached \$12.5 billion in insured losses. Despite the size and complexity of the operation, cleanup efforts have progressed at a record speed. As Governor Gavin Newsom noted, "crews cleaned hazardous waste from thousands of properties in less than 30 days, a record pace never seen before at this scale."



Expediting the cleanup and recovery process has required the coordination of thousands of workers from numerous entities. Much of the process requires tasks to be completed in a specific order by different entities at each stage, typically occurring separately in different phases of work. The cleanup operation for these fires, however, has involved many of the phases to be combined and overlapped to keep the operation moving at a more rapid pace. This has required a greater staffing presence working in the area, as well as multiple roles to be covered by various individuals. In this, Guzi-West has been instrumental as the largest provider of certified staff (CAC/CSSTs), from a single firm on this project. Since late January, Guzi-West has had staff onsite and involved in many of the critical stages of work required to move the process along. Further discussion of our role and involvement in the recovery efforts is discussed below.

The Scope of Work

Our team's work has included initial asbestos site assessment surveys, asbestos abatement and debris removal oversight, and safety monitoring during chimney tipping and site stabilization or "make safe" activities. Although Guzi-West has worked on both the Eaton Fire and the Palisades Fire, our staff has been primarily assisting on the Palisades Fire, working in the Pacific Palisades and Malibu area.

Initially, all CAC/CSST certified employees were conducting site assessment surveys, which included a thorough inspection of each site for any potential asbestos-containing material (ACM) and collecting samples of all suspect ACM identified. These surveys were the first step required before any cleanup work could begin on a site. As results from these surveys came in, asbestos abatement could occur where necessary, requiring the oversight and final clearance inspections from certified staff before the debris removal process was allowed to proceed.

The Work that Continues

There is no known timeline for when the asbestos portion of the work will be fully complete, but until then, Guzi-West expects to have staff working down in the Los Angeles area assisting with the recovery. Guzi-West staff will continue to have a presence down in Los Angeles County during the cleanup and potentially after the cleanup as well. Guzi-West remains committed to supporting Los Angeles County through the cleanup and beyond, prioritizing worker safety and community health at every step. These fires will not only be remembered for the devastating aftermath, but for the prompt response and coordinated cleanup efforts by all parties involved.

References

Office of Governor Gavin Newsom. (2025, February 25). Los Angeles wildfire hazardous debris cleanup reaches substantial completion in record time. CBS8. "California FAIR Plan Illegally Denied Fire Claims." July 2024. Available at: <https://www.cbs8.com/article/news/local/cal-fair-plan-illegally-denied-fire-claims/509-d41cbd49-b4f0-4f6e-bb7f-8c82a09eac02>
California Department of Insurance. "Insurance Commissioner Lara Announces Mandatory Moratorium Protecting Fire Survivors." July 2024. Available at: <https://www.insurance.ca.gov/0400-news/0100-press-releases/2024/release034-2024.cfm>

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Beyond the Flames: The Unexpected and Far-Reaching Impact of Wildfires

The Eaton and Palisades fires not only affected structures in their direct path, but also communities' miles away, as smoke spread across wide areas far away from the fires themselves. The structures that survived the flames face a different complication of smoke damage. Wildfire smoke can contain dangerous particles of soot, char, ash, heavy metals like arsenic and lead, and volatile organic compounds. The presence of these potentially hazardous materials has been featured in numerous national broadcasts recently. See the attached URL's for the videos below.

<https://www.cbs.com/shows/video/eaFmxdg46mQlgoCheKrSIGRlgggEkQI/>, and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYFksPCL-l8>.

In our own smoke damage assessments, we can confirm the presence of asbestos, heavy metals, and volatile organic compounds in numerous structures. The methodology we follow for smoke damage assessments is based upon the latest industry guidance and is described below. If you're concerned your home may have been affected by smoke damage, you should contact your homeowner's insurance company and request smoke damage testing be performed, and specify in addition to smoke damage, you would like testing of heavy metals in the dust, as well as asbestos. If you feel your insurance agency should approve testing based upon your proximity to a given fire, but does not, we recommend you either contact a lawyer or an independent insurance adjuster. Your insurance can either work with consultants like Guzi-West they have an existing relationship with, or they can utilize Guzi-West directly.

SERVICES IN

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- HUMBOLDT COUNTY
- DEL NORTE COUNTY
- COLUSA COUNTY
- GLENN COUNTY
- MODOC COUNTY
- LASSEN COUNTY
- TRINITY COUNTY
- YOLO COUNTY
- PLUMAS COUNTY
- YUBA COUNTY
- SUTTER COUNTY
- MENDOCINO COUNTY
- LAKE COUNTY
- OREGON
- NEVADA
- ARIZONA
- AND MORE!

Our Smoke Damage Assessment Process

At Guzi-West, we take a comprehensive approach to smoke damage assessment, ensuring that no detail is overlooked. We include smoke and dust surface sampling for asbestos, lead, and other heavy metals to identify the presence of any hazardous dust or residue that might exist inside the impacted structures. We first laid out our process in our 2024 Q3 newsletter, however, we have since expanded and improved upon our methodology for conducting these assessments. Our latest process includes the following steps:

- **Initial Site Inspection:** Prior to our site visit, we use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to evaluate the property's proximity to the smoke event and generally identify potentially impacted areas. We then follow up with an onsite visual inspection to further pinpoint potentially affected areas.
- **Sampling:** Working closely with our clients, we develop a customized sampling plan of the site, interior and exterior, that may involve using tape lifts, wipes, swabs, or bulk material collection.
- **Laboratory Analysis:** The collected samples are sent to analytical laboratories across the country that specialize in identifying the presence of combustion particulates (<https://www.pellabs.com/learn/wildfire-combustion-particles-vs-soot-char-ash-analysis>), as well as for the presence of heavy metals in the dust (numerous laboratories utilized). This data in total helps us determine the severity of the smoke damage.
- **Reporting & Recommendations:** Once the laboratory results are received, we provide a comprehensive report that outlines our findings and offers recommendations of actionable remediation steps.
- **Mitigation Planning:** If hazardous particles are confirmed, Guzi-West can prepare a comprehensive plan for the remediation contractor to ensure all wildfire-related hazards are removed.
- **Clearance Sampling:** After remediation is complete, Guzi-West will conduct air and dust clearance sampling for TO-15 Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), combustion particulates, asbestos, lead, and metals to ensure no residual compounds from the fire remains inside the structure.

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GUZI-WEST IN THE FIELD

Here are photos from our team's work in Los Angeles County. These images illustrate both the devastation and the resilience of affected communities. This was a truly horrible disaster, but we are honored to have been given the opportunity to contribute to a safe and swift recovery.

We hope the remaining clean-up goes smoothly for everyone involved and wish a rapid return to normalcy for all affected communities.

