

Los Angeles Fire: Smoke Damaged Fireproofing

Consultant: MKA • **Contractors:** Paul Davis National and DC & Associates Painting

Distributor: Aramsco Santa Fe Springs

Fiberlock Products Used: RECON Smoke Odor Sealer

Focus Issues: Restoration of smoke damage at a sixteen floor Los Angeles commercial/office property built in 1990 and containing 330,000 square feet. The side of the building absorbed an intense heat that blew out most windows. Plumes of smoke rushed into the building, fire ignited on three floors, and water damage added complexity where sprinklers activated on six floors. For the next 90 days, while the demolition and other preliminary restoration proceeded, the consulting engineers researched solutions for the fireproofing. Spray-applied fireproofing was installed everywhere on the steel pillars, beams and deck assemblies. Without some action, smoked fireproofing could relentlessly release odors into the plenums indefinitely.

Challenges: With the volume and intensity of the smoke driven into the building, it was a reasonable assumption that odor emitting particulates had saturated the porous fireproofing. The fundamental principle of fire damage restoration is source removal of contamination wherever possible, but there are times when source removal by cleaning isn't sufficient. The good news was that the bond strength of the fireproofing to the steel structure was acceptable. Assuring that the fireproofing is still properly adhered must be established. Considering the project size and schedule, sealing the fireproofing after best-possible cleaning was a very attractive option. However, the alcohol-based shellac traditionally used in fire damage restoration was unacceptable to the fireproofing manufacturer because of suspected risks that the alcohol and solvents would incur negative effects on the fireproofing. At that stage, sealing seemed a no-go.

Solutions: Solicitations for removal and replacement of the fireproofing were sought, but bids received were daunting and disagreeable to all parties both in regards to dollars and time. To do the work, the tenants would have to be elsewhere for 6 months to a year. Breathtakingly, the price tag was upwards of \$4 million. All parties decided sealers were now worth another look - Fiberlock's RECON Smoke Odor Sealer (SOS) was chosen. RECON SOS represents real innovation as the first sealer that can hold back both stains and smoke odor as well or better than solvent-based products (including shellac), and could breathe. Permeable to the movement of water vapor but not smoke odor through the cured sealer – avoiding the creation of unintended vapor barriers, condensation, and resulting mold.

Time & Cost Savings: A project priced upwards of \$4 million with a 6-12 month time frame for removal/respray was accomplished for \$600,000 and finished in just two months.

Results: Fiberlock provided applicator training on spray technique, coverage estimation and logistics for delivery of the 3,750 gallons of sealer eventually used. Occupants were gradually moved back in as areas were completed – something much more difficult when a shellac is used, and impossible on respray/replacement situations until the entirety of the new fireproofing is installed and inspected. Today, several Los Angeles agencies are back operating in the property. Departments like Building & Safety, and Recreation & Parks operate normally and don't give a thought to the sealed fireproofing above their drop ceilings – exactly the kind of outcome that equals success in fire damage restoration.