



**Company: International Water Mist Association (IWMA)**  
**Address: Poststrasse 33 (im HBC), 20354 Hamburg**  
**Phone: + 49 (0) 40 35085-215**  
**Email: info@iwma.net**



**L-R: IWMA President Ragnar Wighus, first IWMA Award winner Daniel Martin**  
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In 2018, IWMA will celebrate its 20th anniversary, and the association is determined to draw on this vast experience to benefit its clients. The organisation and its variety of members all believe in water mist, demonstrate, explain, test, study and promote it. As an association, IWMA are in a position to bundle activities and to communicate with the media and at the same time other organizations, and as IWMA is the only organization dedicated to water mist and related technologies there is no alternative when it comes to promoting this technology.

Water Mist is a kind of fire extinguishing and suppression technology. The agent to tackle a fire is water; actually less water than with a traditional sprinkler system. This makes it environmentally friendly and sustainable. The idea is to extinguish or to keep a fire under control by taking away the heat and the oxygen. A sprinkler system can only take away the heat.

This is achieved by pumping water through specially designed nozzles. Part of the nozzle is a small bulb which contains a



# Best Fire Suppression Technology Advocacy – Germany & Award for Excellence in Sustainable Safety Technology Development

**The International Water Mist Association (IWMA) represents manufacturers, distributors, installers, test laboratories, universities, insurance companies, approval bodies, fire departments as well as consulting companies. We profile the association and explore the vital services it offers.**

liquid. Heat makes the liquid expand and the bulb bursts and starts the water flow. The water droplets are extremely small as they are forced through the nozzle with a lot of pressure. The result is a mist and this mist can suffocate a fire. Thus, water mist can even extinguish oil fires whilst causing no damage to humans and reducing the harm caused to properties.

As less water is need to control or extinguish a fire, water mist is often installed in museums (water can damage a precious painting much more than the actual fire) or data centres (again, a big gush of water is no good idea in server rooms). There are regions where water is precious. It is also easier to pump up less water within high rise buildings such as the skyscrapers in the Middle East.

During the first 20 years, since the founding of IWMA, a lot of basic work had to be carried out to test and demonstrate the technology, to establish test protocols and standards. Nowadays, there are many buildings which are protected with water mist. Amongst them are the concert hall “Elbphilharmonie” in Hamburg, the Clock Tower in Mecca,

“La Scala” in Milan and the Eurotunnel between the UK and the continent.

“To win the CV Magazine’s Health and Safety Award is a praise for the work which has been done so far and an encouragement to strive for more recognition and acceptance”, says Ragnar Wighus, IWMA President. Indeed, the Board of Directors, the Scientific Council, the Marketing Group as well as the members have never got tired of travelling the world to spread the message and only recently started a project to emphasize more than before that water mist is now ready to use.

Alongside the board, the success of this award is owed to the people who believed that a thimble full of water can extinguish a fire in the first place over 130 years ago, to the pioneers who started undertaking the necessary first scientific steps only about 30 years ago and those who took a risk by starting the business. Many individuals campaigned for water mist long before IWMA even existed.

Recognising the benefits of awards, IWMA itself bestows an award on young scientists for

encouragement and support. The very first “IWMA Young Talent Award / Master Thesis” was handed over only last year. The best Ph.D. thesis on water mist will be honoured in 2017 and the IWMA Scientific Council is currently in the process of scrutinizing the submissions. The organisation’s members are provided with a calendar of relevant events so they can plan what fairs and conferences to attend. IWMA publishes quarterly newsletter for members but also non-members to spread the lasts news.

Ultimately, IWMA strives to make life off shore and on land safer and to achieve this is involved with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the European Commission / European Marine Safety Agency (EMSA).

To build upon its current success, IWMA organizes the annual International Water Mist Conference to offer a networking opportunity and seminars worldwide to educate. The organization is anxious to publish articles to explain the technology and to document the progress. The Marketing Group is currently

turning the website into a pool of knowledge. There are also smaller tasks like publishing position papers, going to all kinds of conferences to meet different audiences and feeding the social media channels. All these tasks are little pieces of a big puzzle.

Looking ahead, there is still a lot to be done. One major task for all people within the fire safety industry is to lift the level of awareness. Fire Protection is important. Many lives are lost because of a lack of precautions. Especially, when it comes to vulnerable people like the disabled, the elderly and children much more has to be done. For IWMA promoting a technology is one issue. Human lives are quite another.

In conclusion, General Manager Bettina McDowell believes that despite the vastness of the challenge, her organisation will rise to the challenge.

“When we look to the future we know that we will have to keep on moving and that busy times lie ahead. But that is okay when you know that the work you are doing is important.”

