

PRESS RELEASE



PIO: Amy Travis, Shasta County EOC

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Wildfire Ash Cleanup

Protect yourself and your loved ones from ash when you return to your home after wildfire. Cleanup can expose you to ash and other products of the fire that may be harmful to your health and irritate your eyes, nose, skin or respiratory (breathing) system. If inhaled deeply, ash can make it hard to breathe or cause asthma attacks. Those with chronic diseases or who are sensitive to smoke or ash should not participate in cleanup efforts or return until the cleanup process is complete.

To clean up ash in and around a home or building that has is not destroyed, remember the three C's: Control, Cleanup, Capture.

Control: Try to control the amount of ash particles that are stirred up into the air. Avoid kicking up ash into the air. Do not use leaf blowers, standard shop vacuums, or any equipment that blows ash into the air. Instead, lightly mist ash with water before sweeping. Do not soak.

Cleanup: Use a damp cloth or mop; use as little water as you can. A vacuum may be used only with a HEPA filter.

Capture: Collect ash into containers or double bag and dispose in regular trash. Do NOT push ash into storm drains. Ash is highly acidic, which may cause harm to the environment.

To prevent health impacts from ash:

- Avoid skin contact. If you get ash on your skin, wash it off immediately.
- Wear an N-95 or P-100 mask, work gloves, long sleeve shirt and pants when cleaning up.
 - Latex gloves can melt if ash is hot. Do NOT wear latex gloves when handling ash.
- Do not allow pets or children to play in ash. Wash ash off toys and pet supplies.

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- Discard any food that has been exposed to ash.
- If you have ash inside your home or building; commercial cleaning may be required for carpet and upholstery items. Remember to change your air conditioning (HVAC) filter.

If your home or building was damaged or destroyed by the fire:

Cleanup of building destroyed by wildfire is very hazardous. Building materials, vehicle waste, and household cleaning products produce harmful chemicals which get into the ash making it unsafe. Do NOT attempt to cleanup a building destroyed by fire, please contact a professional service.

Asbestos

Do not disturb debris from structures that contain asbestos. If inhaled, asbestos fibers pose a serious health risk and can become lodged in body tissues. If you suspect the structure contains asbestos, a California state-licensed asbestos consultant should conduct a survey and take samples of the materials. For additional information on asbestos and a list of qualified asbestos consultants: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/asbestos.html>

For additional information:

Visit the Shasta County Environmental Health webpage:

https://www.co.shasta.ca.us/index/drm_index/eh_index.aspx

Refer to CDPH Fact Sheets for Safe Cleanup:

English -

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDC/DEOD/DCDC/DCDC%20Document%20Library/ReturnHomeAshGuide.pdf>

Spanish -

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDC/DEOD/DCDC/DCDC%20Document%20Library/ReturnHomeAshGuide-Spanish.pdf>

Call 2-1-1 Shasta, www.211norcal.org/shasta and follow us on Facebook and Twitter: Shasta County Sheriff's Office

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