

HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR RE-ENTRY AND DEBRIS REMOVAL AFTER FIRE

DO NOT REMOVE ASH AND DEBRIS. The county is working with various state and federal partners to establish a process for the assessment and removal of household hazardous waste and asbestos, as well as structural ash and debris from the fire. This process will be announced to the public upon its completion.

If you visit your property to collect belongings and mementos, please familiarize yourself with the information below. It contains important details about the hazards of entering a fire-impacted area.

In the burn area, you will encounter dangerous conditions and may be exposed to toxic materials, and physical hazards that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Power lines or wires must be treated as energized as they have the potential to cause serious injury, or death
- Embers & hot ash
- Hazardous materials such as ash, asbestos, heavy metals, oils, fire retardants, pesticides, and other hazardous materials
- Puncture hazards such as broken pipes, exposed nails, broken glass, and damaged structural elements
- Potential explosive hazards such as propane tanks, ammunition, and solvents
- Toxic airborne particles
- Unstable structures

Fire damage can create significant health and safety hazards that may be present at individual properties. It is recommended to not disturb structure ash due to potential exposure to toxic materials. If you choose to visit your property, please consider the following:

- Wear gloves, long-sleeved shirts, sturdy shoes, and long pants to avoid skin contact, whenever possible. Goggles should be worn. Contact with wet ash may cause chemical burns or irritation on skin. Change your shoes and clothing prior to leaving the decontamination site, to avoid tracking ash into your car, home, etc.
- Hazardous chemicals and conditions may be present. Anything in contact with ash should be cleaned and sanitized
- Inspect propane tanks for visible damage before turning on, and check for leaks using a soap solution.
- Do not use leaf blowers or do any activities that will put ash into the air.
- Wear a close-fitting respirator mask that is rated N-95 or P-100 to block particles from ash or smoke from being inhaled. N-95 respirators can be well-fitted when they do not come into contact with facial hair; the strap tension is adequate, but not overly tightened; and masks fit across tightly at the nose bridge. A tight seal may not be possible for children, even with a small adult-size model. People with heart or lung disease should consult their physician before using a respirator. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is the only agency that certifies respirators to determine that they adequately protect people. Look for NIOSH approval on the package or label.