



Ash and Debris Cleanup Guidance

ASH, DEBRIS AND OTHER HAZARDOUS MATERIALS FROM BURNED STRUCTURES

Ash, charred debris, and other contaminated materials from burned structures may be hazardous wastes. To minimize exposure to emergency personnel, the general public, and workers involved with restoration efforts, and to minimize dispersion to the air and run-off to surrounding surface waters, the ash and contaminated debris should be cleaned up and contained.

Actions taken to immediately mitigate and contain and control hazardous waste releases are exempt from hazardous waste permit requirements [22 CCR 66270.1(c)(3)(A)]. This document provides general guidance for the management of these materials. This guidance applies only to the emergency actions taken to clean up, contain and dispose of the ash and debris from the burned structures. This guidance does not apply to long-term restoration activities.

During emergency cleanup efforts, restoration workers must evaluate readily identifiable hazardous wastes and determine if they can be safely segregated and managed separately from the ash and debris. If hazardous material cannot be separated safely, it is permissible to contain and dispose of these materials with the ash and contaminated debris.

Uncontaminated and unburned hazardous materials (i.e., hazardous materials with smoke damage from partially burned structures) should not be commingled with ash and debris. These materials should be segregated and directed to local hazardous waste collection programs. The San Bernardino County Fire Department Hazardous Materials Division will be offering local assistance in managing hazardous waste generated by recent fires. For specific fire-related collection information, please call (909) 386-8418.

Ash and Debris from Residential and Commercial Structures:

Ash and contaminated debris from residential structures should be contained and disposed of at a solid waste landfill (class three) under the direction of the local solid waste enforcement agency. If feasible, disposal to a lined landfill is environmentally preferable.

Ash and contaminated debris from commercial structures must also be contained and disposed of as quickly as possible to minimize exposure. In addition, it is more likely that hazardous materials and hazardous wastes will be found that need to be segregated from the ash and contaminated debris at commercial structures. Generally, ash and contaminated debris from these structures may be handled in the same manner as ash from residential structures.

Industrial-Type Businesses Structures:

Ash and contaminated debris from these structures should be cleaned up and contained as quickly as possible. Debris from this type of business is more likely to contain hazardous waste residues not typically found in the municipal solid waste stream. Disposal to a municipal solid waste landfill

(class three) may not be appropriate for these materials. Contact the San Bernardino County Fire Department, Hazardous Materials Division at (909) 386-8418 if assistance is needed with ash, debris or site evaluation from such premises prior to containment.

Segregated Wastes:

Segregated hazardous wastes should be transferred to local household hazardous waste collection programs as soon as feasible. Most businesses affected by the fires will have lost all records that can be used to establish monthly generation rates. Therefore, unless the business was obviously not a small quantity commercial source, DTSC recommends that local household hazardous waste collection programs accept hazardous wastes from affected commercial sources to facilitate the safe removal of the hazardous materials.

Examples of Segregated Wastes: When the following materials can be safely segregated, they should be separated to ensure safe handling and disposal of ash and debris:

- Compressed gas cylinders and propane cylinders
- Gasoline cans (and other fuel containers)
- Bulk chemicals & chemical containers
- Lead acid batteries
- Transformers
- Paints and thinners
- Bulk pesticides
- Bulk fertilizers
- Munitions
- Laboratory equipment

CLEANUP METHODS

Public health officials recommend that residents and businesses avoid using cleanup methods that may create additional health risks by re-suspending ash and particulate matter. Although health protection should always remain the first concern during cleanup, it's also important to try and minimize the amount of runoff containing ash and debris that enters the storm water conveyance system (e.g., streets, gutters, culverts, and ditches). It should be noted that these guidelines apply only during the current emergency situation; additional requirements regarding discharges to the storm water conveyance system apply under normal conditions.

Outdoor Cleanup

1. Try to wait until ash has stopped falling before cleaning up. This will limit the number of cleanup efforts needed, which can help reduce the amount of wash water entering storm water conveyance systems and receiving waters.

2. As a first step for cleaning, try to determine if ash and debris can be contained and cleaned up without washing the material into the storm water conveyance system. Wet cleanup methods to consider include:
 - a. Wash ash and debris into landscaped areas wherever possible.
 - b. Use a damp mop to clean up ash and debris from small areas, such as patios.
 - c. Dampen accumulated ash and debris and scrape it up or vacuum it up using an adequate filtering vacuum.
 - d. Clean your car by taking it to a car wash, or wash the car over a vegetated area such as your lawn.
 - e. When washing roof areas, redirect downspouts to landscaped areas.
3. If the above methods cannot be used and washing of ash and debris to the storm water conveyance system is necessary, use as little water as possible and try to filter the wash water before it enters the storm water conveyance system. Place gravel bags, filter fabric, fiber rolls, etc., in front of storm drains to capture ash and debris. Scoop up captured ash and debris and dispose of appropriately.

Interior Cleanup

Minimize re-suspending settled dust when cleaning interior areas by using wet methods or adequate filtering vacuums. Typical household vacuums may pickup and re-suspend settled dust.

1. For carpets, use of a high efficiency, HEPA-type vacuum is recommended.
2. Use a damp cloth to pick-up dust and trap it on the cloth for small horizontal surfaces. Clean the cloth in water as needed; dispose of it to the trash when it becomes too dirty for continued use. Dispose of dirty water into the sewer system.
3. For non-porous surfaces like tile or vinyl floors, use a damp mop to trap the dust. Clean the mop as needed in water, and dispose of dirty water into the sewer system.

Other Issues

1. Construction, industrial, and other facilities operating under a Regional Water Quality Control Board permit should implement their Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans or equivalent plans to the extent possible when dealing with ash and debris cleanup. Where following these plans is not possible, the above guidance should be used.
2. If pools are to be drained for cleaning, the pool water should be free of chlorine residual and should have low copper sulfate concentrations.

This guidance is general in nature; specific situations may require additional considerations. For additional information regarding requirements for ash debris management, contact the San Bernardino County Office of the Fire Marshal Hazardous Materials Division at (909) 386-8418.

B. DOUGLAS SNYDER

San Bernardino County Office of the Fire Marshal
Hazardous Materials Division