

# HAZARD ADVISORY

Attempting to sort, clear, or otherwise disturb ash or debris may affect possible assistance, services, or funds that could become available to you in the future.

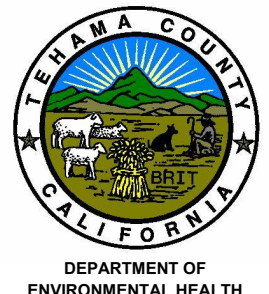
Ash and debris may contain hazardous materials.

**YOU ARE ENTERING A HAZARDOUS AREA.  
ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK.**

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

- Embers and hot ash
- Hazardous materials, including ash, asbestos, heavy metals, oils, fire retardants, pesticides and other hazardous materials
- Puncture hazards, including broken pipes, exposed nails, broken glass, and damaged structural elements
- Potential explosive hazards including propane tanks, ammunition, and solvents
- Slippery surfaces
- Toxic airborne particles
- Uneven ground
- Unstable structures

**WEAR PROTECTIVE GEAR AND MINIMIZE  
TIME OF EXPOSURE**



# HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR RE-ENTRY AFTER FIRE EVACUATION

**Attempting to sort, clear, or otherwise disturb ash or debris may affect possible assistance, services, or funds that could become available to you in the future.**

## DEBRIS, ASH, AND HAZARDOUS WASTE

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

- Hazardous chemicals and conditions may be present.
- Wear sturdy shoes. Steel toes and shanks are recommended.
- Cover all skin when in proximity to ash. Wear gloves, long-sleeved shirts, 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 contaminated site to avoid tracking ash into your car, home, etc.
- Propane tanks should be professionally inspected for damage before turning on.
- Anything in contact with ash should be cleaned and sanitized. **Sorting through or cleaning fire debris is not recommended.**
- Before disposing of anything that has ash or fire debris, contact the Tehama County Landfill to ensure it will be accepted. **Sorting through or cleaning fire debris is not recommended.**
- Be aware of slip, trip, fall, puncture and overhead hazards.
- 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. Look for NIOSH approval on the package or label.
  - N-95 respirators masks are well-fitted when they do not come into contact with facial hair; strap tension is adequate, not overly tightened; and masks fit across the nose bridge. A tight seal would not be possible for most children, even with a small adult-size model. People with heart or lung disease should consult their physician before using a respirator.

## AIR QUALITY PRECAUTIONS

Air quality may be poor in evacuated areas. Conditions throughout Tehama County will likely vary from “Moderate” to “Very Unhealthy”.

- All people, especially those with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion when air quality is poor. Stay indoors and avoid intense physical activity in areas where high smoke levels are visibly evident.
- When air quality is poor, stay indoors, close windows and doors, and filter your air by running your central air conditioner or a HEPA air purifier. Keep in mind that evaporative coolers (swamp coolers) pump smokey air into the house.
- Avoid activities that can degrade indoor air quality such as vacuuming, frying, broiling, and burning candles.
- While all persons may experience varying degrees of symptoms of smoke sensitivity, certain populations such as the elderly, children, immunocompromised, and those with chronic respiratory disease are at greatest risk of experiencing more aggravated symptoms. These symptoms may include, but are not limited to coughing, scratchy throat, watery and itchy eyes, and difficulty breathing. Persons experiencing questionable or severe symptoms should seek professional medical advice.
- For N95 masks, contact the Public Health Department at 530-527-6824 or [epp@tchsa.net](mailto:epp@tchsa.net)

You can monitor the current air quality at: <https://www.tehcoapcd.net/current-air-quality/>

## FOOD SAFETY

- Perishable food items that have not been properly stored (at or below 41 °F) for more than four hours are not considered safe and must be thrown out.
- If your home has been damaged and you find non-perishable food items, DO NOT use them. The containers may appear to be intact but high temperatures may have caused the seams to fail, resulting in the contents being exposed to potential contamination.
- **When In Doubt, Throw It Out!!**

## **SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

Fire could have damaged your septic system. The damage would have most likely occurred to the piping between the house and the septic tank, or from the septic tank to the leach field. Damage sometimes occurs from heavy equipment such as backhoes and bulldozers used to fight the fire or to clean up debris. The repairs to the system must be done by qualified professionals as per Environmental Health requirements.

## **TREE DAMAGE**

Many trees could have been damaged in the fire and could pose a threat to your safety. These trees may be on your property or near your property. Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Fire damaged trees and tree limbs can fall suddenly. Tree roots may still be smoldering underground, so do not walk near fire damaged trees.

## **ELECTRICAL HAZARDS**

Please treat any and all downed power lines or wires as energized and live with the potential to cause serious injury, up to and including death.

## **WATER SAFETY**

- If you are served by a public water system, contact your water service provider for information regarding water safety. If your home or business lost water pressure at any point, water available from your tap should be considered unsafe.
- Commercially bottled water should be used for consumption purposes until your water is confirmed safe.
- Once your water supply is confirmed to be safe and potable, all water lines serving your home or business should be thoroughly flushed.
- If you are served by a private well you should boil water before drinking as it may not be potable. For directions on how to chlorinate your well contact the Tehama County Environmental Health office at 530-527-8020.
- If your well has been damaged, it may have been exposed to potential contamination and can contaminate surrounding groundwater if not repaired properly. Fire can damage the well casing, electrical conduits and piping. DO NOT use the water for consumption which includes drinking, cooking, dishwashing, oral hygiene, hand washing, bathing and pets.
- The well must be repaired by a qualified professional, properly disinfected as per Tehama County Environmental Health's requirements and then tested to determine the water is safe for consumption.
  - Qualified professionals include licensed well drillers, pump contractors and/or certified distribution operators. Water sampling may be conducted by the Shasta County Public Health laboratory or by a local state certified laboratory (FGL and Pace Analytical Laboratory in Chico or Redding). If you have questions, contact the Tehama County Environmental Health office at 530-527-8020.

# PROTECT YOUR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Feeling strong emotions after a disaster is normal but seek professional help if experiencing any of the following:

- Difficulty managing your emotions.
- Trouble completing daily tasks.
- Difficulty caring for yourself or your family.

## **FOR 24/7 IMMEDIATE HELP:**

- **CALL THE TEHAMA COUNTY MOBILE CRISIS UNIT AT 1-800-240-3208**
- **CALL OR TEXT 988 TO REACH THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS LIFELINE**

## **Ways to Cope**

Reaching out to family and friends, seeing a therapist or primary care doctor, finding a support group, or connecting with a religious leader can all be helpful tools in overcoming or dealing with the psychological effects of a wildfire. Here are other ways to take care of yourself and your family's emotional health:

- Find opportunities to spend time with other people to stay connected.
- Talk to a trusted friend or adviser about what you are feeling.
- Participate in enjoyable activities.
- Take frequent breaks from recovery efforts.
- Exercise (indoors if air quality is poor).
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Get enough sleep.
- Write in a journal.
- Avoid relying on substances like alcohol or marijuana for stress relief. During times of great stress, use of substances can be counterproductive and lead to more stress, anxiety and physical symptoms.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR CHILDREN

## WILDFIRE ASH SAFETY

Wildfire ash may contain toxic substances. The best protection for children is to keep them inside or out of the burned area until ash has been removed.

- NEVER allow children to play in ash.
- Wash toys before allowing children to play with them.
- N95 masks do not provide adequate protection for children.
  - N95 masks require a tight seal, which is not possible for most children, even with a small adult-size model.

## HELPING CHILDREN COPE

Children will likely have a hard time processing the losses caused by wildfire and it's easy for parents to become preoccupied with post-fire recovery. Parents are advised to pay close attention to their children's emotional well-being by watching for behavioral changes and listening carefully to their child's questions.

Here's are some tips on how to help children cope:

- Validate your children's feelings. They may be feeling scared, confused, or angry.
- Be honest with your answers to children's questions, but don't provide more information than necessary.
- Provide opportunities for your children to talk and express themselves, like through drawing or playing.
- Limit their exposure to television news and online media.
- Avoid irrational promises like, "This won't happen again."
- Maintain the same daily schedule as much as possible, such as bedtime routines.
- Ensure your children are eating healthy food, exercising, and maintaining healthy sleep patterns.
- Watch for physical symptoms like stress-related stomachaches and headaches, regressive behavior like bed-wetting, or if they show changes in demeanor. While these are normal stress responses and are usually temporary, parents may want to seek professional help for their child if these behaviors continue.

# RESOURCES

## **A DIRECTORY OF SERVICES IS AVAILABLE THROUGH 211 NORCAL**

In Tehama County, dial 211. Outside of Tehama County or TTY users, dial (866) 963-8182.

### **Information available from 211 during and following a disaster or emergency:**

- Location of emergency shelters
- Location and hours of relief services
- Road closures
- Animal evacuation sites
- Where to find food and water
- Where to find temporary housing
- How to access other government resources
- How to volunteer to help
- How to make a donation



<https://211norcal.org/tehama>

## **TEHAMA COUNTY LOCAL ASSISTANCE CENTER**

- Receive recovery resources and information from local and state agencies, nonprofits, and community organizations.
- Open Thursday, August 15th to Saturday, August 17th, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
- Located at: Red Bluff Community Center 1500 S. Jackson St. Red Bluff, in the Gym