



# After the Fire

## Help is Available

**California Office of Emergency Services**  
Find information about your fire incident:  
[Wildfirerecovery.caloes.ca.gov](http://wildfirerecovery.caloes.ca.gov)

**Disaster Assistance Improvement Program**  
Find help for federally declared disasters  
[Disasterassistance.gov](http://Disasterassistance.gov)  
(800) 621-3362 | TTY (800) 462-7585).

**Local Government Services**  
Cities and counties often promote local services through local flyers, media, and social media.

## Avoid Toxic Ash and Debris

Toxins in the debris of burned homes include:

- Arsenic
- Lead
- Mercury
- Asbestos
- Other hazards from burned propane tanks, batteries, and household chemicals

## Caution!

Do not let your children near wildfire debris or ash!

## Wear Protective Gear



- Respirator
- N-95 mask
- Gloves
- Long shirts and pants
- Shoe coverings
- Safety eyewear

Safely sifting through ash and debris without moving it **will not** disqualify you from no-cost government debris removal.

Moving or spreading debris outside of the structural footprint **will** disqualify your property from this program.

## Debris Removal in 2 Phases

Wildfire debris must be safely removed to prevent more harm to you and your community.

Debris removal begins after a disaster is declared and Cal OES grants your county's request for assistance.

**Phase 1:** Removal of visible household hazardous waste happens right away

**Phase 2:** Removal of remaining ash and debris

## Prepare to Enroll in Program

1. Identify a long-term mailing address
2. Gather insurance and property ownership documents

## Don't forget!

1. Touching or breathing ash and debris is dangerous.
2. Debris removal is a 2-phase process.
3. Find resources at [wildfirerecovery.caloes.ca.gov](http://wildfirerecovery.caloes.ca.gov).

Phase **2** Overview

# Debris Removal



## Home Wildfire Debris is Toxic

Wildfire debris contains toxins like lead, mercury, arsenic, and asbestos.

After Phase 1 removes the most visible household hazardous waste, the rest of the toxic debris must be removed safely to protect your community's air, water, and land.

### Step 1: Phase 2 Cleanup Options



Communicate directly with your county about which of these two options you select to do the required debris cleanup:

#### A. Enroll in the government-managed and funded program by submitting a Right-of-Entry form to your county

- State-managed cleanup has no out-of-pocket costs for property owners
- Rigorous protocols and testing prevent toxic debris from endangering your community's air, water, and land

#### B. Conduct the cleanup yourself or hire a private contractor by enrolling in the alternative private cleanup program

- Homeowners hire and manage a private contractor at their own expense to meet debris cleanup standards and safety protocols
- Homeowners obtain permits and environmental OK before contractors begin work
- Homeowners follow county permitting and environmental regulations before and during debris removal



### Step 2: Site Assessment

Assessment teams inspect each property to create a safe plan to remove debris.



### Step 3: Asbestos Assessment and Removal

Specialists test for and remove asbestos that wasn't removed during Phase 1.



### Step 4: Structural Debris Removal

Government-managed crews clear ash, debris, and contaminated soil after giving property owners 24 to 48 hours notice.



### Step 5: Soil Testing

Contractors test independent soil samples for contaminants like lead or mercury and remove soil that tests high.



### Step 6: Hazard Tree Removal

Contractors identify and remove fire-damaged trees in danger of falling on public property.



### Step 7: Erosion control

Crews place mulch where structures once stood to protect the soil and watershed from eroding away.



### Step 8: Final walk-through

State supervisors inspect the property to verify that all work was completed satisfactorily.