

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

Wildfire-Damaged Structure Demolition/Renovation Activities Reducing Potential Exposures to Asbestos Containing Materials

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRACTORS AND HOMEOWNERS

Contractors (and homeowners) who are planning to demolish wildfire-damaged structures and/or to clean up and remove ash and debris need to be aware of certain precautions and air pollution control requirements that apply. Private homes, apartments, condominiums, retail and commercial buildings may have been constructed with materials that contain asbestos (although most structures built since 1980 should have little if any asbestos materials present). There may also be other hazardous substances in the wildfire ash and debris. These can be released into the air in the form of fine particles during demolition and when handling the ash and debris.

Air Pollution Control District rules regulate the demolition, renovation, and removal of asbestos containing materials and require special procedures to be followed during such operations. Although most of these requirements do not apply to single-family residences and structures containing four or fewer dwelling units, homeowners and contractors should take common sense precautions to reduce exposure to dust and possible asbestos-containing materials.

Inhaling asbestos fibers can pose a serious health threat. Many years after exposure, diseases to the respiratory system and other organs can develop. Asbestos exposures should be avoided.

In addition to the precautions listed below, to protect themselves from possible asbestos exposures, owners of homes or structures built before 1980 that are intact but have suffered wildfire smoke damage and are having acoustical ceilings scraped or heating ducts, pipe wrap, insulation or other materials that may contain asbestos removed should first collect samples of the materials in a sealable bag (e.g. plastic storage bag) and have the samples tested for asbestos. Asbestos testing services are listed in the phone directory yellow pages under "Asbestos" categories and the cost should be minimal. If asbestos is present, the materials should be removed by a certified asbestos removal contractor. Testing is not necessary if the home or structure has been fully or partially destroyed by the wildfires and is to be demolished.

Given the unprecedented situation in San Diego County caused by the wildfires, the Air Pollution Control District has decided to waive notification and other administrative

requirements and fees for all wildfire-related demolitions and debris removal activities at multi-unit residential structures (e.g. apartment buildings, condominiums) and at commercial and industrial structures. This exception only applies to wildfire damaged structures, not to routine demolition and renovation activities subject to federal regulations.

All persons conducting demolition and/or removal operations and handling and disposing of ash and debris should take the following minimum precautions to reduce exposure to hazardous air contaminants and to reduce the generation of dust that could affect themselves or neighbors.

- Avoid breathing dust at the site. It may contain asbestos or other hazardous substances.
- Use a tight-fitting particulate mask designed to protect your respiratory system from very fine particles.
- Wear protective glasses or goggles to protect your eyes.
- Wear gloves, a long-sleeved shirt and long pants or coveralls to protect your skin. Clothing and coveralls should be bagged after use and laundered before re-use.
- Keep debris and ash dampened to reduce dust until it has been placed in sealed or closed containers. Wet down structures being demolished.
- Place wetted debris in closed containers. Line bulk containers with heavy duty plastic (e.g. polysheeting) that can be used to “burrito-wrap” debris and ash.
- **DO NOT USE LEAF BLOWERS TO CLEAN UP RESIDUAL ASH, DIRT AND DEBRIS.** This can generate significant dust emissions.
- Check with your waste-disposal company, with the County Department of Environmental Health or your city on where wildfire ash and debris are being accepted for disposal. The Ramona, Otay, Sycamore and Miramar landfills have been authorized to accept this waste.
- Older structure materials that may contain asbestos include roofing and siding shingles, sprayed-on acoustical ceilings, vinyl floor tiles and mastic, backing on vinyl sheet flooring and adhesives, insulation blankets or tape used on steam pipes, boilers, and furnace ducts, boiler door covers and gaskets, and older household products such as stove-top pads.