

What Should you do About Contamination?

The information and resources provided in this guidance document¹ are not an exhaustive list of the legal requirements and responsibilities for a property owner impacted by a wildfire.

Rather, this information is to assist you when considering the health and environmental risks associated with potential contamination on your property after a wildfire, and the actions to take.

Site Remediation

Remediation is the removal or reduction of contamination at an impacted property and should be done in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

For information on managing waste and potentially hazardous waste on your property after a wildfire, refer to the document [Post-Wildfire Hazardous Materials Guidance for Local Authorities and First Nations](#) and factsheet [Dealing with Hazardous Waste After a Wildfire](#), as the Hazardous Waste Regulation may apply.

To assist your clean up and remediation efforts, it is recommended that you seek professional advice from a QP or AP with contaminated site experience. It is crucial to ensure proper handling of contaminated materials and hazardous waste. QPs have knowledge and expertise in applicable legislation and can help you navigate legal requirements and provide specific guidance on the unique circumstances of your property and the remediation process, if needed.

A QP is required to complete investigative work, such as soil sampling/testing, before a remediation plan can be created, implemented, and completed. If your QP investigation finds contamination on your property, independent remediation should be completed. Independent remediation is often undertaken by a property owner as part of due diligence to improve the health and safety of people and the environmental conditions on the property.

You can familiarize yourself with waste management standards and regulations governing renovations and remediation to ensure waste and contaminated materials are handled responsibly.

Applicable legislation includes:

- [Contaminated Sites Regulation \(CSR\)](#)
- [Emergency management legislation - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)
- [Hazardous Waste Regulation](#)
- [Spill management regulations - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

Information for landowners and residents of specific property types is provided in the following sections.

¹ This Guidance is provided as a starting point, and does not limit, and should not be construed as limiting, a director's exercise of discretion under the Environmental Management Act (EMA) and Contaminated Sites Regulation (CSR).

Agricultural Lands

If pesticide and herbicide storage areas on your property have burned in a wildfire, harmful contaminants could still be present. Consider testing standing water accessible to livestock, feed storage, and other animal consumables like hay or silage that may have been impacted by contaminants.

Additional information on emergency management for agricultural properties is available here:

- [Emergency management for agriculture - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/agriculture/emergency-management)
- [Prepare agriculture operations for wildfire - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/agriculture/wildfire)
- [Emergency Planning for Wildfires | AgSafe \(agsafebc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/agriculture/ag-safe)
- [Pesticide fires - prevention, control, and cleanup - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/agriculture/pesticide)

First Nations Lands and Archaeological Sites

The information presented in the sections above will apply to residential and Schedule 2 properties on First Nations lands. There are additional considerations for these sites, and some resources are presented below.

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) provides resources for First Nations peoples when returning to their properties after a wildfire: <https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Returning-to-Your-Home-After-Wildfires.pdf>.

Indigenous Services Canada provides funding for preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery through the Emergency Management Assistance Program. Indigenous Services Canada is working closely with the Province of BC, First Nations' Emergency Services Society of BC and the FNHA to ensure First Nations are fully supported to respond to emergency events and evacuations.

Wildfires can expose archaeological artifacts, as can subsequent erosion. It is important to follow proper procedures if artifacts are found, please see: [Archaeology in B.C. - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/archaeology).

Contact:

Land Remediation

Email:

siteremediation@gov.bc.ca

Environmental Emergency Program

Report a Spill:

1-800-663-3456

Email:

SpillReports@gov.bc.ca