

Fact Sheet: Dealing with Hazardous Waste After a Wildfire

Identifying Hazards on Your Property

Returning home after a wildfire means being vigilant about potential hazards on your property. These hazards can include accumulated ash, wood waste, construction debris, damaged greenery (broken branches), compromised water and gas systems, and home heating fuel oil tanks that may have been damaged. Everyday items like the contents of your fridge and freezer can also pose risks to those re-entering their properties.

Proper Disposal Procedures

To handle the waste on your property effectively, it's important to check with your local authorities, as their procedures for disposing of hazardous materials may have been updated due to the wildfire. The fires might have impacted some landfills and hazardous waste facilities, so stay informed by following your local authority's news releases for the latest information on waste disposal.

Safe Handling of Hazardous Waste

For the protection of human health and the environment, it's crucial to ensure that hazardous waste is handled, stored, transported, treated, and disposed of properly. It's important not to place hazardous materials in your regular curbside bins. Instead, these materials should be taken to authorized landfill or third-party facilities. You can also visit Recycle BC's website to find a safe location for recycling or disposing of hazardous waste: <https://recyclebc.ca/hazardous/>

Disposing of Fridge and Freezer Waste

When it comes to getting rid of waste from your fridge, consult your insurer and your local authority before disposal. Spoiled food, fridges, or freezers need careful handling. Food stored in your refrigerator, cooler, or freezer should be discarded if the temperature inside exceeded 4°C for up to 4 hours or if there was a significant power outage. Keep an eye on local waste disposal updates, as post-wildfire areas may have specific programs for coordinating and disposing of fridges and freezers.

Sorting Through Debris Inside Your Home

When sorting through debris inside your home, pay attention to items that may need disposal. Items like food, medicine, furniture, cosmetics, and toiletries can be damaged by heat, smoke, and lingering chemical residues. Both inside and outside your home, accumulated ash can present health risks and should only be handled with the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Before disposing of household items, create an inventory of all impacted items for insurance purposes and follow local waste disposal guidelines for hazardous materials.

Organizing Yard Debris

When dealing with debris in your yard, organize waste into separate piles for efficient pickup. Consider creating designated areas for different waste types:

1. **Green waste/vegetation debris** (such as damaged plants and tree branches)



2. **Construction/demolition debris** (such as drywall and metal siding)
3. **Hazardous waste** (like ash and wastewater)
4. **Bulky solid waste** (such as couches and mattresses)
5. **Wood waste** (including wooden frames, tables, and doors)
6. **White goods** (such as stoves and microwaves)

By following these guidelines and working in coordination with local authorities, you can safely and effectively manage waste after a wildfire.

For information on recycling facilities in your area and acceptance of hazardous waste materials, see [Recycle BC](#)

For more information on recovering after a wildfire, see [Prepared BC](#)

To [report a spill](#), call 1-800-663-3456