

Kincade Fire Recovery

Storm Drains and Ash

ADVISORY

Cleaning up the ash and leaves from our backyards, landscapes, yards, and streets will eventually help clean our air and our community, but it must be done safely. Smoke and ash can be harmful to your health and the health of those around you. The greatest risk is from fine particles that are not visible. The information below is for residents and those who are cleaning up ash, not those cleaning up burned structures. If you lost your home or business to the fire, you need to take additional precautions. See links below for other resources.

When you determine it is safe to clean up, PROTECT YOURSELF and the ENVIRONMENT remember these three C's: 'CONTROL – CONTAIN – CAPTURE

PROTECT YOURSELF

Avoid cleaning up ash until air quality conditions improve and it's safe to be outdoors. Decisions about when to clean should be based on the level of fine particles and the air. Check your local air quality information at Today's Air Quality.

<https://www.nosocoair.net/air-quality.html>

- No one with heart or lung conditions should handle ash clean-up.
- Use a NIOSH N-95 or P-100 particulate respirator mask.

Inhaled ash may be irritating to the nose, throat and lungs. Choose a mask with two straps and make sure it fits snugly around your nose and chin. Surgical masks, bandanas and other paper masks do not protect your lungs from the fine particles that are of greatest concern.

- Avoid skin contact with ash.
- Protect yourself when others are cleaning around you.
- Thoroughly wash fruit and vegetables from your garden before eating.

CONTROL

Try to control the amount of ash particles that get re-suspended into the air.

- DO NOT USE LEAF BLOWERS to clean up ash or leaves that have ash on them.
- Use only household vacuums or shop vacuums with HEPA filters.
- Do not allow children to play in ash.

CONTAIN

Use appropriate cleaning methods for the task at hand.

- Sweep gently with a push broom, then mop hardscapes with a damp cloth or hose lightly with water.
- Scrape ash, leaves and debris into plastic bags and dispose in the regular trash.
- Commercial cleaning may be needed for smoke damaged carpet, upholstery, and window treatments.

CAPTURE

Ash has a high pH and, in large amounts, can be harmful for people, the environment and aquatic life.

- Protect storm drains from ash and cleaning chemicals.
- Divert water away from storm drains or try to filter the wash water with gravel bags, filter fabric, fiber rolls, etc., in front of storm drains. Scoop up captured ash and debris and dispose of appropriately.

If washing roof areas, redirect downspouts to landscaped areas.

- Ash will not hurt plants or grass but will hurt the storm drains when the water reaches the creeks.