

Asbestos in Wildfire Ash and Debris A guide for residential and commercial property owners.



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

The following information applies solely to properties burned by the 2020 wildfires:

Almeda Fire, Archie Creek Fire, Beachie Creek Fire, Brattain Fire, Echo Mountain Complex Fire, Holiday Farm Fire, Lionshead Fire, Mosier Creek Fire, North Cascade Complex Fire, Powerline Fire, Riverside Fire, Slater Fire, South Obenchain Fire, Two Four Two Fire, White River Fire

Government funded cleanup effort

The State of Oregon is working with federal, state, and local partners to safely address ash and debris from the 2020 wildfires. DEQ strongly recommends waiting for government funded assistance for hazard and debris removal. Asbestos is a known carcinogen and there is no known safe level of exposure. By cleaning up ash and debris on your own you may be putting yourself and those who help you at risk.

Government-funded cleanup is available to you. If you want to know more about the government-funded cleanup effort, go to [the State of Oregon wildfire recovery website](https://wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup) (wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup) for more information.

Removing fire debris is a two-step cleanup process.

- **Step 1** of cleanup includes the removal of hazardous household waste or substances. Examples include fuel, car batteries, antifreeze, solvents, fertilizers, pesticides, propane tanks, disinfectants, aerosols, paint, bleach, and ammunition. This is at no cost to property owners.
- **Step 2** includes the removal of ash and debris.

To participate in this program, you must sign a Right of Entry form to authorize government contractors to enter your property for cleanup purposes. Right of Entry forms are available on your county's website or for in-person pickup. You can also call 682-800-5737 for more information.

Cleanup of wildfire ash and debris

If you choose not to participate in the government funded cleanup, this fact sheet provides some basic information about the asbestos requirements and provides guidance for safely managing wildfire ash and debris. More information is available on [DEQ's Wildfire Debris Removal webpage](#).

On Oct. 9, 2020, the Environmental Quality Commission [approved temporary variances](#) from certain asbestos regulations related to the cleanup of ash and debris following catastrophic wildfires across

Oregon in August and September 2020. The variances are in place through October 1, 2021. The guidance below summarizes the options and best practices for residential property owners choosing to undertake ash and debris cleanup themselves as well as the asbestos rule changes that apply to privately-funded wildfire cleanup at commercial properties. [DEQ's asbestos and fire debris flowchart](#) provides a graphical representation of the information.

Residential Properties Damaged by the 2020 Wildfires

Residential properties with four or fewer dwelling units can either choose to have an asbestos survey performed by an [accredited inspector](#) or presume any remaining ash and debris at the residential property contains asbestos.

- If a survey was performed, and confirms that there is no asbestos-containing material on-site, the asbestos regulations do not apply, and the property owner does not need to use a DEQ-licensed contractor to remove, handle and dispose of the ash and debris. The materials can be disposed of as solid waste. DEQ recommends wetting the ash and debris to minimize dust during handling, transport and disposal. Ensure the load is covered during transport. Take the survey documentation to the disposal site so that the materials can be verified to contain no asbestos-containing material.
- If an asbestos survey was performed and confirms that there are asbestos-containing materials on-site, the property owner must follow one of the options listed below.
- If no survey is performed, the ash and debris must be presumed to contain asbestos, and the residential property owner must follow one of the options listed below.

Option 1 – Hire a DEQ licensed asbestos abatement contractor

DEQ recommends that you hire an asbestos abatement contractor. A list of [DEQ-licensed abatement contractors](#) is available on the DEQ website.

Asbestos Program
700 NE Multnomah St., Suite 600
Portland, OR 97232
Phone: 503-229-5696
800-452-4011
Fax: 503-229-6124
Contact: Hillarie Sales

www.oregon.gov/DEQ

DEQ is a leader in restoring, maintaining and enhancing the quality of Oregon's air, land and water.

The following asbestos rule changes apply:

- Notification requirements are suspended for residential properties with four or less dwelling units
- Fees are suspended
- Open accumulation is allowed
- No negative pressure enclosure is required
- The use of mechanical equipment is allowed

Option 2 – Clean up your own residential property without a contractor

This option is *only* available to owners of exclusively residential properties with four or fewer dwelling units. DEQ does not recommend this option. Asbestos is a known carcinogen and there is no known safe level of exposure. You may be putting yourself and others who assist you at risk. DEQ recommends that you notify any volunteers of the risks associated with handling asbestos-containing material.

Under this option, the property owner may not use any paid labor.

In addition, the property owner must:

- Adequately wet materials during handling, packaging, and transport.
- Double-bag debris in 6 mil plastic bags, fiber or metal drums or other leak-tight packaging. Asbestos waste bags can be obtained from safety supply companies, industrial supply companies, and several online suppliers.
- Packages must have a hazard label that states the following in all bold, all capital letters as shown here:

DANGER

CONTAINS ASBESTOS FIBERS

AVOID CREATING DUST

CANCER AND LUNG DISEASE HAZARD

AVOID BREATHING AIRBORNE ASBESTOS FIBERS

- The waste package must also have a generator label that includes the name of the person doing the removal and the address from where the waste was removed.

Check disposal requirements:

- Prior to starting your cleanup, contact the [landfill or transfer station](#) you will use for disposal for their requirements, capacity, and alternative drop off locations.
- To keep landfill personnel safe and to comply with their DEQ permits, landfills may require the completion of a [waste shipment form](#) and additional test results.

DEQ recommends that property owners take extra precautions when handling wildfire ash and debris. More information is available on the [DEQ wildfire webpage](#) or you can contact [asbestos program staff](#) with questions. For material that may contain asbestos, DEQ recommends that you [wear protective clothing and masks/respirators](#).

Commercial Properties Damaged by the 2020 Wildfires

Commercial properties, which includes properties with more than four dwelling units, can either choose to have an asbestos survey performed by [an accredited inspector](#) or assume ash and debris left at the commercial property contains asbestos.

- If the survey confirms that there is no asbestos-containing material on-site, the asbestos regulations do not apply, and the property owner does not need to use a DEQ-licensed contractor to remove, handle and dispose of the ash and debris. The materials can be disposed of as solid waste. DEQ recommends wetting the ash and debris to minimize dust during handling, transport and disposal. Take the survey documentation to the disposal site so that the landfill can verify that the materials contain no asbestos-containing material.
- If an asbestos survey was performed and confirms that there is asbestos-containing materials on-site the commercial property owner must hire a DEQ licensed asbestos contractor.
- If no survey is performed, the ash and debris must be assumed to contain asbestos, and the property owner must hire a DEQ licensed asbestos abatement contractor.

A list of [DEQ-licensed abatement contractors](#) is available on the DEQ website.

The following asbestos rule changes apply:

- Notification requirements are suspended for commercial properties except for when demolition will occur because part of the structure is still standing (a load-supporting structural member)
- Fees are suspended
- Open accumulation is allowed
- No negative pressure enclosure is required
- The use of mechanical equipment is allowed

Additional Resources

State of Oregon Wildfire Cleanup Page
<https://wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup>

DEQ Wildfire Page
<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wildfires/Pages/default.aspx>

DEQ Asbestos Information
<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/Hazards-and-Cleanup/Pages/Asbestos-Information.aspx>

List of DEQ Licensed Asbestos Abatement Contractors
<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/asb-contr.pdf>

List of Accredited Asbestos Inspectors
<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/Hazards-and-Cleanup/Documents/asbAccredInspector2020.pdf>

The Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) has adopted [an equivalent to the variances](#) granted by the Environmental Quality Commission, such that the asbestos regulations that LRAPA administers remain no less strict than DEQ's asbestos regulations.

Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.

Asbestos Program Contacts

Office	Address	Phone	Counties
Portland	700 NE Multnomah St. Suite 600 Portland, OR 97232	503-229-6351 or 800-452-4011	Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Multnomah, Tillamook, Washington
Salem	4026 Fairview Industrial Dr. SE Salem, OR 97801	503-378-5086 or 800-349-7677	Benton, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Polk, Yamhill
Medford	221 Stewart Ave. Ste. 201 Medford, OR 97501	541-776-6107 or 877-823-3216	Jackson, Josephine, Eastern Douglas County
Coos Bay	381 N Second St. Coos Bay, OR 97420	541-269-2721, Ext. 222	Coos, Curry, Western Douglas County
Bend	475 NE Bellevue Dr. Suite 110 Bend, OR 97701	541-633-2019 or 866-863-6668	Crook, Deschutes, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Sherman, Wasco
Pendleton	800 SE Emigrant Ave. Suite 330 Pendleton, OR 97801	541-278-4626 or 800-304-3513	Baker, Gilliam, Grant, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wheeler
Lane Regional Air Protection Agency	1010 Main St. Springfield, OR 97477	541-736-1056	Lane