



Cleaning up safely after a bushfire

Stay safe – don't enter your property until emergency services give you the all clear. Be aware of hazards following a bushfire, and keep your children and pets away during clean-up.

Electricity and gas

Wait until emergency services confirm power and gas are turned off.

If you see a downed powerline or damaged electrical assets stay at least 8 metres away and call Western Power on 13 13 51 or Horizon Power on 13 23 51 to report the hazard.

Insurance and renters

Contact your insurance company as soon as possible and find out what you need to do. If you're not insured, you may need to organise clean-up yourself. If you are renting, talk to your property manager as soon as possible.

Be aware of hazards

Be aware that hot coals and other hazardous materials may be hidden under the rubble. Buildings and other structures may be unstable to enter or walk on. Ash and dust may stir up by entering the property.

Wear personal protection

Everyone should wear:

- thick rubber gloves
- a P2 face mask
- closed footwear
- disposable coveralls or old clothes with long sleeves and trousers to protect your skin
- protective eye wear

Wash hands and face thoroughly after cleaning-up. Clean or dispose of your protective clothing after use.

Rubbish

Contact your local government to find out how waste collection is being managed and where you can take it, including building rubble.

Sort waste into separate piles for collection or transport. For example, separate chemicals, green waste and general waste into separate piles.

Learn how to safely handle different types of hazards you might find around your property.

Asbestos

Exposure to asbestos fibres in air can cause diseases, such as mesothelioma. Disturbing burnt and damaged asbestos can release asbestos fibres into the air, which will increase your risk of breathing in the fibres.

If burnt asbestos is found on your property, emergency services may install barrier tape or warning signs to prevent people from entering.

The area may be kept damp with water or PVA glue (with dye) to help stop the fibres and ash becoming airborne.

Avoid entering a property that contains burnt asbestos. Burnt asbestos must be removed by a licensed removalist.

Although it is not recommended, if you decide to enter your property, you need to protect yourself by wearing the correct personal protective equipment.

Learn more about how to protect yourself around asbestos and how to clean-up and dispose of small amounts of intact asbestos pieces on the HealthyWA website.

Ash from CCA treated timber

CCA is a preservative used in building timber which includes arsenic and chromium. When timber burns the ash can be harmful if you swallow, breathe in or touch it. If you come into contact with ash, wash off with clean water. Before attempting to clean-up, wear protective clothing and follow the safety precautions on the HealthyWA website. Dispose of ash by double wrapping in plastic bags and taking to your local landfill.

Poisons, chemicals and pesticides

Any items that could be flammable or toxic, such as gas bottles, petrol drums, bottles of chemicals, pesticides or poisons, should be left where they are or separated from other rubbish.

If chemical containers are intact, follow the manufacturer's instructions if visible (or read online)

before touching. If in doubt seek advice from fire and emergency services. Wear protective clothing when cleaning up dangerous goods.

Septic tank

If your septic tank or other on-site wastewater system is damaged it will become an immediate safety risk, especially if the lid is broken. Restrict people from accessing the area and get the system checked by a licensed plumber or service technician.

Drinking water

Rainwater tanks may be contaminated with ash, debris and fire suppressants. The tank may need to be drained, cleaned, refilled and treated, or replaced. For mains water, check for boil water alerts in case the water is unsafe to drink.

Food and medicine

Throw away food and medicine that has spoiled in a fridge or freezer without power. Wrap it in newspaper and put it in sealed bags for collection. Do not throw it away in the environment as it may attract animals and insects. Damaged pantry items such as canned food should be thrown in the rubbish. If you operate a food business with large amounts of food to be thrown away, you may need to hire a skip bin. Contact your local government for further advice and support.

Swimming pool

Swimming pools may be contaminated with ash and can become a breeding place for mosquitoes. A contaminated pool should be emptied and refilled, or super-chlorinated. Before emptying, be sure to check that it will not cause the pool to crack and collapse.

Dead animals

If you find a dead animal, ask your local government where it should be buried or bury at least 1 metre underground.

Learn more about each of these hazards at healthywa.wa.gov.au/afterabushfire



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