



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

News Release

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DTSC's Emergency Response Unit to clean up hazardous waste from wildfires

SACRAMENTO – As California suffers one of the worst wildfire seasons in decades, the Department of Toxic Substances Control's (DTSC's) Emergency Response Unit is helping devastated property owners deal with the aftermath.

"Part of our mission is to help protect people and the environment from the dangers posed by hazardous waste," said Adam Palmer, supervisor of the Emergency Response Unit. "The quicker we can get in to remove the hazardous waste, the faster the people affected by the fires can go back and rebuild their lives."

DTSC's primary focus is to evaluate and remove hazardous waste debris which can range from asbestos siding or pipe insulation, to paints, batteries, flammable liquids, and electronic waste such as computers and monitors. The hazardous waste must be removed and properly disposed of at a waste facility to prevent further exposure to the public and the environment.

So far this year, DTSC has assisted with the cleanup effort following the Rocky fire which burned more than 69,400 acres in Lake, Yolo and Colusa counties in August. Two weeks after the fire raged through the area, DTSC staff, along with hazardous waste/asbestos removal contractors, spent six days traveling through steep hills to reach the more than 70 homes leveled by the flames. They quickly began helping homeowners with the emergency removal of hazardous waste on their properties. The removal of all waste is expected to be completed by mid-October.

DTSC's Emergency Response Unit is also coordinating with Trinity County officials on the multiple wildfires that burned in August, and will start evaluating their fire damaged properties in late September. DTSC will later begin working with Amador and Calaveras counties as soon as the Butte fire that is currently burning is fully contained.

DTSC is in contact with Lake County officials to assist with the Valley fire due to the more than 500 homes destroyed in Lake and Napa counties.

With the possibility of an El Niño-driven rainy season right around the corner, DTSC's work is critical. "We want to remove the hazardous material as quickly as possible before there is any possibility of it entering rivers or drinking water causing damage to human health and wildlife," Palmer said.

Emergency Guidance on Wildfire Fact Sheets:

[Handling Ash, Debris and other Hazardous Materials from Burned Structures](#)

[Management Options for Expedited Collection of Hazardous Wastes from Burned Areas](#)



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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit www.dtsc.ca.gov. To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942.

The mission of DTSC is to protect California's people and environment from harmful effects of toxic substances by restoring contaminated resources, enforcing hazardous waste laws, reducing hazardous waste generation, and encouraging the manufacture of chemically safer products.