



SHASTA COUNTY OPERATIONAL AREA
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

PRESS RELEASE



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Safety tips for returning home after evacuation

Safety is our priority for our community. When returning home after wildfire, please be aware of these health and safety concerns.

Getting home:

- Have your ID or proof of residency handy for traffic control points.
- Use caution on the roadways. You're likely to find congestion from emergency personnel in these areas.

If your property was affected by the fire:

- Check grounds for hot spots, smoldering stumps and vegetation.
- Before inspecting your home, first check for the smell of gas. Turn off power until you've completed your inspection. Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home.
- Check for fire damage to your home, turn off all appliances and make sure the meter is not damaged before turning on the main circuit breaker.
- Check the roof and exterior areas for sparks or embers.
- Be aware of and use extreme caution around trees, power poles and other tall objects or structures that may have lost stability during the fire. Most burned structures and surfaces will be unstable. Do not touch any power lines.

Even if fire did not directly impact your property, utilities may have been shut off, so:

- Discard all food that requires refrigeration if the electricity has been off. Food can spoil in less than 2 hours without refrigeration. Discard all frozen food if your power has been off. Food is unsafe if it thawed and refroze.
- Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke, fire retardant and foam or other chemicals.
- If there is no power, check to make sure the main breaker is on. If the breakers are on and power is still not present, contact the utility company (Redding Electric Utility: 530-339-7200, Pacific Gas and Electric: 1-800-743-5000).
- Water and wastewater utility services have also been returned to all serviceable homes in the City of Redding. If you return to your home and find that these services are not working, please call Public Works Utilities at 530-224-6068.
- If you have a well for water supply:
 - Check the well or pump house to ensure it is in working order.

- If your well has been damaged by fire, contact a local licensed and bonded well constructor or pump installer to determine the extent of the damage and what must be done to either repair or decommission the well.
- If you have a propane tank or system, contact your propane supplier, turn off valves on the system, and leave valves closed until the supplier inspects your system.
- If you have a solar electrical system, this system should be inspected by a licensed technician to verify that the solar panels and electrical wiring are safe for continued operation.

Clean up

As tempting as it is to begin cleaning right away, be careful to avoid contact with hazardous waste. Fire ash can cause respiratory problems and burn exposed skin. Avoid washing ash down driveways into the storm drains, as it can cause water contamination which could harm both people and wildlife.

In the City of Redding, Solid Waste has resumed normal trash pickup. No fire waste is to be placed in the cans on the curb. If you have no fire damage and are simply cleaning up ash, this can be bagged and placed in your gray trash receptacle. The Transfer Station is currently accepting food waste at no additional charge to help those who are cleaning out refrigerators and freezers.

Fire waste is hazardous and needs to be inspected by a hazardous waste specialist prior to clean up. Inspections will be done by either California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) or another state or federal agency. Inspections may be done at any time, whether residents are at their property or not. When they have cleared the property, they will leave notification for the homeowner to begin the debris removal process. No debris removal should take place until DTSC has cleared the property for hazardous waste. The City will keep you informed when that process begins.

For additional resources on returning home after wildfire, go to:

Cal Fire - <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/After-a-Wildfire/>

CDC - <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/index.html>

For more information on local resources, call 211 or visit www.211norcal.org/shasta. You can also follow the Shasta County Sheriff's Office and the Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency on Facebook and Twitter.

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