

**SAFE CLEAN-UP AND WORK PRACTICES DURING AND
AFTER THE MOUNTAIN FIRE**

Please be aware that the Ventura County Public Health Department and the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District are strongly recommending NO USE OF LEAFBLOWERS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. No ash clean-up at residential and commercial properties should occur until this health notice is changed.

We do not advise ash clean-up while ash is still falling and the situation is unpredictable. Wait until conditions improve. DO NOT USE LEAF BLOWERS under any circumstances! Should ash clean-up be absolutely necessary, the following is recommended for safe clean-up.

- Avoid skin contact with ash. Ash from burned homes and other items will likely contain metals, chemicals, and potentially asbestos, items that may be considered toxic if breathed in or touched with wet skin. If you do get ash on your skin, wash it off immediately. Some wet ash can cause chemical burns.
- Inhaled ash may be irritating to the nose, throat and lungs. In order to avoid possible health problems, the following steps are recommended:
 - Use protective wear. Wear a tight fitting N95 respirator mask, gloves, boots, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when cleaning up ash. No one with heart or lung conditions should handle ash clean up.
 - Avoid as much as possible getting ash into the air. As an alternative to leaf blowing, sweep gently with a push broom. Ash can be bagged and put into trash cans. Then hose lightly with water. You may allow water from cleaning to drain into landscaping. Take care to conserve water.
 - Outdoors, you may use a shop vacuum equipped with a **high-efficiency particulate filter (HEPA)** and a disposable filter bag.
 - Indoors, you may sweep gently or use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter. Follow this with water and a wet cloth or mop to clean items, counter tops, cabinets, shelves and floors. Commercial cleaning may be needed for carpets, upholstery and curtains.
 - Protect storm drains from ash and any cleaning chemicals used while cleaning by diverting the water you use away from storm drains or recapturing. Ash is highly acidic, which in large quantities can be harmful for people, the environment and aquatic life.

If you have symptoms that may be related to exposure to smoke or soot, consult your doctor. Symptoms include repeated coughing, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, headaches and nausea, rash or irritated skin and unusual fatigue or lightheadedness.

For more information on fire incident health issues, visit vchca.org/public-health.
For information on air quality, visit vcapcd.org.