

WORKER SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR FIRE CLEANUP SITES



Fire cleanup, removal and demolition work is dangerous. It can expose workers to toxic ash and debris, asbestos, chemical substances, unstable structures and other hazards. Under Cal/OSHA's workplace safety regulations, employers are required to identify these hazards and provide workers with proper training, personal protective equipment (PPE) and other protections. Fire cleanup work, including ash, soot, and debris removal and cleaning of fire or smoke-damaged structures, is not household domestic service. Employees performing this work are covered by Cal/OSHA's health and safety standards. For more information on Cal/OSHA's worker safety requirements during fire cleanup, see:

Site safety and health: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/wildfire/worker-health-and-safety-during-fire-cleanup.html>

Respiratory protection: https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/fire_resp_protection.html

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/wildfire/Protective-Equipment-During-Fire-Cleanup.html>

PLANNING AND TRAINING

Before starting work, employers are required to:

1. Establish an effective plan to identify hazards on the site and communicate them to workers;
2. Ensure that workers have completed a 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training; and
3. Provide workers with proper PPE, including respiratory protection.

EXAMPLES OF SITE HAZARDS

- Electricity, downed powerlines, solar panels
- Unstable structures, trenches, and trees
- Asbestos insulation, tiles, and siding
- Toxic ash and dust, pesticides, fuels, chemical products
- Compressed gas cylinders, aboveground and underground fuel tanks
- Enclosed spaces with low oxygen and toxic atmospheres
- Coccidioides spores in soil (Valley Fever)

- Heavy equipment and vehicular traffic
- Heat illness
- Carbon monoxide from the use of gasoline-powered equipment in enclosed spaces

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Employers are required to provide workers with the following PPE at fire cleanup, removal and demolition sites. Workers must be trained in the use, maintenance and limitations of the PPE.

- An elastomeric air-purifying respirator (APRs) equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, combined with an organic vapor (OV) and formaldehyde cartridge. A P100, N100 or R100 filter may be used in place of a HEPA filter (T8CCR [5144](#)).
- To avoid counterfeit products, please visit the [NIOSH Certified Equipment List \(https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/cel/default.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/cel/default.html).
- N95 respirators may be used where vegetation or untreated wood alone has burned, in place of an elastomeric APR.



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Personal Protective Equipment (continued)

- Hardhat
- Eye protection
- Hearing protection for heavy equipment and powered tools
- Full-body coveralls with head covering
- Chemical and cut resistant gloves
- Protective work boots
- Fall protection for workers at elevated locations

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

Cal/OSHA requires safe work practices at cleanup sites, including the following:

- Workers must be trained and the site must be safe to enter prior to starting work (T8CCR [5192](#), [1509](#), [1510](#) and [3203](#)).
- Workers must wear their PPE, including respiratory protection (T8CCR [5192](#)).
- Notify gas, electric, and other underground utilities at least 48 hours prior to entering the site to ensure that all utilities are shut down and properly marked (T8CCR [1541\(b\)\(2\)](#)). Contact DigSafe at (811).
- Only qualified electrical workers are allowed to work near power lines and restore electrical power (T8CCR [2940](#)).
- Water must be used to suppress dust and debris (T8CCR [5141](#) and [1532.3](#)).
- Workers must be provided with fall protection when working at height (See https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/Fall-Protection-in-Construction-fs.pdf).
- Workers must be protected against impalement hazards (T8CCR [1712](#)).
- Workers must be provided with water, rest, and shade to prevent heat illness (T8CCR [3395](#)).
- Electrical generators must not be connected to fixed wiring (T8CCR [2320.9](#)).

- Traffic control and flaggers must be provided when heavy equipment is operating (T8CCR [1598](#) and [1599](#)).
- Workers must have ready access to a first-aid kit, fire extinguisher, portable eye wash station, and toilet (T8CCR [1512](#), [3400](#), [1922](#), [1526](#), [1527](#), [5162](#), [5162](#)).
- Call 911 immediately if there is a serious injury or illness.
- Workers must have ready access to hand-washing facilities for use prior to breaks, when leaving the worksite, and after removing PPE (T8CCR [1524\(a\)](#), [1527\(a\)](#), [5192\(k\)](#)).
- Operators of chainsaws must comply with Cal/OSHA's chainsaw regulations (T8CCR [6283](#)).
- Workers must follow decontamination procedures and remove PPE before breaks and before traveling home to prevent exposure to toxic substances and contamination of private vehicles and residences (T8CCR [5192](#)).

CAL/OSHA

Workers in California are protected regardless of immigration status. Workers who have questions about safety and health in the workplace can call 833-579-0927 to speak with a live bilingual Cal/OSHA representative between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Complaints about workplace safety and health hazards can be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#).

All Cal/OSHA title 8 regulations listed above can be found at: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/samples/search/query.htm>

Employers who have questions or need assistance with workplace health and safety programs can call [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) at 800-963-9424.

