

# Wildfire Recovery

## Phase 1: Household Hazardous Waste Removal



Santa Cruz County, CA – September 2020

*The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is leading the survey, removal and disposal of household hazardous waste (HHW) at properties affected by the CZU Lightning Complex Fire in Santa Cruz County. This HHW removal is Phase 1 of the overall response.*

### What is household hazardous waste (HHW)?

HHW includes everyday products like paints, cleaners, solvents, oils, batteries, herbicides and pesticides, which often contain hazardous ingredients. HHW field crews will remove items suspected of containing asbestos if it is easy to identify, but the property will not be cleared of asbestos until Phase 2 (see link below for more information). Pressurized fuel cylinders can also pose a threat and will be removed. Following a fire, these products require special handling and disposal, especially if their containers are compromised.

### How is HHW removed from properties?

EPA will survey each property, then HHW field crews will remove the materials identified during the survey.

Some empty containers and tanks will be marked with white paint and left as debris for collection in Phase 2 of the debris removal process. Once HHW is removed and Phase 1 is completed on your property, you may move to Phase 2 of debris removal. You must obtain approval from the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Division for Phase 2.

For more information on Phase 2, see Santa Cruz County's website:

<https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/FireRecovery.aspx>

### Why is HHW removed?

This work will clear the way for the removal of ash and debris (Phase 2), allowing the rebuilding process to begin. An Executive Order issued September 25, 2020 by the Governor of California provides EPA the authority to access properties to protect public health, animals and the environment from these threats.

Phase 1 is being done at no cost to property owners.



*Empty containers, marked with white paint, will be picked up during Phase 2.*



### Will EPA remove anything other than HHW?

No. EPA will **only** remove hazardous waste. If firearms or suspected remains are found, EPA will immediately stop work and contact the County Sheriff. No other items will be removed.

### How will I know if my property will be surveyed for HHW?

You can search for your address on the Phase 1 Debris Removal Progress map:

<https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/FireRecovery/MapsData.aspx>

If your property is on the map, it will be surveyed. If your property is not on the map, but you have fire-damaged or destroyed buildings (even small structures), call EPA's hotline at **(415) 793-8794** and we will add your property to the list for being surveyed, assessed and cleaned up.

### May I provide input about potential hazards to EPA crews before they arrive at my property?

Yes. Please call the EPA hotline at **(415) 793-8794** if you have any special comments or concerns about your property.

### How will I know when the process has started and been completed?

EPA crews are in the field and will post a sign on each property when the HHW removal (or Phase 1) is complete. Completed properties are also indicated on the EPA StoryMap: [www.epa.gov/2020CAfireresponse](http://www.epa.gov/2020CAfireresponse)

### My neighbors' properties were completed for HHW but mine was not. Why not?

There are several factors that impact the schedule of the EPA and DTSC field crews. For example, they may not work in an area when other field crews are present, to decrease traffic and congestion.

Weather and daylight also impact the schedule. Crews are moving between different zones. For more information on which zones the HHW field crews are working in, visit:

[www.epa.gov/2020CAfireresponse](http://www.epa.gov/2020CAfireresponse)

In addition, HHW field crews cannot work around dangerous trees or terrain, unstable structures or other unsafe conditions. Those properties will be addressed during Phase 2.

### For more information:

For questions regarding either phase of the debris removal process, visit the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Resources website:

[www.santacruzcounty.us/FireRecovery/EHResources.aspx](http://www.santacruzcounty.us/FireRecovery/EHResources.aspx)



The sign features four circular logos at the top: EPA Region IX Emergency Response, Santa Cruz County (1850), Monterey County (1850), and County of San Mateo (California). The main text reads: "This property's Household Hazardous Waste removal has been designated" followed by a large green checkmark and the word "COMPLETE" in large green letters. Below this, it states: "Ash and other materials remain a health hazard. Please review health advisories before entering burned areas." A horizontal line separates this from the contact information: "For questions regarding the cleanup, please visit your county website, email or call: Santa Cruz: [www.santacruzcounty.us/FireRecovery](http://www.santacruzcounty.us/FireRecovery) San Mateo: [envhealth@smcgov.org](mailto:envhealth@smcgov.org) (650) 372-6200 Monterey: [www.co.monterey.ca.us/recovery](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/recovery)" At the bottom, in a separate box, it says: "EPA field crews will post this sign at properties where Phase 1 is complete."