

# Public Health Information

## Ash from CCA-treated Timber

When CCA-treated timber is burnt the remaining ash can be harmful. People should wear protective clothing if touching this ash, and keep children and animals away.

### What is CCA-treated timber?

Copper chrome arsenate, or CCS, is a wood preservative that is fixed into timber giving it a distinctive pale-green colour that fades to grey over time. CCA-treated timber is commonly used in private and public recreation areas for pergolas, decking, cubby houses, claddings, posts, gates, fencing and landscaping. Generally, it poses very low health risks for normal use.

### What happens to CCA-treated timber when it is burnt?

When CCA-treated timber is burnt, the remaining ash and char can contain up to 10 per cent arsenic, copper and chromium. These chemicals can be harmful for people or animals.

### Precautions for young children and farm animals

Children, pets and farm animals should be kept away from CCA ash. Young children are more likely to put the ash in their mouths, and swallowing only a few grams of ash is harmful. Farm animals may also lick or swallow the salty ash residue.

### Health Symptoms

Eating CCA ash can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea or a "pins and needles" feeling in the skin. If you or anyone in your family has these symptoms (and you suspect swallowing of ash) seek medical attention as soon as possible.

### Personal Protection When Collecting Ash

- Wear gloves and consider wearing disposable overalls
- Wear a disposable paper dust mask to minimise dust getting in your mouth
- Moisten the ash prior to handling it to minimise dust
- Use a shovel to collect ash and do not spread it around
- After finishing, remove and wash clothing and clean your shoes
- Wash your hands before eating, smoking, preparing food or picking up young children

### Disposal of CCA Ash

Do not bury CCA ash or other building waste on your property or elsewhere. This could contaminate land or water and potentially expose your family, animals and the broader community. Contact your Council or EPA regional office for advice and local requirements.

## **FURTHER ADVICE**

For information about:

CCA and Human Health - contact DHS Environmental Health Unit on 1300 761 874

Transport and disposal of CCA ash - contact the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) on (03) 9695 2722

Domestic garbage requirements and landfill locations - contact your local Council

CCA and farm animal health - contact your local Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Animal Health Advisor on 136 186

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