

# Public Health Information -

## Please be safe when returning to your property

Houses, sheds and other buildings or structures burnt in the bushfire can pose potential health hazards, including fallen objects, sharp objects, hot smouldering coals, electrical wires, and weakened walls.

Hazardous materials that may be present after the fire include leaking gas, asbestos, ash from burnt treated timbers (i.e. copper chrome arsenate or 'CCA'), medicines, garden or farm chemicals, other general chemicals (e.g. cleaning products), metal and other residues from burnt household appliances, as well as ash and dusts.

Check with your local emergency services that it is safe to return to your property.

Where possible, try to avoid taking children onto fire-damaged properties, but if you do, please ensure they remain protected at all times.

### Protect yourself:

Wear protective clothing, including:

- sturdy footwear and heavy duty work gloves
- disposable coveralls (with long sleeves and trousers)
- special face masks (P2/N95) to filter out fine particles, including asbestos fibres.

When leaving the property, dispose of gloves, coveralls and face masks into a garbage bag. Wash your hands after removing contaminated clothing and articles. Shoes should be cleaned before reuse.

*Kits containing protective coveralls, gloves and face masks can be obtained through your local Community Service Hub.*

### Handling Wastes

It is unsafe to spread ash around your property, particularly if asbestos materials were used in your home or other structures, or CCA-treated timber was burnt. It is unsafe

to raise the dust when walking around your property.

### Food

All foods that have been in contact with the fire should be discarded. This includes all perishable and non perishable foods e.g. cans, packaged foods.

### Water tanks

Bushfires generate large amounts of smoke and ash and your tank water could have become contaminated from debris and ash or deceased animals. If the water tastes or smells unusual do not drink it or give it to pets.

### Septic Tanks

If you have a septic tank, remember it may have been weakened in the fire so do not drive or walk over it.

### Take care of yourself

For safety reasons, please try to limit the time spent at your property. However, if you will be there for an extended period, please remember to bring with you:

- bottled drinking water
- food (perishable food should be kept cool in an esky or cooler bag)
- sunscreen
- a hat

Returning to your property may be stressful and exhausting. It is important that you look after yourself. You are encouraged to make use of the specialist counselling and support services available.

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