Wildfire Recovery

Phase 1: Household Hazardous Waste Removal

Santa Clara County, CA – October 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 SCU Lightning Complex fires in Santa Clara County. This HHW removal is Phase 1 of the overall response.

What is household hazardous waste (HHW)?
Everyday products like paints, cleaners, solvents, oils, batteries, herbicides, and pesticides, which often have hazardous ingredients.

EPA's HHW field crews will remove items suspected of having asbestos if they are easy to identify, but the property will not be cleared of asbestos until Phase 2. 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.

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

How is HHW removed from properties?
EPA will survey each property, then remove the HHW materials identified during the survey.

Some empty containers and tanks will be marked with white paint (see image to the right) and left for collection in Phase 2, which is the debris removal process.

Why is HHW removed?
This work will clear the way for the removal of ash and debris, allowing the rebuilding process to begin. An Executive Order issued September 25, 2020 by the Governor of California gives EPA 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.

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?

- Search for your address on EPA StoryMap (look for the "Address Lookup" icon): www.epa.gov/2020CAfireresponse
- Results from your search will show if your property is damaged and in need of assessment.
- If your property is not shown as damaged, but you have fire-damaged or destroyed buildings (even small structures), call the Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health's Wildfire line:
  - 408-918-3411

How will I know when the process has started and been completed?
EPA will post a sign (see image to the right) on each property when the HHW removal (Phase 1) is complete. Completed properties are also marked on the EPA StoryMap, and can be found through the "Address Lookup" tool on the StoryMap: www.epa.gov/2020CAfireresponse

EPA's StoryMap also shows which work zones crews are working in each day.

May I give HHW field crews information about potential hazards 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.

My neighbors' properties were completed for HHW but mine was not. Why not?
There are several factors affecting HHW schedules. For example, HHW field crews may not work in an area when other field crews are present, to decrease traffic and congestion. Weather and daylight also affect the schedule. Also, HHW field crews cannot work on properties with dangerous trees or terrain, unstable structures, or other unsafe conditions. Those properties will be addressed during Phase 2.

For more information:
For questions regarding HHW and debris removal, contact the Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health (DEH) Wildfire line: 408-918-3411.

You can also visit the DEH Site: https://www.sccgov.org/sites/deh/Pages/Fire.aspx
Or the Office of Emergency Management SCU Fire Recovery Website: www.sccgov.org/lightningcomplex