

# PROTECTING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY FROM ASBESTOS



## UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA FIRES EMERGENCY RESPONSE

NOVEMBER 28, 2017

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is supporting Mendocino and Lake County communities affected by the recent fires.

EPA is coordinating with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Mendocino and Lake Counties as part of a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) cleanup and fire-related debris removal. As part of the first phase of this cleanup, DTSC is identifying HHW items, removing those items, and transporting them to be properly disposed. EPA will address asbestos if found on the property. For those properties that have asbestos, EPA may use heavy equipment.

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the name given to a group of six different fibrous minerals that occur naturally in the environment. Asbestos-containing products which may be part of the debris left by the fire include: asbestos-cement corrugated sheet, asbestos-cement flat sheet, asbestos pipeline wrap, roofing felt, vinyl-asbestos floor tile, asbestos-cement shingles, millboard, asbestos-cement pipes, transite sidings and vermiculite-attic insulation.

### TIPS FOR PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM ASBESTOS

- ✓ **If you see fibrous material do not touch or disturb it.** (see photo on next page)
- ✓ **Use caution** when walking around debris, and wet debris to minimize suspending potentially-contaminated debris.
- ✓ **Always use proper respiratory equipment** – See EPA’s “Safe Handling Practices” website listed below for more information. The use of **NIOSH-approved N-100, P-100 or R-100 respirators** is recommended to minimize exposure to asbestos. However, even with the use of such respirators, there is still some level of risk of exposure to asbestos for those who are not trained to recognize and work with asbestos-containing material.
- ✓ **If your structure was built before 1980, minimize walking on material potentially containing asbestos** and kicking up dust that may contain asbestos.
- ✓ **Any work to remove asbestos must be conducted by a certified asbestos professional.** See the asbestos abatement websites below for more information.

# PROTECTING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY FROM ASBESTOS

## How might I be exposed to asbestos?

**Don't disturb suspected asbestos-containing materials.** Asbestos fibers may be released into the air by disturbing these materials (such as sifting through ash and debris). Exposure to asbestos usually occurs by breathing in contaminated air.

Homes built prior to 1980 may contain asbestos. If EPA identifies asbestos on fire-damaged properties, EPA will arrange for its removal. If the asbestos is found on fire-affected structures, further work may be necessary to safely address these structures. This work will be coordinated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) debris and ash removal activities in the next phase of the cleanup of burned properties.

## Resources for reducing exposure to the risk of asbestos

For more information, visit the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Asbestos Toxicological Fact Sheet at:  
[www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts61.pdf](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts61.pdf)

For information regarding the abatement of asbestos-containing materials, visit:  
[www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/acru/acruinfo.htm](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/acru/acruinfo.htm)

For additional information about Mendocino County fire response visit:  
[www.mendocinocounty.org/community/mendocino-county-fire-information](http://www.mendocinocounty.org/community/mendocino-county-fire-information)



*Asbestos in fire-damaged building*

For information about the Lake County Sulphur fire response visit:  
[http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Sulphur\\_Fire.htm](http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Sulphur_Fire.htm)  
or call 707-263-1164

For EPA asbestos regulations, visit:  
[www.epa.gov/asbestos/asbestos-laws-and-regulations](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/asbestos-laws-and-regulations)

For safe handling practices for asbestos, visit:  
[www.epa.gov/asbestos/safe-work-practices](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/safe-work-practices)

For more on EPA's Northern California fire response efforts, visit:  
[www.epa.gov/norcalfireresponse](http://www.epa.gov/norcalfireresponse)

U.S. EPA, Region 9  
75 Hawthorne St.  
San Francisco, CA 94105

More information:  
[R9WildfiresPIO@epa.gov](mailto:R9WildfiresPIO@epa.gov)  
[twitter.com/EPAregion9](https://twitter.com/EPAregion9)  
[facebook.com/EPAregion9](https://facebook.com/EPAregion9)