



**County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency  
Environmental Health**

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## **CONDITIONAL EXEMPTION FROM SANTA CRUZ COUNTY DEBRIS REMOVAL REQUIREMENTS**

Where the only burn debris on a parcel is from non-residential structures less than 120 square feet, fences, and non-structural wood material no work plan is required as long as the structures did not contain paint, pesticides, herbicides, propane or other similar hazardous substances, and requirements listed in this document are followed. An approved exemption from Environmental Health is required. Additional exemptions may be granted on a case by case basis where the structure is greater than 120 square feet and all material contained within the structure was inert. You may not apply for an exemption if the County has flagged your property as potentially containing household hazardous waste (HHW) or asbestos.

### **Processing and Disposal of Wood Waste**

There are numerous wood products that may be left after a fire that may need to be disposed of or processed on site. For organic wood products (trees, brush, etc.) chipping and grinding may be a viable option provided that best management practices are followed.

#### Chipping and Grinding on Site

- Wood chips, waste wood, or bark mulch may last several seasons, depending on the material and its depth. Occasionally, these materials are combined with soil in an erosion control mix. Spread the material to a depth of 2-6 inches, primarily on slopes less than 4:1 (25%).
- Wood chips, waste wood, or bark mulch are not allowed in streams or where they may be subject to erosion.
- Fencing, particle board and preserved lumber are not appropriate for chip and grind on site.
- Precautions must be taken against spontaneous combustion, and storage and/or piling of mulch should be avoided where possible.

### **Grading and Erosion Control Requirements**

Once grading has been completed, best management practices shall be implemented to establish erosion control at the disturbed site.

- Follow best management erosion and sediment control practices to prevent ash, soil, and other pollutants from washing into the street, drainage courses and culverts, or onto neighboring properties. A copy of the County's storm water best management practices may be found at:  
<https://www.rcdsantacruz.org/images/brochures/pdf/HomeDrainageGuide.v25.pdf>

- Stockpiled materials that are not immediately loaded for transport shall be handled and stored on site in a manner as to avoid offsite migration. Stockpiles may be stored for up to 180 days. This may include wetting and covering the waste until it is loaded and transported. Locate stockpiles away from drainage courses, drain inlets or concentrated flows of storm water.
- Stockpiled material may not be stored or placed in a public roadway.
- During the rainy season, cover non-active soil stockpiles and contain them within temporary perimeter sediment barriers, such as berms, dikes, silt fences, or sandbag barriers. A soil stabilization measure may be used in lieu of cover.
- Implement appropriate control measures during debris removal and provide final site stabilization after debris removal is completed.

### **Debris Removal Requirements to Solid Waste Facilities**

Burn waste/ash at a minimum shall be taken to approved to take the material. Any characterization requirements of the disposal site must be met before transporting. An approved hauler appropriately licensed for the material transported will need to perform the work, and the material must be wetted and burrito wrapped (CalRecycle protocol) and tarped for transport and ultimate disposal.

Contractors/haulers failing to adhere to this standard may have their material rejected at the disposal facility and/or a fine imposed. Your approved exemption form must be kept onsite and carried with you or your licensed hauler during debris transport. Your approved exemption will serve as verification to the landfill that this material is coming from an approved site. **Asbestos transport and disposal is not authorized by this exemption.**

### **Dust Control Guidelines:**

- Property owners or their contractors should look to provide water or an approved dust palliative, or both, to prevent dust nuisance at each site. Dust resulting from performance of the work should be controlled at all times.
- Each area of ash and debris to be removed must be pre-watered 48 to 72 hours in advance of the removal. Hoses with a fine spray nozzle are recommended. The water must be applied in a manner that does not generate runoff. Engineering controls for storm water discharges must be in place prior to dust control operations.
- All loads shall be covered with a tarp; this includes metal debris. Ash and debris loads shall be fully encapsulated with a tarp (“burrito wrap” method). Concrete loads are exempt from a tarp provided the loads are wetted prior to leaving. If concrete loads generate dust, then the loads must be wetted and covered.
- All waste material that is not unloaded at the end of each workday should be consolidated, sufficiently wetted, and/or covered to prevent the offsite migration of contaminants.
- All visibly dry, disturbed soil surface areas of operation should be watered to minimize dust emissions during performance of work.
- Speeds must be reduced when driving on unpaved roadways.

- Procedures must be implemented to prevent or minimize dirt, soil, or ash contaminating roadways, neighboring parcels, or creating an airborne health hazard. The use of blower devices, dry rotary brushes, or brooms for removal of carryout and track out on public roads is strictly prohibited.

### **Vehicle and Roads**

Removal activities have to be conducted in a manner as to not impact county road integrity. No track equipment on county roads. Pavement protection is required on the interface between private driveways/roads and county roads.

If removal activities on your property will create a roadway blockage or hinder traffic patterns, property owners or their contractors are responsible for obtaining any required local permits and shall post warning signs, as required by local ordinances. As there may be many contractors actively working on remediation efforts in the burn area, it is in the property owners' best interests to identify removal and remediation efforts in adjacent areas that could impact the ability to locate, park, or transport equipment and materials.

### **Well and Septic Guidelines**

- Identify wells, water tanks and leach fields on the property and take steps to protect them during debris removal. Any immediate hazard involving septic tanks or septic systems shall be mitigated prior to debris removal.
- Email ENVHLTH@santacruzcounty.us for water well and/or septic system repair questions and permitting needs including electrical line repair.

### **Soil Testing and Screening Criteria Guidelines**

Soil testing and screening criteria are not required under this exemption, however, property owners must meet any waste characterization requirements of recipient disposal sites prior to transporting waste.

### **Resources for Disposal and Recycling**

Please see Appendix C. Debris Removal Recycling and Disposal Resources document for a list of recycling facilities that may be available during your cleanup.

### **Contractors**

Due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, California has issued industry guidance for construction. All contractors must read the COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Construction (<https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-construction--en.pdf>) and complete the COVID-19 General Checklist for Construction Employers (<https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/checklist-construction.pdf>).