



Special Notice to Property Owners Affected by the Gray and Oregon Road Fires Asbestos & Fire Damaged Structures - FAQs

The Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency (SRCAA) and other local agencies want you and your family members, as well as volunteers, workers, and others who may be handling fire debris, to be safe. Wildfire debris can contain many types of hazardous substances that can easily become airborne and inhaled, including asbestos fibers.

Why the concern over asbestos?

When building materials are damaged, any asbestos fibers present in the ash and debris can become airborne and inhaled. Asbestos is in many types of building construction materials. Exposure to asbestos can lead to a host of serious health issues, including mesothelioma (cancer of the lining of the lungs and abdomen) and asbestosis (scarring of lung tissues).

What if my house was constructed more recently, say in the last 5-10 years?

Even if the home was recently constructed, asbestos could still be present in building materials. The use of asbestos in building materials has never been completely banned.

Can I retrieve personal items from my fire-damaged property?

Yes, you can remove your own belongings, but care should be taken when handling any materials from buildings that are partially damaged by the fire. Protective clothing and equipment should be worn to avoid skin contact and inhalation of ash and other disturbed material. Wear gloves, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants when cleaning ash, and avoid skin contact. If ash does get on your skin, wash it off as soon as possible. Well-fitting dust masks may provide some protection during cleanup. Masks rated N95 or P100 are more effective at blocking particles from ash than dust or surgical masks. Keep all personal items you remove from the site in sealed bags or containers until properly cleaned. Learn more at: <https://srhd.org/health-topics/after-a-wildfire>

My house is a total loss. What do I need to know about demolition and demolition debris?

If the structure already has been or will be demolished, the resident homeowner needs to:

- 1.) **Obtain an asbestos survey** to check for the presence of asbestos. This must be done by an AHERA-certified building inspector. (Links to service providers are listed on the next page.)
- 2.) **Provide notification to SRCAA** by filing a Notice of Intent (NOI). This can be done online by the homeowner or the contractor who conducted the survey. **NOI fees are being waived, including those for emergency (fast-tracked) NOIs, for those affected by these fires.** File online: <https://spokanecleanair.org/asbestos/asbestos-notifications-payment-portal/>
- 3.) **If the survey comes back negative for asbestos**, no other asbestos requirements apply to the removal of the debris. You will need to show proof of survey results to dispose of demolition debris as non- asbestos. Disposal requirements for debris containing asbestos are on the last page.
- 4.) **If the survey comes back positive for asbestos**, in most cases, a certified asbestos abatement company is required to conduct the demolition.

My house is still standing but it has fire-related damage. What do I need to do?

- 1.) **You can do the renovation work yourself if it is a single-family residence, you are the owner, and it is your primary residence.** You do not need an asbestos survey. However, if asbestos is impacted, asbestos handling requirements must be followed, details at <https://spokanecleanair.org/asbestos/>. You do not need to file a NOI for renovations you do yourself (not the case for demolition).
- 2.) An asbestos survey is required for commercial property and multi-family or rental housing. An AHERA-certified inspector must conduct the survey.
- 3.) **We recommend using a contractor.** Do your homework to ensure the contractor you hire is reputable, properly licensed, and aware of the asbestos requirements. We have a list of asbestos service providers: spokanecleanair.org/asbestos/asbestos-service-providers/. The Washington State Department of Labor & Industries has a list of all types of licensed contractors <https://lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/other-licenses-permits/asbestos-certification#certified-contractors-list>

I do not own my home or it is not my primary residence. Now what?

If the property is not your primary residence or is a rental, multi-family unit, vacation home, commercial building, etc., then an asbestos survey is required and any demolition or renovation work that impacts asbestos must be done by a certified abatement contractor. Refer to the information above about hiring a contractor.

Disposal Requirements for fire-related debris

Because of the hazardous nature of fire-related debris, there are special requirements for transportation and disposal to keep everyone safe. The Graham Road Landfill is the only landfill in Spokane County that accepts renovation and demolition debris (whether it contains asbestos or not). The Graham Road landfill will not accept any fire debris or ash-containing waste that isn't properly sealed and labeled. More here:

<https://www.wmnorthwest.com/landfill/pdf/grahamroadfirecleanup.pdf>

Additional Resources

Below are links to SRCAA fact sheets that may be helpful. Our staff is also available to answer your questions. Call us at (509)477-4727 and ask to speak with an inspector about asbestos.

- [Disposal of Asbestos-Containing Material](https://spokanecleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/Disposal-of-ACWM.pdf) (spokanecleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/Disposal-of-ACWM.pdf)
- [Need an Asbestos Survey? What you should know.](https://spokanecleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/Need-an-Asbestos-Survey.pdf) (spokanecleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/Need-an-Asbestos-Survey.pdf)
- [Need asbestos removed? What you should know before hiring a contractor](https://spokanecleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/Need-Asbestos-Removed.pdf) (spokanecleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/Need-Asbestos-Removed.pdf)
- [List of local asbestos service providers](https://spokanecleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/Asbestos-Service-Providers.pdf) (spokanecleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/Asbestos-Service-Providers.pdf)

Spokane Clean Air's Asbestos website: <https://spokanecleanair.org/asbestos/>

The Spokane Regional Health District has assembled a webpage with additional post-wildfire information and resources: <https://srhd.org/health-topics/after-a-wildfire>