



# WOOLSEY FIRE RECOVERY INFORMATION

County of Ventura  
800 S. Victoria Ave., Ventura CA

City of Thousand Oaks  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **County declares local health emergency for areas affected by the Hill and Woolsey fires**

VENTURA, Calif. - Due to the potential of widespread toxic exposures and threats to public health and the environment that exist in the aftermath of the Woolsey and Hill fires, the Ventura County Public Health Officer and the Director of the Environmental Health Division have declared a Local Health Emergency in Ventura County to limit the public's exposure to hazardous substances. This declaration enables the County to coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies and seek assistance to ensure that fire debris, and hazardous substances removal activities are conducted safely.

The combustion of building materials such as siding, roofing tiles, and insulation can create dangerous ash and dust particles that may contain asbestos, heavy metals, and other hazardous substances. Household hazardous substances such as paint, gasoline, cleaning products, pesticides, compressed gas cylinders, and chemicals may have been stored in homes, garages, or sheds that may have burned or been released in the fire. Exposure to these substances when residents search through debris for personal items, and during fire debris removal activities may lead to acute and chronic health effects and may cause long-term public health and environmental impacts.

The County Public Health Department advises the public to be cautious and avoid any unnecessary exposures to fire debris; and offers the following safety recommendations:

- **Refrain from removing ash and fire debris from your property until professional hazardous material cleanup services are secured.**
- When exposure to dust or ash cannot be avoided, use a well-fitted NIOSH-certified air-purifying respirator N-95 mask.
- Children should not be in the vicinity while cleanup is in progress. Even if care is exercised, it is easy to stir up ash that may contain hazardous substances.



- Clean ash off house pets and other domesticated animals if they have been in contaminated areas. Do not allow pets in these areas for their health and because of their ability to spread contamination.
- Wear gloves, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants to avoid skin contact. Goggles are recommended. Change your shoes and clothing prior to leaving the site, to avoid tracking ash into your car and other areas.

To register to receive fire recovery updates, or for information regarding ash, debris removal, assistance programs and other fire recovery topics, go to [www.VenturaCountyRecovers.org](http://www.VenturaCountyRecovers.org).

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