



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Department of Human Services

*Safety, Oversight and Quality*

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### **NF-20-123 – Provider Alert**

**Date:** September 14, 2020

**To:** All Nursing Facilities  
All Community Based Care Facilities

**From:** Safety, Oversight and Quality  
DHS Aging and People with Disabilities Program

**RE: Wildfire Clean Up Information**

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The fires in Oregon have been devastating for all of us and we appreciate everyone's effort to maintain the health and safety of Oregonians; particularly those most vulnerable. As the fires become contained, and evacuation orders are lifted there are still dangers you should be aware of.

Facilities and providers should ensure to take extra precautions for residents with known respiratory conditions by ensuring current medications and/or treatments are up to date and available. The air quality in Oregon has reached hazardous levels and people with pre-existing breathing conditions are more likely to face serious complications with this compromised, hazardous air quality. This map offers real-time updates related to the air quality index in your area: [Air pollution in Oregon](#)

### **PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS DURING ASH CLEANUP**

The following is information adapted from a City of Salem News Release dated September 14, 2020.

If you have wildfire ashes to cleanup, be sure to take special precautions.

Cleanup work can expose you to ash and other fire byproducts that may irritate your eyes, nose, or skin and cause coughing and other health effects, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

### **CLEANUP PRECAUTIONS:**

- **People with heart or lung disease**, including asthma, older adults, children and pregnant women should use special caution around ash.
- **Children and pets should not be nearby.** Don't allow children to play in ash. Clean ash off pets and other animals. Clean ash off children's toys before use.
- **Avoid direct contact with ash. Wear protective clothing** including a tight-fitting N95 masks, goggles, gloves, long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks to protect yourself. If you do get ash on skin, in eyes, or in your mouth, wash it off as soon as you can. Change clothing and shoes on site to avoid tracking ash into your car or other places.
- **Avoid stirring up or sifting through ash** as much as possible, such as dry sweeping. Before sweeping indoor and outdoor hard surfaces, mist them with water to keep dust down. Follow with wet mopping. Use a damp mop or wet cloth, with as little water as possible, on lightly dusted surfaces.
- **Don't use typical vacuums or leaf blowers.** Instead, use a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA)-type vacuum to clean dusty surfaces. Don't use anything that will send collected ash out into the air.
- **Disposal:** Collected ash may be disposed of in the regular trash. Store it in plastic bags or other containers to prevent it from being stirred up.

## RESOURCES:

EPA – [Protect Yourself from Ash](#)

Oregon DEQ - [Wildfire debris removal](#)

OSU Extension - [Yard and Garden cleanup](#)

Red Cross – [Cleaning Up After a Fire](#)

If you have any questions, please contact your licensing team:

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For general information about the DHS Office of Safety, Oversight and Quality, visit the DHS Web site at [www.oregon.gov/DHS/](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/).