

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE CLEAN UP PROCESS

- Fire debris and ash may be **HAZARDOUS**. Ash and debris from burned buildings and homes can contain toxic substances due to the presence of synthetic and hazardous materials.
- Sonoma County and the State of California's Office of Emergency Services will be coordinating a cleanup effort of private properties that ensures safe disposal. This will be in both the incorporated and unincorporated areas. The attached flowchart summarizes the process.

- The first step in this process will be for landowners to come to the County Department of Health Services to fill out paperwork, including a Right of Entry for the cleanup effort. Starting October 23rd, landowners may come to:

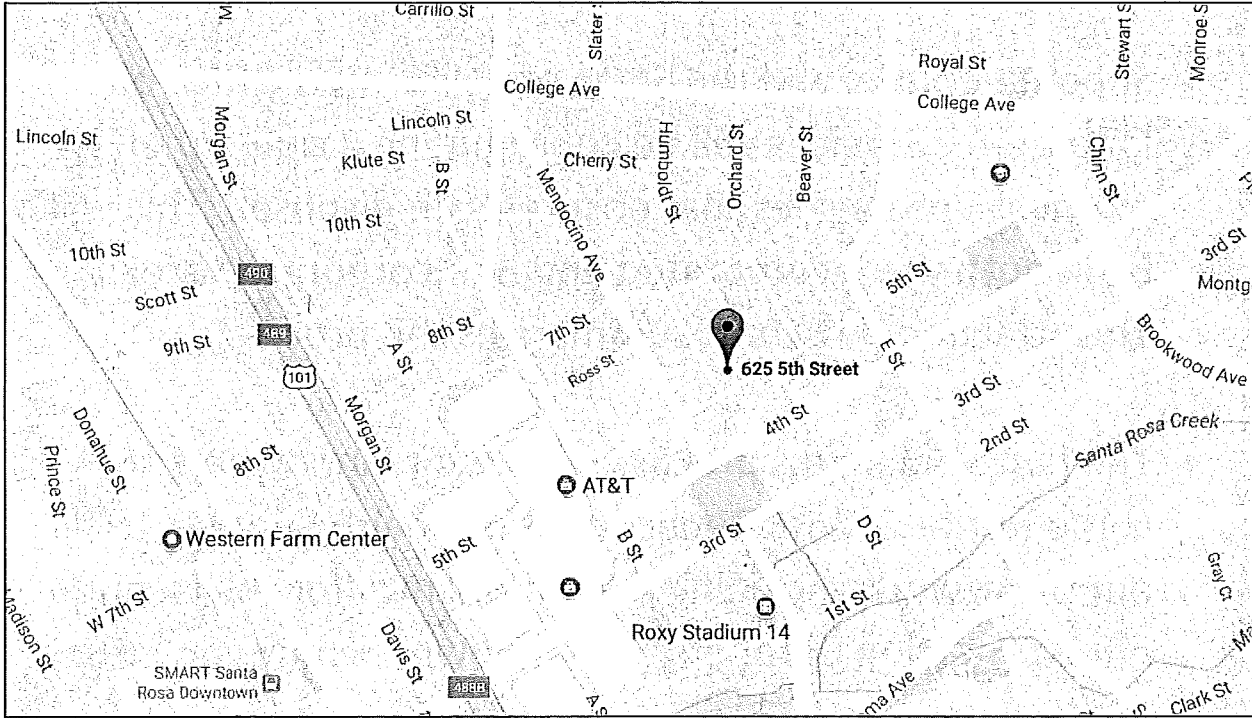
**Sonoma County Department of Health Services,
Environmental Health, 625 5th Street, Santa Rosa CA,
95404.** Our office is open from 9:00 a.m. to last entry at 6:00 p.m.

- If owners elect not to participate in the County- and State-sponsored debris program additional permitting and documentation on adequate cleanup and proper disposal will be required. State and County disaster funding will not be able to reimburse for this work. More information will be available starting October 23rd.

Starting October 23rd for at least two weeks the Sonoma County Environmental Health office will be open daily to assist with the ash and debris cleanup process at 9:00 AM, with last entry at 6:00 PM.

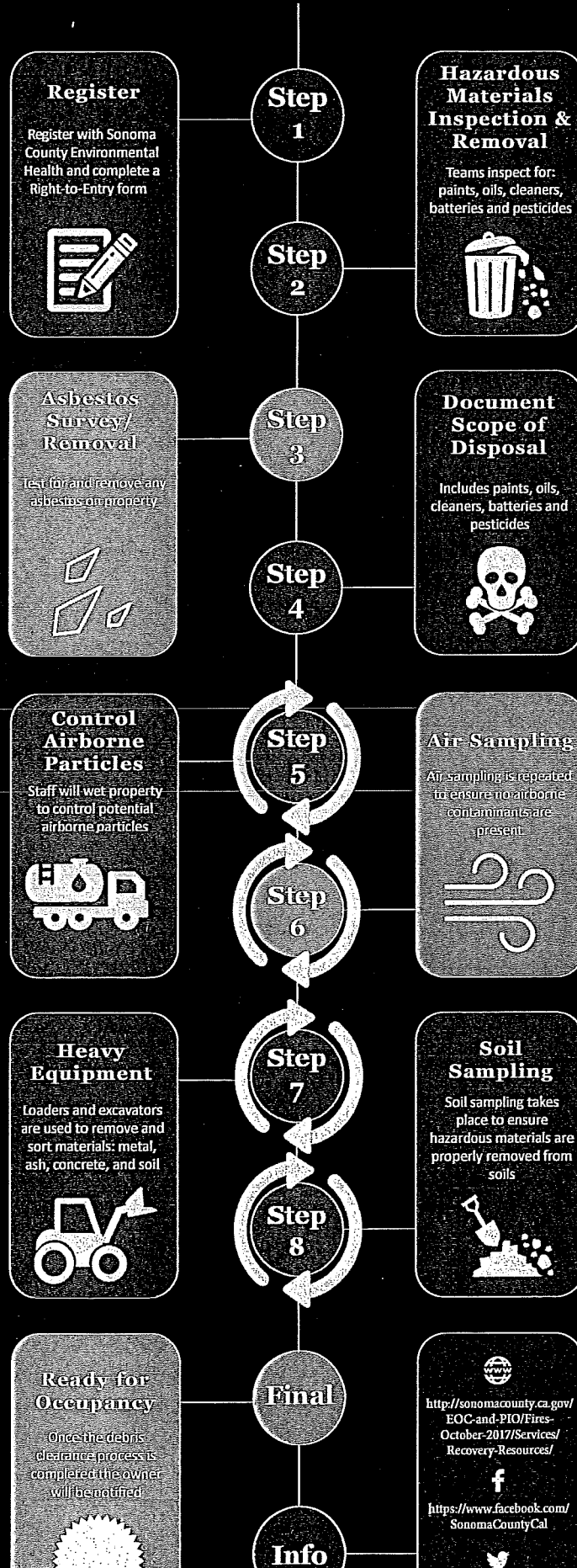
Please call our main line with any questions at 707-565-6565.

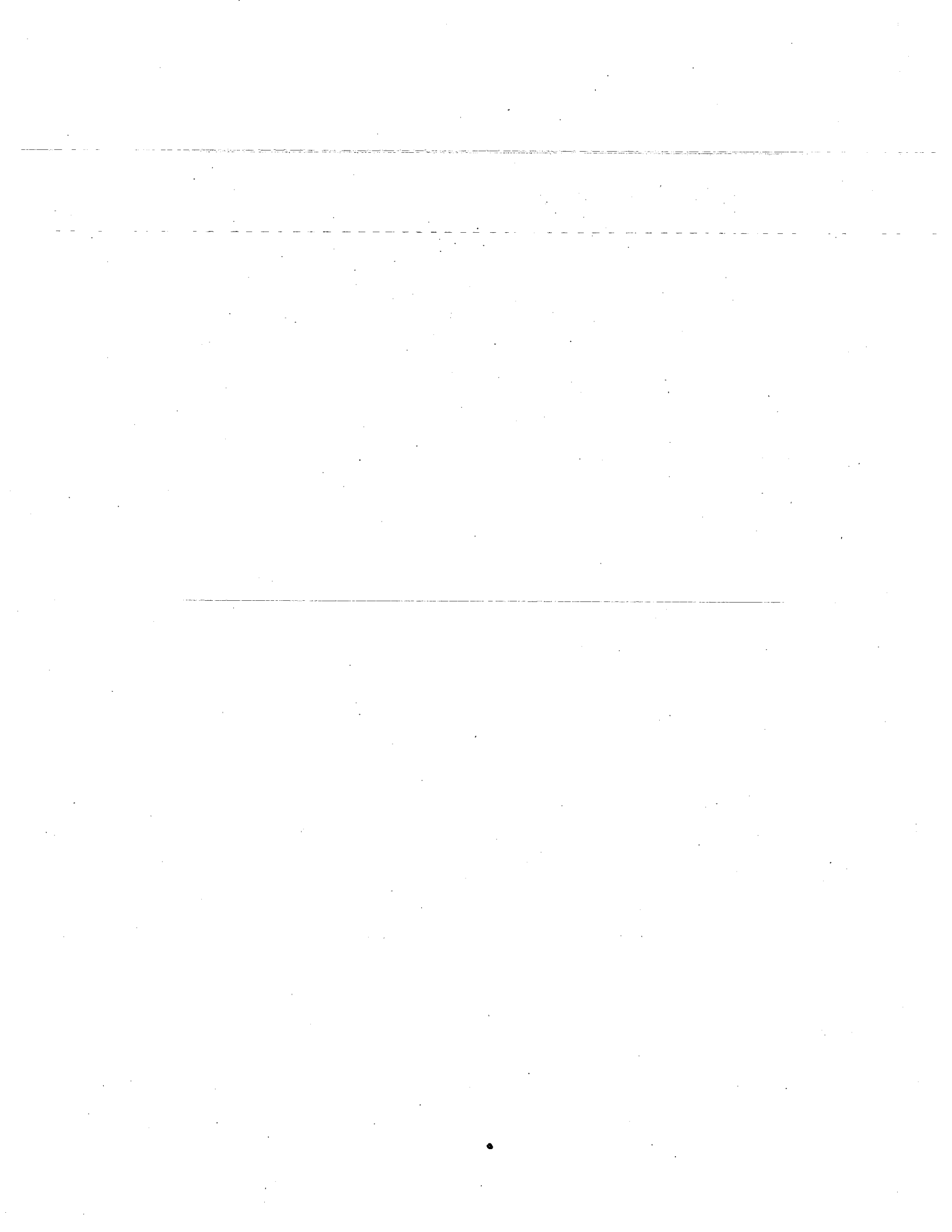
We are located at 625 5th Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.



Sonoma Fire Debris Clearance

Clearing debris from properties includes many steps and a large team of workers performing a variety of tasks. Here is an overview:







County of Sonoma Department of Health Services
Environmental Health
625 5th Street ❖ Santa Rosa, CA 95404
707-565-6565 ❖ Fax 707-565-6525
www.sonoma-county.org/eh



RETURNING HOME AFTER A FIRE

A fire in a home can cause serious damage. The building and many of the things in your home may have been badly damaged by flames, heat, smoke and water.

You will find that things the fire did not burn up are now ruined by smoke and soggy with water used to put out the flames. Anything that you want to save or reuse will need to be carefully cleaned.

The firefighters may have cut holes in the walls of the building to look for any hidden flames. They may even have cut holes in the roof to let out the heat and smoke. Cleanup will take time and patience.

USE CAUTION!

- Wear sturdy shoes and clothing
- Hazardous chemicals and conditions may be present
- Inspect propane tanks for visible damage before turning on
- Wear protective gear when sorting through possessions
- Clean and sanitize anything in contact with ash

It is important to understand the risk to your safety and health even after the fire is out. The soot and dirty water left behind may contain things that could make you sick.

Be very careful if you touch any fire-damaged items. Ask the advice of the fire department, local building officials, your insurance agent, and restoration specialists before starting to clean or make repairs.

Do not eat, drink, or breathe in anything that has been near the flames, smoke soot, or water used to put the fire out.

Safety

Do not enter a damaged home or apartment unless the fire department says it is safe. Fires can start again, even if they appear to be out. Watch for damage caused by the fire. Roofs and floors may be damaged and could fall down.

Fire ash may be irritating to the skin, nose and throat may cause coughing and/or nose bleeds. Fine particles can be inhaled deeply into lungs and may aggravate asthma and may make it difficult to breathe.

- When exposure to dust or ash cannot be avoided, use a well-fitted NIOSH-certified air-purifying respirator mask. This type of mask can be purchased from most hardware stores. A mask rated N-95 is much more effective than unrated dust- or surgical-masks in blocking ash particles. Although smaller sized masks may appear to fit a child's face, manufacturers do not recommend their use for children. If your child is in an area that warrants wearing a mask, you should remove them from that area to an environment with cleaner air. Persons with heart or lung disease should consult their physician before using a mask during post-fire cleanup.

- Do not allow children to play in ash. Wash and clean all children's toys carefully after possible contamination. Children should not be in the vicinity while cleanup is in progress. Even if you care is exercised, it is easy to stir up ash that may contain hazardous substances. In addition, the exploratory behavior of children may result in direct contact with contaminated materials.
- Clean ash off house pets and other domesticated animals if they have been in contaminated areas. However, it is best to not allow pets in these areas due to the potential risk to their health and their ability to spread outside of contaminated areas.
- Covering clothing is recommended, when in proximity to ash. Wear gloves, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants to avoid skin contact, whenever possible. Goggles are recommended. Contact with wet ash may cause chemical burns or irritation on skin. Change your shoes and clothing prior to leaving the decontamination site, to avoid tracking ash into your car, home, etc.

Water

Do not use water you suspect or have been told is contaminated to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make ice, or make baby formula. Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled, or treated water.

If you have a drinking water well, listen to your local health authorities for advice on using your well water.

Handwashing

Keeping hands clean during an emergency helps prevent the spread of germs. If your tap water is not safe to use, wash your hands with soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected. Follow these steps to make sure you wash your hands properly:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water and apply soap.
- Rub your hands together (20 seconds) to make a lather and scrub them well.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

* A temporary hand washing station can be created by using a large water jug that contains clean water.

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers **DO NOT** eliminate all types of germs.

Food Safety

Foods exposed to fire can be compromised!

- Food in cans or jars may appear to be okay, but if they've been close to the HEAT of a fire, they may no longer be safe. Heat from a fire can activate food spoilage bacteria. If the heat is extreme, the cans or jars themselves can split or rupture, rendering the food unsafe.
- One of the most dangerous elements of a fire is sometimes not the fire itself, but TOXIC FUMES released from burning materials. Toxic fumes can permeate the packaging and contaminate the food. Any type of food stored in permeable packaging (cardboard, plastic wrap, etc.) should be

thrown away. Discard any raw foods stored outside the refrigerator such as potatoes or fruit that could be contaminated by fumes. Food stored in refrigerators or freezers can also become contaminated by fumes. The refrigerator seal isn't airtight and fumes can get inside.

- Chemicals used to fight fires contain toxic materials and can contaminate food and cookware. Foods that are exposed to chemicals should be thrown away. This includes food stored at room temperature, such as fruits and vegetables, as well as foods stored in permeable containers like cardboard and screw-topped jars and bottles.

Reheating food that has become contaminated will not make it safe!

When in doubt, throw it out!

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Cleaning and sanitizing your household after an emergency is important to help prevent the spread of illness and disease.

Clean and sanitize surfaces in a four-step process

1. Wash with soap and hot, clean water.
2. Rinse with clean water.
3. Sanitize by immersing for 1 minute in a solution of 1 cup (8 oz/240 mL) of unscented 5-6% household chlorine bleach in 5 gallons (18.9 L) of clean water.
4. Allow to air dry.

Please remember the following safety tips when cleaning.

- Never mix bleach with ammonia or any other cleaner.
- Wear rubber or other non-porous boots, gloves, and eye protection.
- Try not to breathe in product fumes. If using products indoors, open windows and doors to allow fresh air to enter.

Smoke, Water, Ash and Debris Management

Seek professional damage and debris removal/restoration services.