



BUTTE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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New Release

For Immediate Release

June 27, 2008

Hazardous Waste Cleanup Assistance Program For Victims of the Ophir and Humboldt Fires

The fires in the Ophir and Humboldt areas created substantial destruction and devastation. Fire ash and debris may contain asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), heavy metal residues, and other hazardous substances. Due to these hazards, all site cleanup work conducted at these burned properties must be conducted by appropriately licensed professional contractors.

The County of Butte is acting now to respond to the consequences of the fire disasters, including the generation of extraordinary amounts of ash and debris. To ensure public health and safety, the County is working collaboratively with state and federal agencies to address the cleanup of burned properties within the Humboldt and Ophir burn areas, and other recovery issues.

The Emergency Response Branch of the Department of Toxic Substances Control within the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal-EPA) is working with the County develop a plan for removal of identifiable asbestos and hazardous waste from ash and debris at no cost to property owners. This effort is designed specifically to reduce the public health and environmental hazard posed by these materials, facilitate the removal of the remaining ash and debris by the property owners, and allow these materials to be safely disposed of at the Neal Road Landfill. Cal-EPA staff will travel to Butte County next week to survey affected areas, and develop a plan to address safety, logistical, and technical issues to implement the hazardous waste removal project.

To obtain assistance with hazardous waste assessment and removal, property owners are urged to submit a Participation/Right of Entry Form to the Public Works Department-Solid Waste Division, 7 County Center Drive, Oroville, by July 8, 2008. Forms have been mailed to identified property owners, and are also available at the Public Works Department-Solid Waste Division. With property owner authorization, State contractors will remove identifiable asbestos and hazardous waste from the burn ash and debris. Once this

has been completed, property owners will be eligible to participate in the bin program for ash and debris collection, under the direction of the Solid Waste Division of the Butte County Public Works Department.

Property owners are also advised that private cleanup activities must follow all appropriate safety, and environmental regulatory requirements including:

- Specific contractor licensing and training requirements.
- Asbestos assessment and removal by properly licensed professionals
- Dust control
- Traffic control
- Worker health and safety, including personal protective equipment
- Proper disposal requirements. Neal Road Landfill advises that fire debris will not be accepted for disposal unless adequate documentation is provided that screening and/or removal of asbestos and hazardous waste has been performed.

If you have any questions regarding the hazardous waste collection program, please contact Hazardous Materials Program staff at the Environmental Health Division of the Butte County Public Health Department at 202 Mira Loma Drive, Oroville, (530) 538-7281.

If you have any questions regarding the ash and debris collection program, please contact the Solid Waste Division of the Butte County Public Works Department at (530) 879-2352.

END
