

ORANGE COUNTY OPERATIONAL AREA
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLEAN-UP FOLLOWING WILDFIRES

Orange County residents returning to their homes following the Santiago fire are urged to use caution when cleaning up ash and debris.

Fire debris may include sharp edges, nails or other objects capable of causing injuries. When going through fire debris, wear sturdy shoes, long pants and long sleeved shirts. Leather work gloves and eye protection are also recommended.

Fire ash may be irritating to the eyes and skin. If the ash is breathed, it can be irritating to the nose and throat and may cause coughing. Exposure to ash in air might trigger asthmatic attacks in people who already have asthma. In order to avoid possible health problems the following precautions are recommended.

- If you do get ash on your skin, wash it off as soon as possible.
- Avoid getting ash into the air as much as possible. Do not use leaf blowers or take other actions that will put ash into the air.
- Wear eye protection, such as goggles.
- A dust mask can significantly reduce (but not completely eliminate) the amount of particles inhaled. A mask rated N-95 or P-100 will be more effective than simpler dust or surgical masks in blocking particles from ash.
- Persons with heart or lung disease should consult their physician before using a mask during post-fire cleanup.
- Gentle sweeping of indoor and outdoor hard surfaces followed by wet mopping is the best procedure in most cases.
- If you have a vegetable garden or fruit trees, wash the fruit or vegetables thoroughly before eating them.

For additional information on the safe cleanup of fire ash please visit the Orange County Health Care Agency's website at www.ochealthinfo.com.

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