

# **EMERGENCY ORDER REQUIRING ABATEMENT OF HAZARDOUS MATERIAL AND DEBRIS**

The Director of Environmental Health makes the following findings:

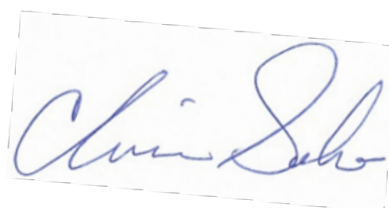
1. Due to the Sonoma Complex Fires, the Governor of the State of California has proclaimed a State of Emergency under Government Code section 8265. The Health Officer and Director of Environmental Health have proclaimed a Local Health Emergency and the County Administrator has proclaimed a Local Emergency. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors also passed the Sonoma Complex Fire Cleanup Emergency Ordinance to provide for an orderly response to the disaster.
2. The Sonoma Complex Fire Cleanup Emergency Ordinance requires that impacted property owners in the unincorporated areas of the County clean up their properties either through the Office of Emergency Services clean up or through the Alternative Program.
3. Properties that have not entered either the Office of Emergency Services clean up or the Alternative Program by November 21, 2017 are subject to summary abatement.
4. The properties listed in this Emergency Order have not entered either the Office of Emergency Services clean up or the Alternative Program by the November 21, 2017 deadline, and property owners have not responded to mail and phone notices, or have indicated no intent to comply with the Sonoma Complex Fire Cleanup Emergency Ordinance.
5. The potential for widespread toxic exposures and threats to public health and the environment exists in the aftermath of a major wildfire disaster. Debris and ash from residential structure fires contain hazardous substances and the health effects of hazardous substances releases after a wildfire are well-documented.
6. Analysis of prior fires, including the assessments conducted for the 2015 wildfires in Lake and Calaveras Counties, has shown that hazardous materials may be found in burned commercial and residential areas. Some of the hazardous materials include metals from batteries, treated wood, melted plumbing, and automobiles; pesticides and herbicides from lawn and garden products; polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, including dioxins and furans from burned tires and plastic; asbestos from building materials; polybrominated biphenyls used as flame retardants in textiles, carpets, and plastics; and polychlorinated biphenyls from appliances, transformers, and automotive parts. Previous assessments prepared by the California Environmental Protection Agency and CalRecycle show that large volumes of hazardous are commonly present in burned residential areas. These prior assessments have demonstrated the need for urgent action based on fires that are significantly smaller than the instant disaster. Sampling from prior California wildfires that have consumed a significant number of structures in Northern and Southern California has demonstrated concentrations for arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, nickel, and zinc that exceed human health screening levels and U.S. EPA screening levels for the protection of groundwater. The risks presented to public health from contaminated properties are both individual and cumulative.
7. Due to the health emergency, the United States Environmental Protection Agency has conducted an initial Household Hazardous Waste sweep of the impacted areas on an emergency basis. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has located and removed remnant containers and significant sources of asbestos, but it has not attempted to remove all hazardous materials. The sweep has not addressed particularized hazardous fire ash and incidental asbestos, and the sweep does not involve the removal of soil that is contaminated by California Title 22 metals. Hazardous materials remain on impacted properties. Ash may contain heavy metals, such as arsenic and lead along with dioxins

and furons, which can be harmful to the health and safety of the public and harmful to the environment.

8. There is a significant risk of contaminant dispersal that rises with the passage of time. Urgent action to protect public health and the environment from the known threats is required. The pending winter rains create the potential for surface water and groundwater contamination from the offsite migration of hazardous materials contained within the burn debris and ash. In addition, particulate matter and ash may be easily dispersed by wind and may scatter and deposit onto neighboring properties, extending the area of contamination and increasing the public's risk of exposure. Particulate matter and wind-entrained ash pose an inhalation risk.
9. Urgent action is also required due to the return of residents to impacted neighborhoods. Widespread debris and ash puts people at risk of potentially harmful exposures should they re-enter burned areas. Residents returning to destroyed neighborhoods, as well as recovery workers in these areas, are at risk of exposure to potential harmful materials from fire ash and debris.
10. There is the potential for exposures through inhalation (air quality), ingestion, or direct contact at the site of fire-damaged or destroyed properties, in the vicinity of ash-strewn areas poses a public safety threat.
11. Drinking water supplies may be subject to decrements in quality from deposition of constituents of concern and toxics following wildland fires that involve burned structures. Groundwater is at risk from contamination from hazardous and toxic chemicals from the burned areas because contaminants can migrate into the aquifers that supply drinking water wells.
12. Surface runoff, including storm drain effluent from burned areas, may result in contaminated surface water. This runoff can contaminate streams that feed drinking water reservoirs, and ultimately affect the water quality of the reservoirs themselves. Contaminants may similarly have adverse impacts on aquatic life and effect ecosystems in local streams and water ways.
13. Fire ash contamination can result in elevated turbidity levels in surface water, creating problems with filtration and disinfection. Ash can impact the pH of the drinking water supply, making it more difficult to remove the turbidity from the water supply through required water quality treatments.
14. Slabs and foundations are fire debris subject to removal.
15. This Emergency Order will be published in the Press Democrat and will be available on the County of Sonoma Website at: <https://www.sonomacountyrecovers.org/>.

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** by the Sonoma County Director of Environmental Health, pursuant to Cal. Const. art. XI, Section 7, Government Code Section 25845 and the Sonoma Complex Fire Cleanup Emergency Ordinances 6211 and 6211(a), that the following properties are a public health hazard, a public nuisance, and an immediate threat to the public health and safety. These properties require summary abatement. The costs of abatement incurred in the physical abatement of the nuisance may be liened against the property.

Date: December 1, 2017



Christine Sosko  
Director of Environmental Health