

Recovering from the Wildfire: Key Next Steps

Returning home after a wildfire can be both a relief and a challenge. While it's essential to assess the damage and begin the recovery process, there are a variety of safety precautions that can help protect yourself and your family.

The following guidelines will help you navigate the post-wildfire environment and ensure your safety as you return home:

- **Listen to officials on when it's safe to return home:** If you attempt to go home before the all-clear, you could end up dealing with smoldering ash, live embers, hot pockets that could spur another fire and unsafe water. Stay informed through local authorities about when it is safe to return home.
- **Wear protective gear:** Upon returning home, you may be at high risk of inhaling unsafe dust particles, so it is best to have a certified respirator dust mask (like an N95). Wear appropriate gear, such as glasses or goggles to protect your eyes, gloves for hand protection, sturdy shoes, and long pants and sleeves (preferably 100% cotton) to safeguard your body.
- **Discard food and boil water:** Any food, beverages, or medications exposed to heat, smoke, or soot should be immediately discarded, as they are unsafe to consume. Tap water should be boiled until emergency personnel notify the public that it is safe to drink.
- **Mitigate smoke damage if your home survived:** If your home survived the wildfire but sustained smoke damage, hiring professional services with expertise in smoke mitigation can help assess the damage. Be sure to speak with your claims team who may have a list of resources available.

Additionally, be aware of the increased risk of flooding in your area. Flooding risks remain heightened for up to five years after a wildfire, as fires severely alter the ground conditions. Mudflows and flash flooding could become more frequent, especially if the land has lost vegetation that will take a while to regrow.

As always, our colleagues across the country are here to assist you if you experience a loss. If you have any questions or need to report a claim, please get in touch with your account executive or call our 24-hour, toll-free line at (800) 221-5830.



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