

WORKER SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR WILDFIRE CLEAN-UP



Planning and Training

Before commencing fire clean-up, demolition or related activities, employers must establish an effective plan to identify and mitigate hazards at the site (Title 8 California Code of Regulations [T8CCR], sections [1509\(a\)](#), [1510\(c\)](#), [3203](#), [5192\(c\)](#)). Employers must train workers to identify and prevent exposure to those hazards (T8CCR [1509](#), [1514](#), [1521](#), [1528](#), [1529](#), [3203](#), [5192\(e\)](#)). Fire cleanup work, including ash and debris removal and cleaning of fire-damaged structures, is not household domestic service, and employees performing this work are covered by Cal/OSHA health and safety standards.

Examples of Potential Hazards

- Electricity, downed power lines, solar panels that may still produce power
- Unstable structures, objects, trenches, and trees
- Asbestos insulation, tiles, and siding
- Toxic ash and dust, pesticides, fuels, chemical products
- Compressed gas cylinders, aboveground and underground fuel tanks
- Enclosed spaces with low oxygen and toxic atmospheres
- Coccidioides spores in soil (Valley Fever)
- Heavy equipment and vehicular traffic
- Heat illness
- Carbon monoxide from the use of gasoline-powered equipment in enclosed spaces

Respiratory Protection

Employers must comply with the respiratory protection standard (T8CCR [5144](#)) and provide NIOSH-approved respiratory protection to workers who enter burned areas to perform clean-up, removal, demolition, or related activities, as follows:

- Provide elastomeric air-purifying respirators (APRs) equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter combined with an organic vapor (OV), and formaldehyde cartridge (T8CCR [5144](#)). A P100, N100 or R100 filter may be used in lieu of a HEPA filter.



- Provide N95 respirators to workers in areas where vegetation or untreated wood alone has burned, in lieu of an elastomeric APR (T8CCR [5144](#)).
- To avoid counterfeit products, please visit the [NIOSH Certified Equipment List \(https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/cel/default.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/cel/default.html).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In addition to respiratory protection, employers must provide PPE that properly fits each worker, as follows:

- Hardhat
- Eye protection
- Hearing protection
- Full-body Tyvek or equally effective coveralls
- Hand protection
- Foot protection and covers
- Chaps and other PPE for chainsaw work
- Fall protection when working at elevated locations

Safe Work Practices

Employers are required to protect the safety and health of workers at clean-up sites by implementing safe work practices, including but not limited to the following:

- Ensure workers complete a 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training prior to entering the site (T8CCR [5192](#)).
- Notify gas, electric, and other underground utilities at least 48 hours prior to entering the site to ensure that all utilities are shut down and properly marked (T8CCR [1541\(b\)\(2\)](#)). Contact DigSafe at (811).



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Safe Work Practices (continued)

- Ensure that the site is safe to enter prior to commencing clean-up, demolition, or related activities (T8CCR [1509](#), [1510](#) and [3203](#)).
- Implement the site characterization, zone delineation, worker decontamination, and other requirements of the HAZWOPER standard (T8CCR [5192](#)).
- Ensure that workers properly use respiratory protection and PPE (T8CCR [5192](#)).
- Provide ready availability of a fire extinguisher (T8CCR [1922\(a\)\(5\)](#)).
- Provide ready availability of a first-aid kit (T8CCR [1512](#) and [3400](#)). Call 911 immediately if there is a serious injury or illness.
- Provide ready availability of a self-contained emergency eyewash station (T8CCR [5162](#)).
- Provide ready access to a sanitary toilet (T8CCR [1526\(a\) and \(d\)](#)).
- Provide PPE and comply with Cal/OSHA requirements for the use of chain saws (T8CCR [6283](#)).
- Provide for the safe use of ladders and step-ladders (T8CCR [1675](#) and [3276](#)).
- Apply water frequently to effectively suppress dust from ash, debris, and dirt (T8CCR [5141\(a\)](#) and [1532.3\(c\)\(2\)](#)).
- Ensure that only allow qualified electrical workers work near power lines and restore electrical power (T8CCR [2940](#)).
- Train workers never to connect electrical generators to fixed wiring (T8CCR [2320.9](#)).
- Ensure that workers are protected from impalement hazards (T8CCR [1712\(c\)](#)).
- Provide traffic control and flaggers at jobsites where heavy equipment is operating (T8CCR [1598](#) and [1599](#)).
- Train workers and provide sufficient water, rest, and shade to prevent heat illness (T8CCR [3395](#)).
- Provide workers with hand-washing facilities for use prior to breaks, when leaving the worksite, and after removing PPE (T8CCR [1524\(a\)](#), [1527\(a\)](#), [5192\(k\)](#)).

- Ensure that workers follow decontamination procedures and remove PPE before breaks and before traveling home to prevent exposure to toxic substances and contamination of private vehicles and residences (T8CCR [5192](#)).
- Employers engaged in tree work during wildfire cleanup must ensure that tree trimming, tree repairing, or removal is done under the direction of a qualified tree worker and in compliance with [Cal/OSHA's tree work regulations](#) (T8CCR [3420-3428](#)).

Cal/OSHA

All Cal/OSHA Title 8 Regulations listed above can be found at: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/samples/search/query.htm>

Employers who have questions or need assistance with workplace health and safety programs can call [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) at 800-963-9424.

Workers in California are protected regardless of immigration status. Workers who have questions about safety and health in the workplace can call 833-579-0927 to speak with a live bilingual Cal/OSHA representative between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Complaints about workplace safety and health hazards can be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#).

