

What to Do After Ash Exposure

Simple steps to avoid turning ash into breathable dust and to keep contamination from spreading indoors.



Priority: avoid stirring up dry ash. Ash from burned buildings can contain irritants and toxic contaminants, so treat it as potentially hazardous until assessed.

CLEAN-UP CHECKLIST

1

Keep children and pets away

Do not allow play in ash, debris or ash-covered items.

2

Do not dry sweep or blow ash

Avoid leaf blowers and sweeping that put fine ash back into the air.

3

Wear protection if cleanup is unavoidable

Use an N95/KN95 or better mask, gloves, eye protection and closed shoes.

4

Use damp cleaning methods

Lightly mist hard surfaces and wipe with disposable damp cloths or mops.

5

Remove shoes before entering

Keep outdoor ash outside. Change clothes and shower after heavy exposure.

6

Use HEPA filtration only

For fine indoor dust, use a HEPA vacuum or professional cleaning.

7

Bag and dispose safely

Seal contaminated cloths, filters and debris. Follow local disposal instructions.

8

Protect indoor air systems

Replace HVAC filters if affected and avoid pulling ash indoors.

9

Consider testing after structural fires

Near a burn zone, consider soil or dust testing before assuming it is safe.

10

Use professional remediation when needed

After burned buildings, vehicles or workshops, professional cleanup is often safest.

!

Structural ash needs caution. Burned homes, vehicles or workshops may leave ash containing heavy metals, asbestos or other toxic residues. Use professional remediation when risk is high.

+

Seek medical help urgently for shortness of breath, chest pain, severe wheezing, confusion, fainting, blue lips or symptoms that rapidly worsen.