



# News Release

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## Fire evacuees should consider health and safety issues when returning home

In response to the Sleepy Hollow fire, Chelan-Douglas Health District is providing some guidelines for evacuees to consider when returning to their homes to avoid health and safety problems. Prompt and safe cleanup procedures will help residents move forward with their lives while minimizing potential health and environmental issues that may be exacerbated with improper cleanup methods.

- **Ash and debris** from burned structures may contain toxic substances. Care should thus be taken when handling any materials from buildings that are either partially damaged or completely destroyed by the fire.
- If you have a **propane tank** system, contact a propane supplier, turn off the valves on the system, and leave the valves closed until the supplier inspects your system.
- If you have a **heating oil tank** system, contact a heating oil supplier for an inspection before using it.
- If you have determined that burying any **dead animals** is an appropriate method, be sure every part of the carcass is covered by at least three feet of soil; at a location not less than 100 feet from any well, spring, stream, or other surface water.
- If you have household chemicals that will require disposal, please contact Chelan County Solid Waste at (509) 667-6631 for advice.
- Discard any **food** that may be contaminated by heat, smoke fumes, chemicals, and power outages.
- Use a "**particulate respirator**" to help to protect your lungs during cleanup efforts, such as one that has the word "NIOSH" and either "N95" or "P100" printed on it.
- Perform a visual inspection of your **well** and other components which are part of your water supply system. If you find damage, contact an appropriate contractor to repair the damage.
- If your water system has been damaged or if you are in doubt about the safety of your water, you may want to have your **water tested**. Water testing kits are available from Cascade Analytical (509) 662-1888.
- If you do not have water that you know is safe, use bottled water or **purify the water** for drinking purposes using chemical disinfection or boiling the water for at least 10 minutes.
- Inspect your **septic system** for damage. If it is damaged, backing up, or malfunctioning, discontinue use and contact a septic system installer or designer for guidance and instruction.
- **Tetanus** is a concern for persons with both open and closed wounds, and a tetanus vaccination is recommended for all residents returning to the burn area who have not had a documented dose within the past ten years.

For more detailed information on safe clean up and health considerations when returning to your home, please see our website at <http://www.cdhd.wa.gov/>.

*Chelan-Douglas Health District  
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"Always Working for a Safer and Healthier Community"  
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