



# Wildfire Cleanup and Debris Removal

## Frequently Asked Questions

Nov. 16, 2020

### Right of Entry Questions

#### Is there a deadline for submitting Right of Entry forms?

There is no current deadline. However, we encourage you to submit your form quickly so cleanup work can begin as soon as possible on your property.

#### The electronic Right of Entry (ROE) form asks me to choose between Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Only and All Wildfire Debris. What does that mean?

If you choose the **Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Only** ROE form, you will be giving permission for Step 1 only. The form authorizing right of entry for **All Wildfire Debris cleanup** allows the county, state, and federal governments and their contractors to perform both Step 1 (HHW Removal) and Step 2 (Ash and Debris Removal). Find the latest information about both steps at [wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup](https://wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup).

#### What do I need to complete the Right of Entry form?

You will be asked to supply your name, affected property address, contact information, and insurance information, if you have insurance. If you are not able to report any of this information on your Right of Entry form, someone will contact you at a later date to gather this information.

#### What if I choose to opt-in for All Debris Removal (HHW & All Wildfire Debris) and decide at a later time that I do not want to participate in the Step 2 (Ash and Debris Removal)?

You can contact the wildfire cleanup hotline at 503-934-1700 to opt out of Step 2. Please note that ash and debris are still dangerous even after Step 1 is complete. Ash and debris may contain asbestos or chemicals that are harmful to your health if inhaled, and may require special handling and disposal. Find information about cleanup requirements if you choose to complete cleanup yourself at [ordeq.org/firedebris](https://ordeq.org/firedebris).

### Eligibility Questions

#### Do I need to qualify for FEMA assistance before debris removal?

No, these are two separate processes. FEMA Individual Assistance is an important additional resource, but you do not need to apply or be approved for FEMA assistance before signing your Right of Entry form to get no cost wildfire cleanup.

#### Do undocumented residents qualify for wildfire cleanup?

Yes. The property owner just needs to sign a Right of Entry form to allow cleanup crews on their property. Personal information will **not** be shared with the federal government. Contact your county or call 682-800-5737 to find more information about how to submit your Right of Entry form.

**Are businesses, mobile home parks, and second residences included in Step 1 (hazardous waste) and Step 2 (ash and debris) cleanup?**

Yes, businesses, mobile home parks, and second residences are included in both Step 1 and Step 2 of wildfire cleanup.

**If I purchase a property affected by the wildfires, am I eligible for government-led wildfire cleanup?**

No. Only the owner at the time of the incident is eligible for removal.

**Insurance Questions**

**Will there be any cost to me? Will my insurance be billed?**

Home and business owners that opt into this government-led wildfire cleanup program will pay no upfront costs for any cleanup work. Additionally, no government agency – state, federal or contractor – will seek payment from any insurance policy unless it is specifically designated for debris removal or left over after the home or business is completely rebuilt. Cleanup is funded by the federal and state governments. **If you do the cleanup on your own, it will cost more and reduce the amount of insurance money you have available to rebuild your home or business.** More information about this is available in the FAQ section of the wildfire cleanup webpage at [wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup](http://wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup).

**What if I don't have insurance coverage?**

You are eligible for the government-led wildfire cleanup whether or not you have insurance. When you complete the form, simply select "This property is not insured."

**Step 1 Cleanup Questions**

**What types of materials are included in the Step 1 household hazardous waste removal?**

Household hazardous waste includes leftover household products that can catch fire, react, or explode under certain circumstances, or that are corrosive or toxic. This includes products like paints, cleaners, oils, batteries, pesticides, and propane tanks that can contain hazardous ingredients and require special care when you dispose of them. Please keep in mind that some items that are typically harmless become hazardous after they are burned. Do not assume that your household did not contain any household hazardous waste.

**How do I know when the EPA has finished household hazardous waste cleanup on my property?**

Once Step 1, household hazardous waste removal work is complete, EPA posts a "Complete" sign on the property and enters the property into a database that automatically tells the county and state that the property is ready for Step 2, ash and debris removal. Check hazardous waste cleanup progress for your property on EPA's 2020 Oregon Fires Recovery website: <https://ordeq.org/EPACleanupMap> or call EPA's hotline: 541-225-5549.

**If debris is blocking access to my property, do I need to clear that debris so that the EPA can gain access to my property?**

No. The EPA will move any debris that is blocking access to the site. EPA recommends that property owners stay away from the property due to health and safety concerns because of the hazardous material on site.

**Do I need to be present when the EPA performs the household hazardous waste cleanup?**

No. Property owners should remain off the property while the HHW cleanup is in progress due to health and safety hazards.

**What should I do if my property is gated? How do I know when to let cleanup crews in the gate?**

The EPA will contact the state or county, and the state or county will contact property owners when they need entry to perform cleanup.

**How can I inform the EPA of specific information about my property that will be necessary for them to perform a comprehensive HHW mitigation operation?**

Call EPA's hotline to notify cleanup crews of any specific concerns or questions: 541-225-5549.

**Step 2 Cleanup Questions**

**What is going to be cleaned up during ash and debris removal?**

Every Oregonian that signs up for cleanup through the state managed, locally coordinated program, will be left with a property ready for rebuilding. Following the Debris Management Task Force's proposal to the Wildfire Economic Recovery Council, the council approved the cleanup of all wildfire debris, including concrete pads, burned vehicles, and hazardous trees for home and business owners. Types of properties included: mobile home parks, businesses, second residences, barns, and agricultural outbuildings.

**I missed Step 1 and EPA already finished work in my area: Can I still sign up?**

Yes. If you didn't sign up for Step 1 while EPA was doing the work in your area, you can still participate in the assisted cleanup. Sign the Right of Entry form for All Wildfire Debris with your county as soon as possible to get this work started. State contractors will complete Step 1, household hazardous waste removal, on your property before beginning Step 2, ash and debris removal.

**Are mobile home parks included?**

Yes. Mobile home parks will be included in wildfire ash and debris removal.

**Are businesses included?**

Yes. Businesses will be included in wildfire ash and debris removal.

**Are second residences included?**

Yes. Second residences will be included in wildfire ash and debris removal.

**Are concrete and structural foundations included?**

Yes. The state will provide an opportunity for property owners to opt into removal of concrete and structural foundations as part of wildfire ash and debris removal.

**Are barns and outbuildings included?**

Yes. Barns and other agricultural outbuildings will be included in wildfire ash and debris removal.

**Are burned cars, boats, and trailers included?**

Yes. Burned cars, boats, and trailers will be included in wildfire debris removal. The state's contractors will coordinate with the vehicle owner on this removal. If you know you have a burned vehicle on your property, you should reach out to your insurance company and the Oregon Driver and Motor Vehicle Services, to report the Vehicle Identification Number, or VIN, before cleanup teams arrive. This notification is an important part of getting the vehicle removed from the property. Go to [Oregon DMV's Wildfire Information webpage](#) to learn more about reporting the destruction of vehicles from fires.

**When will my property be cleaned up?**

Step 1 is already underway. The Oregon Debris Management Task Force is currently working to hire contractors to complete the work for Step 2, ash and debris removal. The task force is working with each of the impacted counties to manage the work to meet local priorities. Given factors such as weather impacts, property access limitations and the large area to be covered, Step 2 is estimated to take approximately 6 to 18 months to complete statewide. People can check cleanup progress at [wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup](http://wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup) or by calling the wildfire cleanup hotline: 503-934-1700.

**What if I've already done some debris removal work and want to participate in the state Step 2 process?**

You can still sign up for the government-led cleanup process. You just need to do sign your county's Right of Entry form to allow cleanup crews onto your property. If you've used insurance money for this

work, that's okay. The government will take into account work you've already completed before recouping insurance funds designated for debris. If you have insurance questions, contact Oregon's Insurance Commission Consumer Advocate Hotline: 888-877-4894. It is good practice to keep all receipts for any costs you pay for on your own.

### **Will septic systems be removed?**

If a septic system tank can be identified and has been damaged, the state's contractors will pump it and backfill it with a cement sand slurry, which will prevent it from caving in. Septic systems will not be removed as part of wildfire cleanup.

### **Will wells be damaged during cleanup work?**

State contractors will mark wells to protect them from damage during cleanup work.

### **Are trees included?**

State contractors working on debris removal will contact property owners before removing trees. A professional arborist will assess trees near homes and businesses to determine if they pose a safety threat and may need to be removed. Contractors will only cut down hazard trees that pose a danger to cleanup crews working to remove ash and debris from destroyed homes, such as a tree leaning over the burned down house area. Trees that are a threat to public property, such as a road, sidewalk, parking area or trail must be removed. Hazard trees may also be removed if they are an immediate threat to public waterways. Trees on undeveloped private property or are away from the destroyed home are the responsibility of the property owner. They will not be included in the state cleanup process

### **Will there be soil testing after cleanup?**

For property owners who participate in the government-led Step 2 cleanup process, cleanup will include the removal of the top three to six inches of soil. After cleanup, the state will pay for and complete soil testing after all debris has been removed. Contaminants can get into the soil after a wildfire and be detrimental to public health.

### **How will I know when cleanup is complete on my property?**

When the state-led cleanup is complete, the state will issue the participating property owner a notice stating debris has been removed, soil has been tested, and the Right of Entry is no longer in effect.

### **How do I know the person contacting me is the state's contractor and not a fraudster?**

It's crucial that Oregonians know that the state and their contractors will **never** ask you for money up front or to do testing before cleanup work begins. If you are concerned that the person calling you is a fraudster – hang up! You can call the wildfire debris cleanup hotline and confirm that the request was really from the state: 541-225-5549. For more information on avoiding scams and fraud, visit the Oregon Department of Justice's webpage on avoiding wildfire scams: <https://bit.ly/avoidwildfirescams>.

### **What should property owners do if they have questions?**

There are a number of resources available where people can get their questions answered about wildfire debris cleanup:

- Hotline: 503-934-1700
- Email: [odot.wildfire@odot.state.or.us](mailto:odot.wildfire@odot.state.or.us)
- Website: [wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup](http://wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup)