



## **STEP 2. ASH AND DEBRIS REMOVAL**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Nov. 16, 2020

The Oregon Debris Management Task Force is beginning to transition to Step 2 of the cleanup process, ash and debris removal. This follows Step 1, household hazardous waste removal. This work is scheduled to begin in December 2020.

#### **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.

#### **How do people sign up for ash and debris removal?**

Home and business owners need to sign a Right of Entry form allowing the removal of all wildfire debris. If they previously signed an ROE only for Step 1, removal of household hazardous waste, cleanup teams for Step 2 will not be able to enter their property until they sign an ROE for all wildfire debris. These forms are all available on county websites, which can be found at [wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup](http://wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup).

Additionally, while only the owners of mobile home parks had to sign the ROE for Step 1, each individual mobile home owner must sign an ROE for Step 2.

#### **How long will ash and debris removal take?**

The state is currently hiring contractors to carry out this work, scheduled to begin in December 2020. The task force is working closely with local governments to determine cleanup priorities for each area. 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. As the state task force gets contractors on board, more clarity on timing will be provided.

#### **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

### **What should property owners do if they know they have a burned vehicle on site?**

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 Department of Motor Vehicles, 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: <https://bit.ly/burnedvehicle>.

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

For property owners who participate in the state-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. Once 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.

Property owners who chose to complete cleanup on their own should: 1) contact their county for any information on requirements, and 2) follow guidance from DEQ at [ordeq.org/firedebris](http://ordeq.org/firedebris).

### **How will property owners know when cleanup is complete on their 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.

### **Do I need to sign up 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 free removal of household hazardous waste.

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

It is 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)