



NEWS RELEASE

CALAVERAS COUNTY



CONTACT: <http://butte.calaverasgov.us> RELEASE DATE: September 16, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALAVERAS COUNTY BUTTE FIRE

As you begin to go home and assess your residences and property, please be aware of any and all changes in fire conditions.

If you see trees on a highway, please call Cal-Trans at 209-948-7543.

If you see trees on a County road, please call Public Works at 209-754-6402.

If you see any hazardous material or waste, please call Environmental Health at 209-754-6399.

If you see any fire danger or criminal activity, please call 911.

If you need to speak to a grief counselor, please call our local 24 hour mental health crisis line at (800) 499-3030.

Remember, there may still be many hazards to your health and safety as you return to your homes. Stay vigilant and aware.

A Calaveras Local Assistance Center (CLAC) is OPENING!! The CLAC is a centralized location where County, State and Local agencies will provide assistance and guidance to residents who have been impacted by the fire.. Representatives will be present to provide information on:

DATES OF OPERATION: Friday 9/18 through Monday 9/21 (dates may be extended based upon need)

HOURS OF OPERATION: Friday 9/18, Noon to 7:00pm; Saturday and Sunday 9/20-21, 7:00am to 7:00pm

LOCATION: Calaveras County Government Center, 891 Mountain Ranch Rd, San Andreas

SHERIFF: Emergency Personnel are saddened to announce that yesterday, 09/15/15 at about 1700 hours, the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office recovered human remains on Baker Riley Way in Mountain Ranch, which appear to be a result of the Butte Fire. The identity of the victim is unknown at this time and is under investigation. An Autopsy is scheduled later this week for identification.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS FOR PROPERTY CLEANUP: The Butte Wildfire has generated an extraordinary amount of ash and debris. To ensure public health and safety during debris cleanup and other recovery of your property, the following general information should be considered and followed:

Significant health hazards may be present when handling ash, debris, and household hazardous waste. Experience from similar fires in California has shown that asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), heavy metal residues, and other hazardous substances may be present in burn ash and debris.

Due to these hazards, it is recommended that site cleanup be conducted by appropriately licensed professional contractors. The Environmental Health Department (“EHD”) has coordinated with the California Department Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) to remove all Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) items. Please contact the EHD for more information to sign up for the HHW removal program with DTSC.

Appropriate safety and environmental precautions must be followed by all debris removal contractors, including:

- Specific contractor licensing and training requirements
- Dust control
- Traffic control
- Worker health and safety, including personal protective equipment
- Proper disposal requirements

EHD does not recommend that property owners conduct their own cleanup due to the significant health and safety hazards that may be present at individual sites. If property owners decide to proceed with cleanup despite this warning, appropriate personal protective equipment should be utilized to reduce exposure to hazardous materials. The following general information is provided to inform persons who chose to perform cleanup on their own property, in the selection of appropriate personal protective equipment.

1. **Respiratory protection:** A NIOSH approved particulate respirator can provide protection against dust and ash. If asbestos may be present a “HEPA” respirator (N100) will provide a greater level of protection. Note that respirators are only effective if they fit correctly so as to provide an effective seal around the face.
2. **Gloves:** Nitrile or equivalent inner gloves may be worn under work gloves to provide protection if paints or solvents must be handled.
3. **Disposable coveralls:** “Tyvek” or other equivalent disposable coveralls may be worn, and disposed of prior to entering vehicles or structures to reduce the potential to contaminate these areas or expose others.
4. **Footwear:** Steel toed rubber boots, or steel toed work boots with disposable booties are appropriate. Potentially contaminated footwear should not be worn into residences or other structures unless rinsed off first.
5. **Hardhat & goggles or protective glasses:** Hardhats are recommended when working with debris or other materials overhead. Protective goggles that seal against the face offer the most protection from splashing chemicals or thick dust. Protective glasses with shatterproof lenses (ANSI approved) are recommended on all construction or cleanup sites.
6. **All hauled ash:** All hauled ash and burn debris originating from the Butte Wildfire 2015 shall be transported to the appropriate designated facility. During transport to the disposal site, the ash shall be wetted and covered with a tarp to prevent the ash from being airborne and contaminating other areas.

Property owners and other site workers should take precautions to avoid heat stress, which can be significantly increased when wearing personal protective equipment. Care should be exercised to recognize and avoid physical hazards such as downed and potentially live electrical wiring, open excavations, uneven footing, overhead hazards, and equipment that may be operating in the area.

If water is available, ash should be wetted (not soaked) to prevent airborne emissions, especially during handling operations. Ash **should not** be saturated to the point of runoff.

Property owners should also keep children, pets and livestock out of areas with ash and debris from burned structures and debris, to protect their health and reduce tracking of ash and debris into vehicles and structures.

If you have any questions regarding safe property clean up, please contact: EHD at (209) 754-6399.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS: All schools in Calaveras County will remain closed for the duration of the week. Monday 9/21/15, all schools are set to reopen with the exception of West Point, Rail Road Flat, and Mokelumne Hill.

CAL FIRE: The Butte Fire Information Line has been expanded to include the Butte Fire Recovery Information Line. The Fire Information and Fire Recovery Lines will serve as a central information center for residents and those affected by the Butte Fire. For any questions regarding the Butte Fire or recovery efforts, please call: (209) 822-3159

The fire will continue to produce smoke within the perimeter of the fire footprint for many days, as pockets of unburned vegetation smolder and burn. However, if you see a fire that appears threatening, you should not hesitate to call 911 and report it.

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS: Effective at noon, 9/16/15 current local info line (925.588.6678) has been officially forwarded to the California Wildfire Information Phone 855.224.2490

DONATIONS: Have you or are you thinking about making a donation? If so, please use the below contact information:

Calaveras Community Foundation:

Designate your donation to: Disaster Relief Fund (“DRF”)

Tax ID # 68-0472056

Send check to:

PO Box 1436, Angels Camp, 95222

OR Call: 209-736-1845

OR pay on-line at: <http://calaverascommunityfoundation.org/news-events/calaveras-community-foundation-disaster-relief/>

Salvation Army Donations to the Calaveras Service Unit:

Tax ID # 94-1170408

Send check to:

Calaveras Health & Human Services

509 E St Charles St., San Andreas, CA 95249

OR Call: Kathy Houle 209-754-6851

Resource Connection/Food Bank:

Tax ID # 94-2705790

Send check to:

PO Box 919, San Andreas, CA 95249

OR Call: 209-754-1257

Red Cross-Gold County Region

Designate your donation to: California Wildfires

Tax ID # 53-0196605

Send check to:

1565 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95815

OR Call: 916-993-7080