



FIRE RECOVERY INFORMATION



Health Information

Bushfires have the potential to cause a number of environmental health concerns beyond the immediate damage caused by the fire.

Water Contamination

If you have a water tank, be aware that the water is most likely to be contaminated either indirectly by ash, smoke and debris, or directly by fire and the firefighting activities. Do not use the water for drinking, preparing food, making ice, washing, bathing or cleaning teeth. Do not provide it to animals.

Please use the water instead to:

- Flush toilets;
- Water the garden; and
- Wash cars and fight fires

It is dangerous to attempt to remove the contamination so, this is not recommended. Using any rainwater contaminated with ash or other debris to fill swimming pools or in evaporative air conditioners may clog filters and pumps. Contact the relevant manufacturer for your air conditioner, filter, or pump for advice.

For more information about water testing, rainwater tanks or water systems, visit the Shire's website or contact the Department of Health.

Contaminated Swimming Pools

After a bushfire a swimming pool may contain ash. This may affect the chemical balance of the water. Swimming pools should either be emptied or kept chlorinated to prevent the water quality from deteriorating.

You may need to make an assessment as to whether it is safe to empty the pool. Advice from a building consultant may also be required. If it is safe to empty the pool, all water and residue should be removed. Where it is not safe to do so, a trained technical operator will need to inspect the pool.

Chemicals and Other Hazards

Houses, sheds, and other buildings or structures that are burnt in a bushfire can leave health hazards in the remaining rubble and ash including:

- Asbestos;
- Ash from burnt CCA-treated timber can contain up to 10 per cent (by weight) arsenic, chromium and copper;
- Electrical hazards;
- Medicines;
- Garden or farm chemicals and pesticides;
- Other general chemicals, such as cleaning products or pool chlorine;
- Metals and other residues from burnt household appliances; and
- Ash and dust

For more information visit HealthyWA website: www.healthywa.gov.au

Asbestos Damage and Contamination

If the home or structure on your property was built before 1990, particularly between the 1970's and 80's, it should be suspected of containing asbestos, typically as flat or corrugated cement sheeting.

If you suspect or know your home or dwelling contains asbestos, please contact the Shire's Environmental Health team on **9290 6666** and *select option 8*.