



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **December 12, 2017**

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### **SAFE CLEAN UP OF ASH**

#### *Instructions for dealing with ash*

**(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.)** – If your home was impacted by the Thomas fire, here are some health precautions to take after you return home and before you begin the clean-up process.

**We do not advise ash clean-up while ash is still falling and the situation is unpredictable.** Wait until conditions improve.

Avoid skin contact with ash. Ash from burned homes and other items will likely contain metals, chemicals, and potentially asbestos, items that may be considered toxic if breathed in or touched with wet skin. If you do get ash on your skin, wash it off immediately. Some wet ash can cause chemical burns.

Inhaled ash may be irritating to the nose, throat and lungs. In order to avoid possible health problems, the following steps are recommended.

- Avoid doing activities that stir up ash. Do not allow children to play in ash or be in an area where ash-covered materials are being disturbed. Wash ash off toys before children play with them.
- Clean ash off pets.
- Wear a tight fitting N95 respirator mask, gloves, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when cleaning up ash.
- Avoid getting ash into the air as much as possible. Avoid sweeping it up dry. Use water and wet cloth or mop to clean items and surfaces.
- Under any circumstances, **DO NOT USE LEAF BLOWERS!**

If you have symptoms that may be related to exposure to smoke or soot, consult your doctor. Symptoms include repeated coughing, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, headaches and nausea or unusual fatigue or lightheadedness.