FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HEALTH NOTICE TO LOCAL LANDSCAPERS
Safe Clean-Up and Work Practices During and After Thomas Fire

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) --Please be aware that the County Public Health Department and the Air Pollution Control District are strongly recommending NO USE OF LEAFBLOWERS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. No ash clean-up at residential and commercial properties should occur until this health notice is changed. If any landscaping or gardening activity is necessary it is essential to make sure all personnel are wearing properly fitting N-95 masks. If you need these for staff, they can be obtained free of charge from the Public Health Dept. at 805-681-5100. Spanish speakers will be available.

We do not advise ash clean-up while ash is still falling and the situation is unpredictable. Wait until conditions improve. DO NOT USE LEAF BLOWERS under any circumstances! Should ash clean-up be absolutely necessary, the following is recommended for safe clean-up.

• 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.
• Use protective wear. Wear a tight fitting N95 respirator mask, gloves, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when cleaning up ash. No one with heart or lung conditions should handle ash clean up.
• 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.

ALTERNATIVES TO LEAF BLOWERS
• Sweep gently with a push broom, then hose lightly with water. Take care to conserve water. Ash can be bagged and put into trash cans.
• Using a shop vacuum equipped with a high-efficiency particulate filter (HEPA) and a disposable filter bag.

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.