

Information for Property Owners Affected by the Spokane Complex Fire, August 2026 Asbestos & Fire-Damaged Structures, *Revised 08.11.16*

The Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency (SRCAA) and other local agencies want you and your family members, as well as volunteers, workers, and others who may be handling fire debris, to be safe. Fire debris can contain many types of hazardous substances that can easily become airborne and inhaled, including asbestos fibers.

Why the concern over asbestos?

There is no known safe level of asbestos exposure. Asbestos is found in many building materials, and when they are damaged, asbestos fibers are released. These fibers may be present in ash and debris, and once airborne, are easily inhaled. Asbestos exposure can lead to mesothelioma (cancer of the lining of the lungs and abdomen), asbestosis (scarring of lung tissues), and other asbestos-related health problems.

What if my house was constructed recently?

Even if the home was recently constructed, asbestos could still be present in building materials. The use of asbestos in building materials has never been completely banned.

Can I retrieve personal items from my fire-damaged property?

Once authorities have permitted you to access your property, you can remove your own belongings but take precautions when handling any materials from buildings that are partially damaged by the fire. Protective clothing and equipment should be worn to avoid skin contact and inhalation of ash and other disturbed material. Wear gloves, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants when cleaning ash, and avoid skin contact. If ash does get on your skin, wash it off as soon as possible. Well-fitting dust masks may provide some protection during cleanup. N95 or P100 masks are more effective at blocking ash particles than dust or surgical masks. Keep all personal items you remove from the site in sealed bags or containers until properly cleaned. Learn more at:

<https://srhd.org/health-topics/after-a-wildfire>

My house is a total loss. What do I need to know about demolition and demolition debris?

If the structure already has been or will be demolished, the resident homeowner needs to:

- 1) **Obtain an alternate AHERA asbestos survey** to check for the presence of asbestos. This must be done by an AHERA-certified building inspector. (Links to service providers are listed on the next page.)
- 2) **All demolition requires notification to SRCAA** by filing a Notice of Intent (NOI). This can be done online by the homeowner or the contractor once the asbestos results are documented in an alternate asbestos survey. **NOI fees are being waived, including those for emergency (fast-tracked) NOIs, for those affected by these fires.** File online: <https://spokanecleanair.org/asbestos/asbestos-notifications-payment-portal/>
- 3) **If the survey comes back negative for asbestos**, demolition notification must still be obtained. Keep your asbestos survey results. You will need to show proof of survey results to dispose of demolition debris as non-asbestos. Disposal requirements for debris containing asbestos are on the last page.
- 4) **If the alternate asbestos survey comes back positive for asbestos**, an alternate work plan must be developed by an AHERA Designer and removal carried out by certified asbestos abatement company.

Verifying credentials before hiring a contractor.

- 1) **AHERA building inspectors should be able to produce a certification card or certificate.** They are required to renew annually, so make sure their credentials are up to date before performing any work.
- 2) **AHERA Project Designers are required to develop Alternate Work Plans (AWP).** Their credentials must also be renewed annually. Be prudent and ensure their qualifications are current before performing any work.
- 3) **Spokane Clean Air produces guidance documents on developing Alternate Asbestos Surveys.** A certified building inspector should be up to date on the guidelines. All guidance documents are readily available at www.spokanecleanair.org.
- 4) **Asbestos must be removed by a certified abatement contractor.** To validate if the business is a certified abatement contractor, check L&I website at: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/other-licenses-permits/asbestos-certification#certified-contractors-list>

Disposal Requirements for fire-related debris

Because of the hazardous nature of fire-related debris, there are special requirements for disposal.

Ash and debris that tests positive for asbestos: The Graham Road Landfill is the only location in Spokane County that accepts asbestos-containing debris and ash. For more information on Graham Road Landfill guidance: <https://spokanecleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/Structural-Fire-Debris-Management-Guidance-GRL.pdf>

Ash and debris that tests negative for asbestos can be disposed of as regular solid waste at either of the **two solid waste/transfer stations (Northside and Valley)**. A copy of the survey must accompany the debris. The Waste to Energy Facility is **not** accepting dedicated loads of ash, but other fire demolition debris with minimal ash contamination may be accepted with a copy of the negative asbestos survey results.

Additional Resources

Below are links to SRCAA fact sheets, which are available at spokanecleanair.org/asbestos/asbestos-forms-resources/. In addition, our staff is available to answer your questions. Call us at (509)477-4727 and ask to speak with an inspector about asbestos.

- [Asbestos Damaged Structure Flow Chart](#)
- [When are Alternate Work Practices Necessary](#)
- [Damaged Structures: from surveys to clean-up](#)
- [Need an Asbestos Survey? What you should know](#)
- [Need asbestos removed? What you should know before hiring a contractor](#)
- [List of local asbestos service providers](#)

Spokane Clean Air's Asbestos website: <https://spokanecleanair.org/asbestos/>
Spokane Regional Health District webpage: <https://srhd.org/health-topics/after-a-wildfire>