



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDED WHEN CLEANING FIRE SITES**

*All Sites Should Be Surveyed for Health, Safety Hazards*

As clean-up efforts get underway following the recent wildfires, San Diego County officials urge workers to exercise caution before working on fire sites.

All sites should be surveyed for health and safety hazards before work begins, said Nancy Bowen, M.D., San Diego County Public Health Officer.

"Flammable gases are of particular concern," she said. "They may form pockets in areas such as basements, and may take time to dissipate. Even decayed vegetation can create gas pockets."

To protect against injury, the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) recommends personal protective equipment, including:

- Hardhats. Adjust the suspension of the hardhat so the band fits snugly against your head, and look for hardhats that meet the requirements of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z89.1.
- Eye protection, including safety glasses or goggles, should be used when working with power or impact tools. Look for eye protection that meets ANSI Z87.1.
- Respirators. Use if there is visible smoke on the ground, or if experiencing respiratory irritation. At minimum, workers on site should use an air-purifying respirator.
- Hearing protection is required for workers working near heavy equipment.
- Gloves, made of leather, Kevlar, or canvas, that extend above the wrist, will help prevent cuts and other injuries. Special gloves need to be used if there are chemical or biological hazards.
- Foot protection. Footwear should provide toe and sole protection, and have good traction. Foot protection should meet ANSI Z41.
- Fall protection. Employers must provide fall protection for workers working at heights, and provide training and equipment such as a lanyard and harness, as well as determine a safe point of anchorage.
- Avoid take-home hazards by cleaning coveralls, gloves and overboots on the job, or leaving them on the site.

For more information, please visit the County of San Diego Web site at [www.sdcounty.ca.gov](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov) and click on San Diego County Wildfires, then click on "Clean up."

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