



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**San Joaquin County Public Health Services Issues Guidance to Protect Residents
During Ash and Debris Cleanup After Promontory/Medline Fire**

Personal protective equipment and safe cleanup methods reduce health risks

STOCKTON, CA – As recovery efforts continue following the Promontory/Medline Fire, community members are urged to take precautions when cleaning ash and fire debris. The fire created a debris field covering approximately six (6) square miles. Ash from burned structures may contain hazardous materials, including chemicals, metals, and fine particulate matter that can irritate the skin, eyes, and lungs. As material is further examined and tested in the days and weeks ahead, advice may change, but Public Health Services will always recommend the safest possible option for our residents.

“We are always concerned with protecting county residents and want to ensure that people in the vicinity of the fire take safety precautions as they remove ash and debris from their property, just in case there are irritant chemicals present,” said Dr. Maggie Park, Public Health Officer, San Joaquin County Public Health Services. “Also, there are a few areas where the air quality index is moderate, and we encourage sensitive groups such as pregnant people or people with heart or lung disease to make outdoor activities short and less intense.”

Residents and workers in the affected area are strongly encouraged to prioritize health and safety during cleanup activities and follow recommended precautions:

- Wear protective equipment, including an N95 respirator or higher, goggles, gloves, long sleeves, long pants, and eye protection.
- Keep children, pets, older adults, and individuals with respiratory or heart conditions away from ash and debris.
- Lightly mist ash with water before cleanup to reduce airborne particles. Do not sweep dry ash or use leaf blowers.
- Do not vacuum ash unless using a HEPA-filtered vacuum.
- Wash exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water and launder cleanup clothing separately from other household laundry.
- Double bag ash and debris and store it separately from regular household waste for proper disposal.

The County remains actively engaged in recovery efforts and is coordinating across public health, emergency response, and community partners to provide ongoing support, resources, and guidance to residents throughout the cleanup and rebuilding process.

“From first responders and public health professionals to emergency services personnel, I am proud of the swift and coordinated response by our County employees,” said Robert Rickman, District 5 Supervisor. “During the most critical moments of this rapidly evolving incident, they worked tirelessly to provide timely information, resources, and support to our residents and help keep our community safe.”

Community Resources are now available to the public.

- Free personal protective equipment (PPE), including N95 respirators, is available to the public for pickup at Fire Station 95 in Tracy Hills, located at 7151 Tracy Hills Drive in Tracy.
- Debris removal and cleanup assistance can be arranged by contacting the Community Cleanup Helpline at (209) 751-1888, available daily from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Visit the Promontory (Medline) Fire on [SJReady.org](https://www.sjready.org).

For additional health and safety information, residents are encouraged to review the California Department of Public Health’s Wildfire Ash Safety Guide: <https://bit.ly/AshSafetyGuide>.

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About the Office of Emergency Management

The Office of Emergency Services (OES) is at the forefront of ensuring the safety and resilience of San Joaquin County. At OES, our unwavering commitment is to protect lives, property, and the environment across all phases of emergency management: preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. We understand the dynamic nature of emergencies and disasters and strive to create a safer and more resilient community for all.

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