

FAQs | Fire debris disposal

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Background

The 2020 Oregon wildfires have created the need for clarity around the types of burned materials that can be accepted at Metro transfer stations. Below is a list of commonly asked questions and answers. If you need more information, call the Recycling Information Center at 503-234-3000.

Where can I get more information about wildfire debris and ash cleanup?

Wildfire debris can be hazardous. Many homes have toxic chemicals like pesticides, motor oil and paint, and older homes may have asbestos. When a home has been affected by fire, these materials can be in the ash or debris.

Government-funded cleanup assistance is available to you help you save money, protect your health and the health of others, and simplify the cleanup process.

[Learn more about getting help with wildfire cleanup and debris removal.](#)

What kind of fire debris can Metro transfer stations accept?

Metro transfer stations will not accept wildfire debris or ash. Items burned in wildfires and the resulting ash can contain hazardous materials (paint, chemicals and other household items can leave behind dangerous residue).

For other burned materials, Metro transfer stations can only accept them if the items are still recognizable. Load inspectors need to be able to identify what items were before contact with fire.

If the load contains any parts of a structure (such as a house, outbuilding or shed), [asbestos paperwork](#) will be required.

What should I do with unrecognizable burnt items?

Items that are not recognizable should be taken [directly to the landfill](#).

What should I do with my wildfire debris and ash?

To protect your health and safety, Metro and the Department of Environmental Quality strongly recommend that [you seek assistance with wildfire cleanup](#) and debris disposal. If you have already collected these materials, they should be taken [directly to the landfill](#).

[See DEQ's website for additional resources and guidance.](#)

Is any amount of fire ash accepted at Metro transfer stations?

Small amounts of ash from cooking or recreational fires (such as fires from charcoal grills, fireplaces or campfires) can be accepted if bagged, wetted down with water, and cold.

The ash must only be from charcoal or wood. It should not contain ash from garbage like painted or treated wood or plastic.

Metro transfer stations cannot accept fire ash that is mixed with other materials.