

MEDIA ADVISORY**Borel Fire: Returning Home Safely**

August 6, 2024

As Borel Fire evacuees begin to return home, it is important to be aware that hazards still exist that can impact your health and safety. Kern County Public Health urges residents to proceed with caution as you return to your property and not to return home until the evacuation orders have been formally lifted.

Ash and Debris

Residents may be tempted to sift through ash and debris on their property following a wildfire as they search for belongings. Sifting through ash after a fire can be dangerous and unhealthy, so it's not recommended. Ash can contain toxic substances that can irritate the skin, eyes, nose, and throat, and it can be unhealthy to breathe.

Kern County is working to secure assistance to ensure proper handling and disposal of debris and ash from the Borel Fire. Disturbance of the debris and ash on your property may result in disqualification for the removal assistance we hope to secure.

If residents do sift through ash and debris, you should take precautions including:

- Wearing protective gear: Wear sturdy shoes, long sleeves and long pants, and a properly fitting N95 mask.
- Sanitizing and cleaning: Anything that comes into contact with ash should be sanitized and cleaned.
- Being aware of hazards: Look out for slip, trip, fall, and puncture hazards.

Water

Wildfires can affect drinking water sources, posing health risks to consumers. When returning home after an evacuation, you should not drink tap water until it is determined to be safe and free of contamination. Residents should contact their water system provider immediately.

Water Wells

Water wells could be adversely affected by a wildfire, power outages and equipment failure from fire damage. Even if your home and water well remain intact, be aware that water supply systems can be damaged and become polluted during wildfires and appropriate steps should be taken to ensure your health and safety. Learn more about private water wells by visiting our [website](#).

For more information:

- A Local Assistance Center will be opening for those affected by the Borel Fire at the Lake Isabella Senior Center beginning August 10th from 10:00am to 7:00pm.
- Borel Fire Call Center: 661-873-2660
- Kern County Public Health: <https://kernpublichealth.com/returning-home-after-a-wildfire/>
- Borel Fire Community Resources and Information: <https://www.kerncounty.com/Home/Components/News/News/3202/34810>

Grounded in Health