



December 8, 2021

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Debris Removal Program Provides Assistance to Property Owners Impacted by French Fire**

The Kern County Public Health Services Department has partnered with the California Office of Emergency Services to provide a debris removal program for homeowners and property owners who sustained damage caused by the French Fire. This program will assist homeowners and property owners with the removal and clean-up of ash, burn debris and hazard trees because of the need for a rapid recovery from the damage caused by the French Fire.

This service is being provided because ash from a residential fire may be hazardous and debris from burned buildings and homes can contain toxic substances. Building materials may contain asbestos and older buildings often contain lead. Also, common household chemicals such as cleaning products, along with pesticides, fuels, or other chemicals that may have been stored in homes, garages, or sheds may have burned in the fire. These materials can become concentrated in ash and soil following a fire and then be considered a hazardous waste.

The debris removal program provides property owners with a safe and comprehensive program to remove potentially hazardous debris. Only structures 120 square feet or larger are eligible for removal. Property owners that do their own cleanup in advance of the State will be ineligible for assistance. As part of the cleanup, ash and debris from destroyed buildings, hazardous trees, and contaminated soil will be removed. The cleared area will then be tested to ensure it is safe and ready to rebuild. Cleanup and testing will be provided at no cost to those who qualify.

We encourage residents to take advantage of this program that will ensure proper handling and disposal of ash, burn debris and hazard trees from the French Fire. This program will help protect you, your family, and your neighbors by safely removing those toxic materials from your property.

For more information about the program, residents should contact Kern County Public Health's Environmental Health Division by phone at (661) 862-8740 or email [wildfirecleanup@kerncounty.com](mailto:wildfirecleanup@kerncounty.com) or visit our website at [www.kernpublichealth.com](http://www.kernpublichealth.com).

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