



Plumas County Fire Debris Removal

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Board of Supervisors January 18, 2022 Update

Establishing Safe Soil Cleanup Levels in Downtown Greenville

Cal OES recently notified Plumas County officials that unexpected soil sample results have been found during wildfire debris cleanup in the downtown Greenville area. Cleanup crews have discovered elevated concentrations of lead and other heavy metals like mercury and arsenic during routine cleanup sampling in soil from some locations. These results appear to be unrelated to the wildfire debris but are above safe health and safety levels. Why these metals are being found here is still unknown however, they appear to be related to historical mining or other past land use activities.

Plumas County is working with state partners to understand the full extent of the contamination and develop solutions. At this time, these findings may have the following affects on property owners and the community:

- Property owners in the downtown Greenville area may experience a delay before their properties are considered cleaned and safe to return to them. They may see visible debris has been removed from their lot and wonder why the clearance has not been issued. Please be patient while state and local officials determine if their property is safe to rebuild.
- When determining safe levels, public health comes first. Repeated exposure can cause heavy metals like lead to accumulate in humans over time. Even at low concentrations, exposure to lead can have serious, long-term health effects, especially for children.
- State and local officials are working hard to minimize delays to the overall debris removal schedule. Cleanup of ash and structural debris will continue while we investigate how best to address this problem.
- The California Department of Toxics Substances Control (DTSC) will be leading this investigation. The first step will be drilling and taking core samples up to two (2) feet in depth to determine the lateral and vertical extent of the metals in the soil.
- A range of possible solutions is available to protect the long-term health of the community. Once the extent of the contamination is known, we will have a better idea of which solutions will work best.

Plumas County is working closely with Cal OES and DTSC to identify solutions and minimize the impacts on the county's recovery effort. We will keep the public informed as information becomes available. For questions about the process to establish safe soil cleanup levels in Greenville, please contact the Plumas Debris Removal Center at 530-283-7080. Thank you.