

FIRE RECOVERY GUIDE

COLD SPRINGS FIRE



Boulder County is here to support you as you return to the impacted area. General information about what to consider as you re-enter your home is outlined in this guide. More detailed information is available at www.ColdSpringsFireRecovery.org.

Damage Assessment

Boulder County Damage Assessment teams will be entering onto properties to evaluate fire damage in the coming weeks. County staff will assess damage to structures, septic systems, debris, etc. so multiple staff may be on the property. All County employees will have appropriate identification.

Contact Us

When you're ready, Boulder County is here to help you with your questions about:

- Clean-up, including ash and chemicals
- Safe disposal of household items impacted by the fire or loss of power
- Well water safety and testing
- Septic system safety and inspection
- Personal safety, including risk for tetanus

See the back of this handout for things to consider, or contact us:

Email: firerecovery@bouldercounty.org

Web: www.ColdSpringsFireRecovery.org

Phone:

Health Concerns: Public Health 303-441-1564

Damage Concerns: Land Use 303-441-3930

Financial Support: Housing and Human Services 303-441-1000
3460 Broadway, Boulder (no appointment needed)
Services may also be available in Nederland soon.

Power Restoration: Xcel Energy 800-895-1999
Xcel customers who need to restart their utility service should call customer care or visit www.xcelenergy.com

Take Care

Experiencing the impact of a fire, whether your home was damaged or not, can be traumatic. After a fire, a sense of security can be lost and can significantly disrupt normal daily life.

Below are some strategies to help you cope with stress and protect your emotional and physical well-being:

- Stay Active. Volunteer for work in a shelter, community, school, or faith-based organization.
- Help with cleanup and repair if it is safe to do so.
- Spend time with others.
- Participate in activities you enjoy.
- Take breaks from the cleanup efforts.
- Exercise (indoors if air quality is not acceptable).
- Keep a journal.
- Talk about your feelings.

Returning to the way you felt before the fire may take time. Talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor if you are having trouble:

- Managing your feelings.
- Completing daily tasks.
- Caring for your family.

Clean Up

The best way to prevent potential health and safety hazards is to remove the burn debris and ash from affected properties. All residents and visitors should assume that the burn debris and ash contains hazardous materials and should take the following precautions:

- Stay indoors, or leave the burn area on windy days.
- Keep doors and windows closed.
- Use rugs inside and outside entrances to catch any possible debris on shoes.
- Avoid tracking debris into the house; remove shoes.
- Use a damp mop or cloth to clean away visible dust in the house.
- Use a vacuum cleaner equipped with a HEPA filter system.

Anyone cleaning up debris material should:

- Wear appropriate masks.
- Wear protective clothing.
- Wet the debris and ash while handling it.

Those with underlying health conditions may want to take extra precautions such as wearing respiratory protection when outside, or minimizing time in the burn area, and/or seeking a physicians recommendation.

Ash

Ash from forest fires is relatively nontoxic and is similar to ash that might be found in your fireplace; however, all ash contains small amounts of cancer-causing chemicals. Fire ash can also irritate the skin, nose, and throat, cause coughing and may trigger asthmatic attacks. Well-fitting dust masks may provide some protection during cleanup.

Fire Suppressant

The health risk from fire suppressant to humans, plants, and animals is minimal. However, take care to ensure it is not ingested.

- Wash skin thoroughly with soap and water to remove residues.
- As with any garden produce, rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly.
- Shampoo pets and keep them away from puddles.
- Use absorbent materials, such as sand, soil, or other materials to soak up standing puddles.

Food

Food exposed to fire can be compromised by four factors: heat of the fire, smoke fumes, chemicals used to fight the fire, and power outage as a result of the fire.

- If your home has been exposed to heat, smoke fumes, or chemicals used to fight fires, food may be contaminated and should be discarded.
- If your home has been without power for more than two hours, food stored in the refrigerator or freezer should be discarded.
- Never taste food to determine its safety. If in doubt, throw it out.

Spoiled food and general trash can be dropped off from 8 a.m- 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 13 at:

- Fisherman's Parking Lot, near the Teen Center. (Also collecting recyclables.)
- The dirt pull-off at the intersection of West Magnolia Road and Highway 72 and 119.
- On Sugarloaf Road at the intersection of Old Townsite Road.

Spoiled food, general trash, and recyclables will also be accepted at the Nederland Transfer Station for extended hours Wednesday, July 13 - Sunday, July 17 from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Transfer Station regular hours will resume after that. Hazardous waste and electronics will not be accepted at any location.

Visit www.ColdSpringsFireRecovery.org for detailed clean-up guidelines.

Water

Wells

Wells should be visually inspected for damage to the well head or other components of the water system.

- If your well is damaged, contact a well service provider for an assessment and repair.
- If you are concerned about the water, have it tested before consuming it.

More information about treating water can be found at www.ColdSpringsFireRecovery.org

Septic Systems

Septic system could be adversely affected by the fire, power outages, or equipment failure from fire damage. The system may have been impacted if:

- Plastic piping above ground has melted.
- The raised system was in the direct line of fire (i.e. grass on top is scorched).
- There is damage in the area where the pipes enter the home.

If you feel your septic system may have been damaged, discontinue use until a licensed professional has inspected the system.

Visit www.SepticSmart.org for more information and a list of inspectors.

Donate

A fire relief fund has been set up through Foothills United Way for the collection of financial donations to help residents impacted by the Cold Springs Fire near Nederland. Those seeking to make online contributions can visit www.ColdSpringsFireFund.org. The funds will be distributed by Boulder County Housing and Human Services through case managers working with fire-impacted residents to determine need.