



# ASSESS YOUR HOME SAFELY

Before returning home and starting clean-up please read this section to ensure you have adequate safety measures in place. Identify whom you may need to call to shut off services. Contact the City or County Building Official and your local fire district to assess the safety of your property and structure, and discuss the process of demolition or repair. Depending on the extent of the damage, if not completely destroyed, a structural engineer will be required to provide an evaluation to the building official prior to clean-up.

## safety first - what to wear

- Boots, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt. If you suspect asbestos may be present in debris, use disposable coveralls to protect clothes from collecting asbestos fibers and spreading them when washed. See page 66 for more information about asbestos risks.
- Hard hat.
- N95 mask to protect your lungs from smoke and ash during cleanup. If you suspect asbestos, use a NIOSH-Approved, N-100 or P-100 respirator. Follow instructions that come with the mask to make sure it fits properly. Basic paper dust masks and bandannas do not filter the tiny particles that are most dangerous to lungs.

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## before entering your home

- Check for the smell of gas. If you smell gas, leave the house and turn off the supply at the tank or outside valve. Open the doors and windows and contact your utility provider.
- If you have a propane or oil tank system, contact a propane supplier, turn off the valves on the system, and leave the valves closed until the supplier inspects your system. The system can be unsafe. If the fire burned the tank, the pressure relief valve likely opened and released the contents. Contact your supplier before operating.
- Check for electrical power. If there is power, temporarily turn it off until you've completed your inspection. If there is no power, see if the main breaker is on.
- Inspect your roof and rain gutters. Wet them down immediately and remove debris that could ignite.
- Check your whole property for burning embers or debris. Wet them down immediately. Check back frequently over the course of several days to make sure they are completely out.
- Check roofs and floors to be sure they are structurally safe before entering.



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## once inside your home

Check for embers and smoke in the attic and crawl space. Do this every day for several days.

Beware of hot spots, dust, ash, broken glass, and other sharp objects.

Do not start cleaning or throwing away anything until you have contacted your insurance company and documented damage with photographs.

Take pictures and/or video, and start a list of damaged belongings.

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## next steps

Ask your insurance provider what you should do about covering broken windows, doors, and other exposed areas, pumping out water, and any other activities you may need to do to secure your home.

Contact utility and service providers (water, natural gas, and electricity) to cancel or restore service, stop automatic payment or waive deposits for equipment use or rentals (dish, internet/phone devices, etc.). Check out the next section for a list of service providers.