



# RETURN HOME SAFELY

Although the fire may be out, dangers may still be present. Keep these tips in mind.

If you feel you are in danger, call 911.

- 1 Stay away from your home or business until fire officials tell you it's safe. Weather conditions can change quickly and fire can threaten the same area multiple times. Stay up to date on emergency alerts.
- 2 Keep a "fire watch." Look for smoke or sparks in and outside of the home, on rooftops, in gutters, etc. that can ignite your home.
- 3 Flash floods can be dangerous, particularly if it rains over a burned area upstream of your location. Stay away from storm channels, ditches, and areas where water concentrates around your home. Listen for weather and flash flooding alerts. Stabilize burnt slopes if possible, read more in the landscape recovery section.
- 4 Have an evacuation plan in place and identify several ways out of your area. Make sure everyone in your household knows what to do in case of an evacuation for flash flooding or other danger.
- 5 Do not drink or use water from the faucet until officials say it is okay. Water supply systems can be damaged from fires or flooding. For more info, visit the [Washington Department of Health Drinking Water Alert website](#).
- 6 Use extreme caution around trees, power poles, and other tall objects. Structures and surfaces will be unstable. Stay out of burned forests. Trees can fall in windstorms. Do not touch any power lines.
- 7 Utilities: if there is no power, check to make sure the main breaker is on. If the breakers are on and power is not present, contact the utility company. If you have a propane tank or system, contact a propane supplier, turn off valves on the system, and leave valves closed until the supplier inspects your system. If you have a heating oil tank system, contact a heating oil supplier to inspect your system before using it.
- 8 Document damage with photographs and contact your insurance before beginning any cleanup.
- 9 Purchase flood insurance. If you are downstream from or adjacent to the burn area, you are at risk for flooding and debris flows. Contact your insurance agent to learn more.



10

Clear culverts/drainages. Remove any debris, lawn clippings, or material blocking culverts and drainages.

11

Secure outdoor furniture. Heavy furniture can move in a flood or debris flow and cause further damage.

12

Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home. Note: turn the flashlight on outside before entering - the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.

13

Watch out for ash pits and fire-sharpened sticks. Ash pits are holes created by large objects like stumps and downed trees. They can stay hot for many days and cause serious burns. Fire-sharpened sticks are the remains of vegetation that have partially burned; leaving behind spear-like sticks protruding up from the ground.

**USE CAUTION AND GOOD JUDGMENT. Burned structures and surfaces can be unstable. You are responsible for your own safety.**