



**EMERGENCY ORDER OF THE SONOMA COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER  
CONCERNING RE-ENTRY AND PROHIBITING THE ENDANGERMENT  
OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH THE UNSAFE REMOVAL,  
TRANSPORT, AND DISPOSAL OF FIRE DEBRIS**

WHEREAS the potential for widespread toxic exposures and threats to public health and the environment exists in the aftermath of a major wildfire disaster. Debris and ash from residential structure fires contain hazardous substances and the health effects of hazardous substances releases after a wildfire are well-documented.

WHEREAS the combustion of building materials such as siding, roofing tiles, and insulation result in dangerous ash that may contain asbestos, heavy metals, and other hazardous materials. Household hazardous waste such as paint, gasoline, cleaning products, pesticides, compressed gas cylinders, and chemicals may have been stored in homes, garages, or sheds that may have burned in the fire, also producing hazardous materials.

WHEREAS exposure to hazardous substances may lead to acute and chronic health effects, and may cause long-term public health and environmental impacts. Uncontrolled hazardous materials and debris pose significant threats to public health through inhalation of dust particles and contamination of drinking water supplies. Improper handling can expose workers to toxic materials, and improper transport and disposal of fire debris can spread hazardous substances throughout the community.

WHEREAS the Sonoma County Health Officer has proclaimed a local health emergency due to the hazardous conditions.

WHEREAS, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors has ratified the proclamation of a local emergency due to the LNU Lightning Complex Fires, due to the conditions of extreme peril caused by these fires, which are exacerbated by extreme heat and fire danger weather, rolling power outages, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in the Sonoma County operational area.

WHEREAS, the County is also under a Local Health Emergency due to COVID-19 which continues to create an imminent and substantial threat to public health and safety.

WHEREAS areas that have been closed to reentry by residents and the public for safety reasons will be opened in the near future.

WHEREAS, the Sonoma County Health Officer finds that:

- a. The LNU Lightning Complex Fires have created hazardous waste conditions in Sonoma County in the form of contaminated debris from household hazardous waste/materials and structural debris resulting from the destruction of a large number of structures.
- b. This hazardous waste debris poses a substantial present or potential hazard to human health and the environment unless its removal and disposal is performed in a manner that will protect the public health and safety.

WHEREAS Health and Safety Code section 101040 authorizes the Health Officer to require protective measures in the context of a local emergency.

**NOW THEREFORE**, the Sonoma County Health Officer **ORDERS** that:

- 1. Property owners and the community should not enter the burn footprint of structures without Personal Protective Equipment.**
2. Until the enactment of additional requirements to address the LNU Lightning Complex Fires disaster clean up, no cleanup activities of burned structures shall commence without the written authorization of the County of Sonoma's Department of Health Services, Environmental Health.
3. Until the enactment of additional requirements to address the LNU Lightning Complex Fires disaster clean up, no debris bins shall be provided to property owners for the purposes of the removal of fire debris without the written authorization of the County of Sonoma.

**SIGNED AND SUBSCRIBED** this 24<sup>th</sup> day of August 2020.



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Sundari R. Mase, MD, MPH  
Sonoma County Health Officer