



Public health information for properties in Hester affected by ash from copper chrome arsenate (CCA) treated timber

The information below is for residents in Hester in the HAZMAT Incident area designated by the Department of Fire and Emergencies Services (DFES). Please refer to [EmergencyWA](#) for the most current advice.

Do not enter the restricted area until advised by DFES that it is safe to do so.

What is CCA-treated timber?

Copper chrome arsenate (CCA) is a wood preservative that is fixed into timber and used to protect wood from rotting, fungi and insects.

What happens to CCA-treated timber when it is burnt?

The ash from CCA treated timber can contain the metals chromium, arsenic and copper. This ash may pose a health hazard if sufficient amounts are inhaled or swallowed by residents, especially young children, pets or farm animals.

Health effects

Exposure to ash particles may cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat. Inhalation and swallowing CCA-treated timber ash can cause nausea and/or vomiting, diarrhoea and a “pins and needles” feeling in the skin.

If you or anyone in your family has these symptoms (or you suspect someone has swallowed CCA-treated timber ash) seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Precautions for young children, pets and farm animals

- To prevent exposure, children, pets and farm animals should be kept away from CCA-treated timber ash.
- Ensure that fresh, uncontaminated water and feed is available for pets and livestock.
- Don't consume contaminated home grown fruit and vegetables.
- If you accidentally come into contact with ash, wash it off.
- If you or anyone in your family experience symptoms or is suspected to have accidentally swallowed ash from CCA-treated timber, seek medical attention.

Water use and rainwater tanks

Your mains water supply is safe to use. When first turning water back on it is a good idea to purge the water pipes by running the water until it looks clear.

Water in rainwater tanks should only be used if it has been tested and found to be safe for its intended use.

As a precaution, do not use existing rainwater water for drinking, swimming pools/spas or watering fruit trees and vegetables, cooking, showering or drinking water for pets and farm animals.

Rainwater is safe to use for irrigating lawn and ornamental plants.

Clean up of ash in and around your property

Professional cleaning services are available for Hester residents. Contact the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes for more information. General precautions for cleaning ash covered items or areas are provided below.

- Practice good hygiene and wear gloves and a disposable dust mask (Class P2 mask) to minimise breathing in dust when cleaning or handling CCA-treated timber ash.
- Wash your hands after finishing clean-up work and before drinking, eating, smoking, preparing food.
- Clean items and surfaces using wet disposable cloths or wipes and place in a bag for disposal.
- Clean and wash down any outdoor equipment such as tables, chairs and play equipment that you may come into contact with. Make sure run-off water does not go onto areas where you grow vegetables or fruit.
- Kitchen and eating surfaces should be wiped clean before use. Any sealed containers of food can be cleaned, unsealed food contaminated with ash should be disposed.
- Carpets and soft furnishings may be vacuumed using a vacuum that has a HEPA filter installed and disposable bag. Use personal protective equipment to dispose of the vacuum bag and wipe down vacuum cleaner and wash hoses after use. You can also steam clean carpet and soft furnishings.
- Small amounts of waste can be placed in kerbside collection bins. The landfill is currently (8 February 2022) closed. Contact the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes for updates on rubbish disposal/collection.

If any structures on your property are fire damaged see advice on hazards following a bushfire in and around your property [here](#).

For further information

Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes Environmental Health Service btshire@bridgetown.wa.gov.au
(08) 9761 0800

Department of Health, Environmental Health Directorate ehinfo@health.wa.gov.au, (08) 9222 2000

Contact your insurance company to ask how they can assist.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

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