

Safely managing debris from snow damaged buildings

Handling Material

Many structures and buildings in Malheur County collapsed or suffered significant damage following the recent snow storms in late 2016 and early 2017. The debris from fallen structures can pose a threat to people and the environment if not handled safely.

Safety First

Above all else, use caution when working in or around any building whose structural integrity is compromised. Try to keep children and pets from the debris, where they could be exposed to sharp objects, electrical hazards or hazardous material, including asbestos.

Check with your insurance company before removing debris, as it's likely the company can assist with the task and provide expertise on handling dangerous materials.

Always wear personal protective gear and clothing, including, eye protection, gloves and boots.

Separate and recycle when possible

Many of the damaged or collapsed buildings are constructed of metal, wood, brick and cinder block. These materials have the potential to be segregated for re-use and recycling.

Disposing of waste

Residents with debris from the recent snowstorm have two options for solid waste disposal. One is the Lytle Boulevard Landfill, located approximately ten miles south of Vale, Oregon off Lytle Boulevard. The second is the Clay Peak Landfill located approximately three miles south of Payette, Idaho. Although the Lytle Boulevard Landfill will have special approval from DEQ to accept demolition waste, they have limited space for it. If you are located closer to the Clay Peak landfill, consider taking your debris there.

The Clay Peak Landfill also has composting options for clean organic matter, including damaged onions.

Asbestos

It's possible that asbestos may be present in some of the fallen building material, including roofing, siding and insulation. It's best to apply water to material that may contain asbestos to prevent dangerous fibers from going airborne.

Inhalation of asbestos fibers is the primary cause of asbestos-related disease. These fibers are very small and sharp. If they are not expelled through coughing or mucus secretions, they can become embedded in the lung. Inhaled asbestos is associated with three major diseases: asbestosis, lung cancer, and mesothelioma.

It is not effective to use paper masks or bandanas to cover your mouth, as these will not filter out dust or asbestos fibers. Why risk it? If you suspect asbestos may be present, please consult with a licensed asbestos removal contractor or call DEQ's air quality program.

Burning of materials

Check with the local fire department before conducting any open burning of construction materials. It is illegal to burn treated wood, petroleum-based products or anything that emits dense or noxious smoke.

For more information please contact:

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Alternative formats

Documents can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request a document in another format or language, call DEQ in Portland at 503-229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696; or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.



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