

Ash from CCA-treated timber after a bushfire

“CCA” stands for copper chrome arsenate, a preservative that protects the timber from insects. Freshly treated CCA timber can be identified by its yellow/greenish colour, which fades to grey over time.

CCA-treated timber is commonly used in structures around the home including:

- Decks
- Garden furniture
- Picnic tables
- Playground equipment
- Landscaping timbers, retaining walls and fences
- Gazebos and patios

Structures made from CCA-treated timber can be damaged or destroyed. The remaining ash and char from damaged CCA-treated wood can contain up to 10 per cent (by weight) arsenic, copper and chromium.

Precautions for young children and animals

Although ash is too large to be breathed into the lungs, ash particles can irritate the eyes, nose and throat.

Swallowing only a few grams of CCA-treated timber can be harmful.

Children, pets and other animals must be kept away from contaminated ash areas until clean-up is completed.

Safe disposal and handling

Before handling damaged CCA-treated timber, it is essential to wear personal

protective equipment such as gloves and dust masks.

- Ash should be double-bagged, sealed and taken directly to your local landfill.
- Damaged timber can also be taken to landfill.

After coming into contact with ash, it should be washed off your hands, face and neck as needed (e.g. can use a portable camp shower to wash and change before leaving the site). If ash gets in your eyes, gently wash out your eyes with clean water.

If you or anyone in your family experience symptoms or is suspected to have swallowed ash from CCA-treated timber, seek medical attention.

Further information

Refer to the HealthyWA website:

healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/After-a-bushfire-hazards-on-your-property

Other factsheets include:

- Health hazards after a bushfire
- Swimming pool contamination after a bushfire
- Damaged chemicals, poisons or pesticides after a bushfire
- On-site wastewater damaged after a bushfire
- Rainwater tanks after a bushfire

To discuss further:

- Contact your local government Environmental Health Officer
- Call the Environmental Health Directorate, Department of Health WA on (08) 9222 2000 or email ehinfo@health.wa.gov.au

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

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