



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
**NEWS RELEASE**  
WWW.EPA.GOV/NEWSROOM



For Immediate Release: September 29, 2020

Media Contact: Rusty Harris-Bishop, 415-694-8840, [harris-bishop.rusty@epa.gov](mailto:harris-bishop.rusty@epa.gov), [R9WildfiresPIO@epa.gov](mailto:R9WildfiresPIO@epa.gov)

## U.S. EPA begins hazardous waste removal following Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Mateo County Fires

**SAN FRANCISCO** - On Tuesday, September 29 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began the field operations to assess and remove household hazardous waste from burned properties in Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Mateo counties. These operations are part of the broader response to the CZU Lightning Complex, Carmel, River, and Dolan Fires. Field crews will begin in Santa Cruz County, and EPA will expand operations into Monterey and San Mateo counties as crews are trained and mobilized.

In these operations EPA will consolidate and dispose of materials including paints, cleaners, solvents, oils, batteries, herbicides and pesticides. Fuel from tanks will be removed and tanks will be marked for collection in the second phase of the cleanup. Following a fire, these products require special handling and disposal, particularly if their containers are compromised. These efforts will reduce potential threats to public health and safety and allow other agencies to remove solid waste, debris and ash in the affected areas.

EPA's work is authorized by a Federal Emergency Management Agency-issued federal disaster declaration mission assignment for wildfire operations and recovery based on the request from the California Office of Emergency Services and pursuant to the Governor's Disaster Declaration. Specifically, EPA's response activities involve the assessment, survey and collection of household hazardous waste at more than 1,000 residences in Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Mateo counties.

For additional information on the recovery efforts, please visit the following county sites:

Santa Cruz: [www.santacruzcounty.us/FireRecovery](http://www.santacruzcounty.us/FireRecovery)

San Mateo: [www.smcgov.org/smc-wildfire-recovery](http://www.smcgov.org/smc-wildfire-recovery)

Monterey: [www.co.monterey.ca.us/recovery](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/recovery)

For more information on past wildfire recovery efforts led by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, please visit: <http://wildfirerecovery.org>



[epa.gov/50](http://epa.gov/50)

#EPAat50