

Returning Home after a Chemical Fire



What YOU can do

Protect you and your family from exposure to fire contaminants by following the simple tips in this flier when you return home.

THE BOTTOM LINE – WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GO HOME

- Call local authorities for help:
 - If you get sick when you return home.
 - If you smell odors in your house that were not there before the fire.
 - If something looks different in your house, or yard, after the fire.
- If you begin to feel ill while you are in your house, stop what you are doing and go outside to an open air shady area. Drink some cool water. If you don't begin to feel better soon call for help.
- If you start to feel sick, or different, over the next few weeks call your doctor. Tell your doctor you were evacuated from your home during the fire. If your doctor would like to talk to a doctor who is an expert about health problems caused by chemical exposure call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.
- If your pet(s) start to act sick, or different, call your veterinarian.

When is it safe to return home?

Local officials will notify you when the “all clear” is given and it is safe to return home and to return to your normal activities. At the time you are released to return home the fire will be contained, and should not pose a hazard to your health.

Could chemicals from the fire be in my house or on my yard?

Most of the chemicals released from the ruptured rail car burned during the fire. The fire released smoke that may have contained chemicals and particles in the air.

- Most chemicals released from the rail car burned during the fire.
- The smoke contained soot and particles that may have settled on your yard or gotten into your house. Smoke or fumes may have gotten trapped in your house.

Many people are injured from falls and accidents during an evacuation than from the incident itself. You will be excited to get home, but take your time, be careful, and watch your step.

What can I do to lower the risk of being exposed to chemicals or hazards that may be in my house?

Follow these safety tips:

- Look to see if anything looks different than it did before you left. Call local authorities for help if:
 - You smell strange odors that were not there before the fire.
 - The floors, walls or countertops are stained, have changed color, or are covered in residue after the fire.
- Throw out any perishable foods that have spoiled.
- Throw out all food that was left out when you left your house, unless it was in a sealed container or unopened can. Wash these items with soap and water before opening. **Remember "If in doubt throw it out!"**
- Throw out pet's food and water that was left out when you evacuated. Wash the food containers with soap and water before using.
- Wash all clothes that were left anywhere, except in a closet with the door closed, or a closed dresser, before wearing them again.
- If the filters in your air conditioning and heating system look dirty, stained, or have changed color, replace them.
- Get fresh air into your house. Use fans to blow fresh air in from outside to remove any smoke from the fire. Blow fresh air into the house overnight if possible.
- Wash the outside of your house with water from your garden hose. Use a watering wand to reach second or third story levels.

Will smoke from the fire affect my garden produce?

Check your garden produce, and do not eat it if:

- It has a strange odor.
- It is a different color.
- There are particles on, or around, the produce that weren't there before the fire.

Always wash garden produce, especially leafy vegetables, well before eating to remove soot or particles that may have gotten on them during the fire. Contact local authorities if you are concerned about the safety of eating your garden produce.

Could the water used to fight the fire get into my private well?

The fire department, and other emergency responders, have taken steps to keep runoff water used to fight the fire from getting into private wells. Your well should not have gotten contaminated water into it. However, if you are concerned contaminated water got into your well, have the well inspected as soon as possible.

How can I get more information about the spill and fire?

For more information about the spill go the <http://epaossc.org/csxmaryvillefire> or contact:

Kevin Eichinger
Federal On-Scene Coordinator
Phone: 678.897.3759
eichinger.kevin@epa.gov

Stephanie Brown
Public Affairs Specialist
Phone: 678.575.8505
brown.stephanie@epa.gov