# Broker LogoA person's legs on a table  Description automatically generatedCal/OSHA’s Guidance for Worker Safety and Health During Fire Cleanup

California

Cal/OSHA provided information for employers to ensure workers’ safety and health during fire cleanup.

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Under Labor Code § 1139, employees have the right to leave or refuse to report to work in a disaster area if they believe it is unsafe to remain.

It is unlawful to take action against an employee for refusing to work in such situations.

However, this does not apply to first responders or certain other emergency services workers.

Important Information

The California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) has issued [guidance](https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/wildfire/worker-health-and-safety-during-fire-cleanup.html) on worker safety and health during fire cleanup and reconstruction. Cal/OSHA requires employers performing cleanup and other work in areas damaged or destroyed by fire to identify and evaluate hazards; correct any unsafe or unhealthful conditions; and provide training and instruction to employees.

This guidance provides potential hazards that could be encountered and the workplace health and safety standards that apply to all employees performing fire cleanup and reconstruction.

## Guidance Topics

The guidance that Cal/OSHA provides for fire cleanup identifies safety, health and confinement hazards, as well as the rules that apply to each. The following are the hazards identified:

* Fire and fire byproducts;
* Electricity;
* Flammable gases;
* Unstable structures;
* Demolition;
* Sharp or flying objects;
* Excavations;
* Tree work;
* Haulage vehicles;
* Carbon monoxide poisoning;
* Ash, soot and dust;
* Asbestos;
* Hazardous liquids;
* Other hazardous substances;
* Heat illness; and
* Confined spaces.

## Employer Next Steps

Employers should review the guidance Cal/OSHA has published to understand the health and safety standards and protocols that need to be complied with to protect employees during fire cleanup and reconstruction.