

PALISADES FIRE

POST-FIRE ASSESSMENT OF ONSITE WASTE TREATMENT SYSTEMS

Many homes in Malibu are serviced by septic systems, otherwise known as onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS). Heat from the fires or post-fire cleanup phase may have damaged or weakened the OWTS components, such as fiberglass and plastic components of septic tanks, lids, and risers. This could potentially result in its collapse or caving when additional weight is placed on top of it.

Residents are highly recommended to have their OWTS inspected for damage by a City-Registered OWTS Inspector, and submit an OWTS Fire Damage Assessment Form to the City of Malibu Environmental Health department.

The City of Malibu is advising residents serviced by OWTS to take the following precautions when it is safe to return home:

- Avoid walking, driving over, or using heavy equipment on or near the OWTS
 - Driving over a non-traffic rated septic tank may result in collapse of the tank
 - Driving over the leach field may result in the collapse of the leach lines, and scraping away debris with heavy equipment may remove cover material over the leach lines resulting in failure of the system.
 - Driving over the seepage pit may result in collapse of the pit and failure of the system
- If you do not know where your OWTS is located, avoid your yard area until it is located and inspected by a City-Registered OWTS Inspector

SIGNS OF DAMAGE TO OWTS

- Melted lids (riser and/or tank). Take measures to protect from collapse if necessary
- Melted plastic piping above or below ground
- Below ground components of system, such as disinfection unit, pumps, and electrical, may be melted
- Evidence of vehicle traffic, such as from firetrucks, in the area of the OWTS
- Raised components of the system are in direct line of fire, i.e. vegetation is scorched
- Damage in the area where pipes enter the structure
- Interruption of power to OWTS components



If your OWTS has been damaged, backing up, or malfunctioning, discontinue use and contact a City-Registered OWTS Inspector and the City of Malibu Environmental Health office for repairs. A list of City-Registered OWTS Inspectors can be found at MalibuCity.org/Practitioners. For more information, contact the City of Malibu Environmental Health department by calling **310-456-2489, ext. 390**, or email mbuilding@malibucity.org.