



County of Riverside  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

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Riverside County  
**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Cleanup of soil contaminated in fires is planned tomorrow in Mecca**

A state Department of Toxic Substances Control contractor is scheduled to commence a cleanup tomorrow (6/23) of soil contaminated as a result of multiple brush fires during the past year near Avenue 64 and Dale Kiler Road in Mecca.

The most recent fire on May 14 consumed native vegetation and exposed and burned wooden stakes used to support grape vines on the property. Laboratory analysis of samples taken at the site after the fire showed levels of arsenic, copper and chromium in the soil that exceeded federal and state health-protection standards for these substances.

In an effort to protect public health, the California State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has hired a contractor to clean up contaminated areas on the 40-acre parcel where the grape stakes burned during several fires. The cleanup will include the use of high-powered industrial vacuum equipment that will remove the contaminated soil starting in the early morning hours. The cleanup is expected to last up to 10 days. Soil removed will be secured in special bins on site and additional sampling and laboratory analysis may be conducted during the cleanup.

Representatives from DTSC, the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health will observe the cleanup.

Subsequently, dry brush will be removed from the remainder of the unburned portion of the 40-acre parcel, as well as the adjacent 20-acre parcel. In addition, any unburned grape stakes present will be disposed of properly.