



County of Riverside
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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Riverside County
NEWS RELEASE

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Cleanup of soil contaminated by fire in Mecca completed

A cleanup of contaminated soil and ash that was created when fire consumed chemical-laced grape stakes has been completed on property near Avenue 64 and Dale Kiler Road in Mecca. The contractor hired by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control removed material in the area that most recently burned, where the need for immediate action was identified.

A 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 the substances.

The daily cleanup began June 24 and was done in the early morning hours to avoid the heat of the day. Collected waste is now secured in bins and will be tested further to validate proper disposal methods. Additional testing and possible remediation may be needed depending upon future use of the property.

Clean up of the property was observed by members of Riverside County Environmental Health Hazardous Materials and South Coast Air Quality Management District as well as Department of Toxic Substances Control officials.