

ROMO – Researcher Permit Holders Suggested Precautions for Working in Burned Areas

Objective: *To provide suggested safety precautions research permit holders may want to put in place for their teams when planning and working in burned areas. This list is not exhaustive and includes suggested actions that can be taken. This suggested list is not fully comprehensive of all hazards one may encounter while working in these areas. The suggested actions listed below are not to replace a research team's existing job hazard analysis or safety standard operating procedure.*

Working in burned areas is inherently dangerous and individuals and teams should be prepared for a variety of hazards that may exist within post fire burned areas.

- Complete a team/solo risk assessment prior to entry of burned areas for hazards such as potential tree falls, rock falls, erosion, etc. Consider additional risk assessments at project sites or for large scale work as the environment and potential hazards change. Re-assess often. Hold open conversations about go/no-go triggers and stop work triggers.
- Working in a team of two or more is highly recommended.
- Evaluate daily/weekly weather forecasts based on your itinerary/elevation. Note any incoming high wind and/or precipitation events and ensure your team is aware of high-risk areas within drainages. Take note of National Weather Service- Boulder Flash Flood warnings for burn areas. Your team can sign up for emergency alerts (links below).
 - Larimer County: <https://leta911.org/>
 - Grand County: <https://www.co.grand.co.us/193/Sign-Up-for-CodeRED-Emergency-Notificati>
 - To receive customized alerts on your phone from the National WeatherService: <https://inws.ncep.noaa.gov/>
- Due to potential tree and rock falls from dead, damaged trees, erosion, and freeze thaw of ground surface, take note of winds in excess of 10 mph. May need to evaluate if work locations/tasks need to be re-evaluated for continuation. Facilitate a group discussion to ensure input from all people on site and determine mitigations needed to stay on site/task.
- Determine and communicate a “safe zone” for all projects in case of sudden changes in conditions (e.g. wind increases, precipitation) that would prompt a work stoppage. Determine when the team would need to stop working and provide ample time to stop work and return to the trailhead or point of access. Consider high points for some locations if flash flood conditions present at the work site.
- Create and share a detailed travel plan for your field work that includes daily destinations and overnight camp locations, when applicable. Share this information with someone who will not be in the field during your field work. Consider establishing a check in/out system with your teams and leadership.
- Consider ensuring field teams have communication while in the field. Carry an alternate communication device, such as a satellite texting device, cell phone, etc. for as an additional safety precaution.
- Helmets are suggested for travel in fire affected areas. Periods of heavy ground saturation, high winds, spring run off season, during strong precipitation events, etc. all play heavily into tree root disturbance. Helmets rated/approved for the work task are also suggested at work sites when your attention is focused on work tasks and away from the surrounding area conditions.