

Santa Fe Trail Ranch POA | Wildfire Mitigation Best Practices

Disposal of Fireplace & Stove Ash

Santa Fe Trail Ranch • Trinidad, Colorado • NFPA Firewise USA® Certified Community Since 2006

Fireplace and wood stove ash can retain live embers for up to 72 hours after a fire appears to be fully extinguished. Improper disposal — tossing ash into a trash can, spreading it in a dry yard, or dumping it near vegetation — is a leading cause of human-caused wildfires in Colorado. Following safe ash disposal practices is one of the simplest and most effective things you can do to prevent a devastating fire on your property.

⚠ During Red Flag Warnings — Stop. Wait. Do Not Remove Ash.

Suspend all ash removal during active Red Flag Warning conditions. Keep the firebox closed and sealed until fire danger conditions improve. Check current warnings at **weather.gov** or **colorado.gov/dfpc**.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SAFE ASH REMOVAL & HANDLING

- **Wait a minimum of 72 hours (3 full days)** before removing ash from a fireplace or wood stove — never assume ash is cool just because the fire appears out.
- **Always use a metal shovel or scoop** — never use plastic scoops, brushes, or paper/cardboard containers near ash.
- **Transfer ash into a metal container with a tight-fitting metal lid**; never use plastic bags, cardboard boxes, or paper sacks.

- **Add water to the metal container and stir ash thoroughly** to fully extinguish any remaining embers before sealing the lid.
- **Allow water-soaked ash to sit in the sealed metal container for an additional 24 hours** before final disposal.
- **Store the metal ash container on a non-combustible surface** (concrete, gravel, or bare soil) at least **10 feet away** from the home, deck, or any combustible structure while cooling.
- **Never dispose of ash directly into a trash or recycling bin** unless it has been fully cooled, wetted, and confirmed cold to the touch.

DISPOSAL OPTIONS

Option	Details & Conditions
 Bagged Cold Ash (Trash)	Once fully wetted, cooled, and confirmed cold (24–72 hrs) it is now ready for disposal on your property or double-bag ash in heavy-duty plastic bags take to the Trinidad dump.
 Garden Soil Amendment	Cool <i>wood ash only</i> (not coal or treated wood) can be applied sparingly as a pH amendment. Never apply during Red Flag Warnings, dry/windy conditions, or near structures.
 Las Animas County Solid Waste	Contact Las Animas County for guidance on ash disposal at the county landfill when ash quantities are large or for questions about accepted materials.
 Dedicated Metal Ash Bin	Dedicate a clearly labeled metal ash bin for ongoing seasonal use. Rinse and dry thoroughly between uses to prevent corrosion and residual heat retention.

References & Resources

- **NFPA Firewise USA®** — [firewise.org](https://www.firewise.org)
- **USDA Forest Service / National Interagency Fire Center** — [nifc.gov](https://www.nifc.gov)
- **Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS)** — [csfs.colostate.edu](https://www.csfs.colostate.edu)
- **Colorado Division of Fire Prevention & Control (DFPC)** — colorado.gov/dfpc
- **Las Animas County Emergency Management** — [lasanimascounty.net](https://www.lasanimascounty.net)

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