

Wildland Fire Retardant Clean-Up Hints

When it lands on people:

- Wildland Fire Retardant contains ammonia and will sting if it gets into cuts or scratches or comes into contact with chapped or sunburned skin.
- Wash thoroughly with a gentle soap and water to remove all residues as many of the fire chemicals are drying to the skin.
- After washing use a good quality hand cream to minimize drying and chapping.

When it lands on structures:

- Wash retardant off as soon as possible. Retardant solutions are also thickened so that the liquid will accumulate on the fuel rather than falling past the fuel onto the soil.
- Retardant solutions will generally be easy to remove from smooth surfaces. Use of a garden hose to wet the surface followed by scrubbing would be expected to clean the surface. If the retardant solution has dried and is present for several days in the hot sunshine some discoloration could result.
- Some products may discolor metal. This can arise either by corroding or cleansing the surface of metal oxides that form over a period of time subjected to weather. Corrosion generally occurs over a prolonged period. Removal of oxide films can be rather quick. Unless removed from painted surfaces before the retardant dries, it is possible that some fading may occur.
- The red color of retardants is due to the use of red iron oxide (rust) to make the retardant drop more visible to the pilots. These highly colored, fine particles can be very stubborn to remove from rough or porous surfaces such as stone and rock. Use clean-up procedures that do not have a tendency to drive the color pigment deeper into the rough, uneven surfaces. The use of high-pressure power washers is not advised.
- Dampen a stained surface with water and scrub with a soft-bristled brush. Dampen the brush and using some borax cleanser may prove to be effective. Cleaners containing enzymes have also been successful in more rapidly reducing the stickiness of the thickener in the retardant.
- Restrict water use to prevent forming standing puddles, which may be attractive to pets and animals or dilute puddles that form with copious amounts of water.
- Avoid leaving standing puddles of water by using absorbent materials such as sand, soil, or other materials.

When it lands on vegetation:

- Rinse retardant off of vegetation as soon as possible to avoid leaf “burning”.
- Retardant solutions contain vegetative fertilizers (sources of both nitrogen and phosphorus) that are considerably higher than what is generally sold at garden stores. This causes vegetation and plants to brown and appear dead after more than a few

hours of contact without removal. However, they will generally recover and grow back - usually within one to two months.

- As with any garden produce, wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly before eating.