



Today's discussion is from the
Miscellaneous Category.

ASH PIT HAZARDS

Ash pits are an inherent and hidden risk to wildland firefighters that can cause severe burns and injuries. Ash pits are created when a ground fire consumes underground fuels creating an empty space that is imperceptible from the surface.

- Environmental factors that increase the risk of ash pit formation after a wildfire:
 - Extensive root systems of trees and shrubs.
 - Deep duff or peat, the organic layer covering mineral soil.
 - Landscapes that have once been cultivated or manipulated by heavy equipment, old dozer piles, sawmills, timber sale yards or decking areas.
 - Small rodent holes that have become filled with decadent combustible debris, beaver holes near dams and stream beds, badger and coyote dens.
 - White ash is sometimes an indicator of ash pits as are swarms of hovering insects.
 - With the sun behind the suspected ash pit, look for small nearly translucent smokes that dissipate quickly above the ground.
 - Ash pits often give off the smell of incomplete combustion or of creosote burning.

- Mitigation measures to consider:
 - Identification of high risk landscape.
 - Identify and flag all hazardous discovered ash pits.

Resources: [Safety Advisory: Ash Pit Safety](#), Risk Management Committee 2010

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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