

# Palisades Fire Recovery Guide



## The Office of Congressman Brad Sherman California's 32<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District

*Need Help? This guide might be able to help. Still have questions? Contact Us.*

Washington D.C. Office – 202-225-5911

Sherman Oaks Office – 818-501-9200

*Contact us through our website here:*

[BradSherman.house.gov/services/la-wildfire-resources-contact-form](http://BradSherman.house.gov/services/la-wildfire-resources-contact-form)

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# Quick Reference to Disaster Information and Resources

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## Disaster Recovery Center

Los Angeles County and City, in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), have opened a Disaster Recovery Center for Angelenos impacted by the fires to speak in-person with representatives from a variety of government agencies and other services.

### Address:

UCLA Research Park (formerly the Westside Pavilion)  
10850 West Pico Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90064

### Hours:

9:00 AM – 8:00 PM, 7 days a week

### The Disaster Recovery Center supports individuals with the following:

- Applying for disaster relief, such as FEMA grants and Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest loans for people with homes and businesses impacted by the fire.
- Replacing lost vital records (birth certificates, driver's licenses, social security documentation, passports, etc.).
- Referring individuals for mental health counseling and other services.

For a full list of agencies and resources available, visit [tinyurl.com/recovery-center-resources](https://tinyurl.com/recovery-center-resources)

## Evacuation Information

CalFire website – Palisades Fire (includes updates and evacuation information)

[fire.ca.gov/incidents/2025/1/7/palisades-fire](https://fire.ca.gov/incidents/2025/1/7/palisades-fire)

LA County website – Palisades Fire (includes updates and evacuation information)

[lacounty.gov/emergency/](http://lacounty.gov/emergency/)

Sign up for emergency alerts

[tinyurl.com/fire-alert-signup](http://tinyurl.com/fire-alert-signup)

## Social Media Pages

**LA City Emergency Management Department:** @ReadyLA – X(Twitter) and Instagram

**LA County Office of Emergency Management:** @ReadyLACounty – X(Twitter) and Instagram

**LA Department of Transportation:** @LADOTofficial – X(Twitter)

**LA County Fire Department:** @LACoFDPIO – X(Twitter)

**CalFire:** @CAL\_FIRE – X(Twitter); @calfire – Instagram

## Evacuation Shelters

### **Stoner Recreation Center**

1835 Stoner Ave

Los Angeles, CA 90025

### **Westwood Recreation Center**

1350 South Sepulveda Boulevard

Los Angeles, CA 90025

### **Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Recreation Center**

14201 Huston Street

Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

## Animal Evacuation Shelters

Missing your pet? Call the hotline.

**Missing Pets Hotline:** (213) 270-8155

### **Small Animal Shelters:**

- El Camino High School, 5440 Valley Circle Blvd, Woodland Hills
- American Red Cross Sheltering Site with mobile animal shelter (small animals only)
- Agoura Animal Care Center, 29525 Agoura Rd, Agoura Hills
- Baldwin Park Animal Care Center, 4275 Elton St, Baldwin Park
- Carson Animal Care Center, 216 W Victoria St, Gardena
- Castaic Animal Care Center, 31044 Charlie Canyon, Castaic
- Downey Animal Care Center, 11258 Garfield Ave, Downey
- Lancaster Animal Care Center, 5210 W Ave I, Lancaster
- Palmdale Animal Care Center, 38550 Sierra Hwy, Palmdale

### **Large Animal Shelters:**

- Pomona Fairplex, 1101 W McKinley Ave, Pomona
- Industry Hills Expo, 16200 Temple Ave, City of Industry
- LA Equestrian, 480 Riverside Dr, Burbank (**At Capacity as of 1.12.25**) Please go to Hansen Dam Horse Park, 11127 Orcas Ave, Hansen Dam
- Castaic Animal Care Center, 31044 Charlie Canyon, Castaic
- Pico Rivera Sports Arena, 11003 Sports Arena Dr, Pico Rivera

## **Road closure information**

Check below resources for road closure information.

**LA County Road Closures:** [pw.lacounty.gov/roadclosures/](http://pw.lacounty.gov/roadclosures/)

**California Department of Transportation Travel Alert Map:** [quickmap.dot.ca.gov/](http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/)

## **What to do if you evacuated without your medications**

For information about what to do if you evacuate without your medications, **read this LA Times article here:** [tinyurl.com/LATimes-Meds](https://tinyurl.com/LATimes-Meds)

# Best Practices for Preparing, Evacuating, and Rebuilding

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*The below resources from California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Congressional Wildfires Caucus are a set of best practices for preparing for a wildfire:*

## Pre-Evacuation Steps – Protect Your Family And Your Home

### Create An Evacuation Plan

- Learn your local community's evacuation plan including escape routes and meeting points.
- Ask friends or family members outside of your area if you can stay with them.
- If you have a disability, make a plan with family members and care providers.
- Check with your county emergency management office to find out what shelters are open in case you need to evacuate your home. Follow guidance from local public health and emergency management officials on when and where to shelter.
- If you have pets, find out which shelters allow animals and up to what size. If you plan to take your pet with you, bring their medications.
- Find out which sites are sheltering larger barnyard animals if applicable.
- Pack a "go bag" (*see list below*).
- Place all important documentation in a fireproof safe, or bring it with you when you evacuate.
- Withdraw cash in case the power goes out.
- Monitor wildfire updates.

### Get Your Home Ready – Protect Your Home

Here is some helpful guidance to prepare. If you don't have time to complete all of these steps – skip some – and leave promptly when ordered to do so.

- Close all windows and doors especially your garage door. Remove all flammable window shades and curtains. Close metal shutters.
- Move flammable furniture to the middle of the room, away from doors and windows.
- Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off pilot lights and air conditioning systems.

- Gather flammable items from outside of the house (patio furniture) and bring them inside.
- Create a five-foot perimeter around your home and remove flammable objects, such as by clearing fallen branches and cutting trees growing near the home's roof line.
- Turn off all propane tanks and move appliances away from structures.
- Do not leave sprinklers or water running. Doing so can lower the water pressure for fire hydrants nearby and hinder firefighters' ability to fight the fires.
- Leave your lights on for firefighters to see your house through the smoke.
- Prepare tools for your local firefighters. Attach garden hoses to outside taps for firefighter use. Fill buckets of water and scatter them around your property. Leave out any personal ladders you own for easy roof access.

### **What to Bring – Preparing Your “Go Bag”**

It is suggested to pack a 3-day supply of items that are ready to go in case of an evacuation (a “go bag”). Have these items ready to go either in your car or by the door:

- A map of at least 2 evacuation routes
- Medications
- Personal hygiene items
- First aid kit & sanitation supplies
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Baby supplies, if applicable
- Pet supplies and medications, if applicable
- Cell phones with chargers and portable power bank if available
- N95 or KN95 masks (cloth and surgical masks do not protect from wildfire smoke)
- Important personal documents (social security card, car registration, passport, birth certificate)
- Several changes of clothing

Wear the right clothing. Dress to protect yourself in a wildfire. Wear clothes that cover your skin (100% cotton is best), like long pants and tops, and tough shoes. This helps guard you against heat and sparks.

Only pack valuables, family photos, computer data & hard drives, and irreplaceable items that are easy to carry, and if time allows.

### **Protect Yourself From Fire Smoke**

Wildfire smoke is a mixture of air pollutants that can irritate the lungs, cause inflammation, and alter immune function. It can also increase susceptibility to respiratory infections.

People who are particularly vulnerable to wildfire smoke exposures are:

- Children under the age of 18
- Adults over the age of 65
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic health conditions such as heart or lung disease, including asthma and diabetes
- People recovering from a respiratory illness

The U.S. Forest Service and EPA have a joint **AirNow Fire and Smoke Map** ([fire.airnow.gov/](https://fire.airnow.gov/)) to map wildfire smoke and resulting air quality impacts in your area. This Fire and Smoke Map also includes past smoke history, and actions you should take to reduce risk in the case of poor air quality. You can also use the **Air Quality Index (AQI)** ([airnow.gov/aqi/](https://airnow.gov/aqi/)) to check the air quality in your area.

If wildfire smoke is affecting the air quality, wearing an N95 or KN95 mask can help protect you.

## Long-Term Recommendations for After the Fire

- **Harden your home from direct flames, radiant heat, and flying embers.** CalFire provides tips, tricks, and resources for hardening your home here: <https://readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/hardening-your-home/>
- **Create defensible space** – otherwise referred to as a buffer zone – to bolster your home’s wildfire safety. For more info on how to create defensible space, click here: <https://readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/defensible-space/>
- **Ensure that the landscaping around your home is fire-smart.** Fire-smart landscaping is cost-effective too, as it conserves water and can increase your property value. For more info on fire-smart landscaping, click here: <https://readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/fire-smart-landscaping/>



# When can I get back home?

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Many people are asking, “When will I be allowed back in my home?” This may depend upon whether you live in the disaster’s incident perimeter.

Especially, for those within the incident perimeter, work has to be done to make areas safe. Utility companies are dealing with gas and electric power lines. The EPA is coming in with people to deal with toxic chemicals and residues.

From time to time, fire authorities are allowing residents to return and are indicating that particular areas are open to residents only. Some areas are open to visitors as well. You will want to know what category your home fits into and this will change as more locations open up in the days to come.

## **Here’s how you find out what category your home fits in:**

- Go to the website [protect.genasys.com](http://protect.genasys.com)
- Search your address.
- Look to the left side of the screen under the word “Reason” to see which category is applicable to your home.
- You then can see what category that zone is in. Those three categories are:
  1. Continuing mandatory evacuation
  2. Evacuation order remains in effect, but now open to residents only
  3. “Evacuation warning,” which means residents and guests are allowed; use caution.

## **How to Check Fire Damage to Your Home**

If you're anxious to find out what happened to your house, inspectors have looked at the vast majority of structures in many areas and documented the fire damage to each.

Go to [recovery.lacounty.gov/palisades-fire/](http://recovery.lacounty.gov/palisades-fire/) . Insert your address to see the current report on the degree of fire damage, and you may also see a picture of your property. If you have a safe deposit box in the community, the bank vaults are supposed to be very fire resistant. You may want to see what happened to your bank by inserting the address of the bank branch into the website above. They have not completed all the inspections, so some addresses will not give you useful information at this time.

# Applying for FEMA Disaster Assistance

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If you would like in-person assistance with applying for aid through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), visit the Disaster Recovery Center.

**Address:**

UCLA Research Park (formerly the Westside Pavilion)  
10850 West Pico Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90064

**Hours:**

9:00 AM – 8:00 PM, 7 days a week

**FEMA Grant Assistance to a Household:**

FEMA Disaster Assistance is available to help pay for basic needs not covered under your insurance policy.

- **FEMA Individual Assistance – Special Needs Assistance Grants:** \$770 one-time payment to afford immediate needs like food, water, hygiene, and transportation.
- **FEMA Individual Assistance – Clean and Sanitize Assistance:** \$300 one-time payment to help with uninsured costs related to cleaning up your damaged home.
- **FEMA Individual Assistance – For Housing:** The maximum amount a homeowner can receive through the FEMA Individual Assistance grant program for home repair and replacement, and for temporary housing, is up to \$43,600.
- **FEMA Individual Assistance – For Other Needs:** Another \$43,600 is available in the form of a grant from FEMA to cover medical expenses, damage to a vehicle, household items/property, funeral expenses, moving/storage, and childcare expenses, etc.

To Apply for FEMA Assistance, visit [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov) or call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 or apply in person at the Disaster Recovery Center (address above).

**The deadline to apply for FEMA Assistance is March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025.**

### **Here's some additional information regarding FEMA Assistance:**

- In addition to the \$43,600 of housing assistance, you may qualify for additional temporary rental assistance from FEMA. The amount of assistance is based on prevailing rental value in your community, and the number of people in your household.
- If you qualify for the full \$43,600 in FEMA housing aid, you will probably qualify for an additional \$10,000 in aid from the California State Supplemental Grant Program. This aid can be used on rental expenses, housing repairs or rebuild, replacement of personal property, medical expenses, etc. Importantly, there is no separate application to obtain this state assistance. Individuals who receive the maximum in FEMA housing assistance will automatically receive state assistance. **For more information on the California State Supplemental Grant Program, visit <https://tinyurl.com/CA-State-Grant>**
- The “Other Needs” (car, medical, etc.) FEMA grant of up to \$43,600 is in addition to the initial FEMA housing assistance, which also has a separate maximum of \$43,600.

### **I applied for FEMA Aid and received an automatic “not approved” reply. What now?**

- If you submit the application for assistance with FEMA and you have insurance, you may have initially received a message that your assistance was “not approved.” If you have insurance that does not fully cover all of your costs (under-insured), you are still eligible for FEMA assistance. You will need to provide additional information to show that your insurance will not cover all of your costs. Congressman Sherman has worked with FEMA to provide an updated clarified letter, and to reduce the paperwork and delay for those who are under-insured.

The \$43,600 in housing assistance is the maximum set by current law for disaster victims. Congressman Brad Sherman will be advocating for new special laws to provide additional assistance to Los Angeles area fire victims. Congressman Sherman realizes that the cost to rebuild some homes can exceed \$1 million, and that many fire victims do not have adequate insurance.

**Before you apply for FEMA aid, please have the following information available:**

- A phone number and a reliable alternate in case FEMA needs to call you back
- Address of the damaged property
- Social Security number
- Bank account information (or direct deposit information)
- Insurance information (if you have insurance)
- Brief description of damages
- Current mailing address
- Pen and paper to write down your registration number.

# Applying for SBA low-interest loans

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If you would like in-person assistance with applying for low-interest loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA), you can visit the Disaster Recovery Center (address below) where representatives from the SBA can assist you. Alternatively, you can visit one of the dedicated Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Outreach Centers (addresses below).

## **Disaster Recovery Center Address:**

UCLA Research Park (formerly the Westside Pavilion)  
10850 West Pico Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90064

## **Hours:**

9:00 AM – 8:00 PM, 7 days a week

## **Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Outreach Centers:**

Walk-ins are accepted, but you can schedule an in-person appointment in advance at [appointment.sba.gov](https://appointment.sba.gov).

### **Pasadena**

Disaster Loan Outreach Center  
Pasadena City College Community  
Education Center (PCC CEC)  
Multi-Purpose Room  
3035 E. Foothill Blvd.  
Pasadena, CA 91107

## **Hours:**

Mondays - Fridays, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
Saturdays, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

### **Camarillo**

Disaster Loan Outreach Center  
Ventura County Community  
Foundation (VCCF)  
Economic Development Collaborative  
4001 Mission Oaks Blvd., Ste. A1  
Camarillo, CA 93012

## **Hours:**

Mondays - Fridays, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

## **Small Business Administration Loans for Homeowners and Renters:**

SBA loans can cover up to \$100,000 of personal property loss (i.e. furniture, clothing, automobiles) and up to \$500,000 of a homeowner's real property loss (i.e. home repair). Second homes and vacation homes are not eligible. Loans are for up to 30 years; first payment and

interest accrual deferred for the first 12 months. The interest rate is 4% or less unless credit can be obtained elsewhere. If credit could be obtained elsewhere, then interest rate is 8% or less.

**Small Business Administration Loans for a Business:**

**SBA Physical Damage Loans:** Loans up to \$2 million for businesses and nonprofits for uninsured physical damage and losses. Loans are for up to 30 years; first payment and interest accrual deferred for the first 12 months. The interest rate is 4% or less unless credit can be obtained elsewhere. If credit could be obtained elsewhere, then interest rate is 8% or less.

**SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans:** Loans up to \$2 million for businesses and nonprofits with economic injury (such as lost sales) as the result of the disaster. Only available when Small Business Administration determines a recipient is unable to obtain credit elsewhere. Loans are for up to 30 years; first payment and interest accrual deferred for the first 12 months. The interest rate is 4% or less.

**The combined loan amount across both SBA programs may not exceed \$2 million.**

**To Apply for SBA Assistance visit [sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance/california-wildfires](https://sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance/california-wildfires) or call the SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or send an email to [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov) for more information.**

**The filing deadline to submit applications for physical property damage is March 10, 2025.**

**The deadline to return economic injury applications is Oct. 8, 2025.**

# Unemployment Assistance & Replacing Lost Documents

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If you would like in-person assistance with applying for unemployment assistance or help with replacing lost documents visit the Disaster Recovery Center.

**Address:**

UCLA Research Park (formerly the Westside Pavilion)  
10850 West Pico Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90064

**Hours:**

9:00 AM – 8:00 PM, 7 days a week

## Unemployment assistance

People who are out of work due to the fires may be eligible for unemployment benefits. You can file for unemployment benefits online at <https://edd.ca.gov/>. You can also file by phone, Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm by calling:

- English: 1-800-300-5616
- Spanish: 1-800-326-8937
- Chinese (Cantonese): 1-800-547-3506
- Chinese (Mandarin): 1-866-303-0706
- Vietnamese: 1-800-547-2058

## Replacing Lost Documents

If you've lost important documents or identification in the fires, many can be replaced. You can learn more about how to replace these common documents by contacting the agencies directly:

- **California Driver's License:**
  - Phone: 800-777-0133
  - Visit a California DMV office to complete an application. Replacement license forms must be delivered in person.

- **Green cards:**
  - Phone: 800-375-5283
  - Website: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
- **Medicare cards:**
  - Phone: 800-772-1213; (TTY) 800-325-0778
  - Website: [www.ssa.gov/medicare](http://www.ssa.gov/medicare)
- **Military records:**
  - Phone: 866-272-6272
  - Website: [www.archives.gov/contact](http://www.archives.gov/contact)
- **Passport:**
  - Phone: 1-877-487-2778; 888-874-7793 (TTY)
  - Website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)
    - Fire victims are eligible for a fee-waiver to replace your lost passport for free. Contact Brad Sherman's office for more information (below).
- **Social Security Card:**
  - Phone: 800-772-1213; (TTY) 800-325-0778
  - Website: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)
- **U.S. Savings Bonds:**
  - Phone: 1-844-284-2676
  - Website: [www.treasurydirect.gov](http://www.treasurydirect.gov)
- **Internal Revenue Service (IRS) federal tax returns:**
  - Phone: 800-829-1040
  - Website: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

**Need help with a federal agency to replace a lost document? Brad Sherman's office may be able to help. Visit [BradSherman.house.gov/help](http://BradSherman.house.gov/help) to contact Congressman Sherman's constituent service team or call our office at 202-225-5911.**



# Tax Relief & Information

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In response to the unprecedented and devastating fires impacting our community, federal, state, and local tax agencies have announced tax relief including postponing various tax filing and payment deadlines for Los Angeles County.

The Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Disaster Assistance Page provides updates and resources.

Visit [tinyurl.com/IRS-Fire-Aid](https://www.irs.gov/disaster)

Call the IRS Toll-Free Disaster Assistance Hotline at **866-562-5227**

## **IRS Announces Federal Tax Relief – Deadline Extension**

Individuals and businesses whose permanent address of record is anywhere in Los Angeles County, regardless of whether the individual or business was directly impacted by recent wildfires, will qualify for IRS deadline extension relief and automatically receive extra time from the IRS to file returns and pay taxes. Taxpayers will not be penalized nor will interest accrue on tax payments during this time. Taxpayers do not need to call or write to receive disaster tax relief from the IRS.

**Taxpayers will now have until October 15, 2025 to file their tax returns.** January 15th, April 15th, June 16th, and September 15th quarterly income tax payment deadlines have also been extended to October 15, 2024.

For businesses – annual tax returns and payments have also been extended until October 15, 2025. Furthermore, quarterly payroll and excise tax returns normally due on January 31st, April 30th, and July 31st have been extended to October 15, 2025 as well. Businesses will not be penalized nor will interest accrue on tax payments during this time. For more information visit [tinyurl.com/IRS-Deadline-Extension](https://www.irs.gov/disaster)

## **California Franchise Tax Board Announces State Tax Deadline Extension**

The California Franchise Tax Board has **extended the deadline to file California tax returns and to pay any tax payments for individuals and businesses anywhere in Los Angeles County to October 15, 2025.** Taxpayers do not need to call or write to receive disaster tax relief from the California Franchise Tax Board. For additional information visit [tinyurl.com/CA-tax-relief](https://www.cftb.ca.gov/tax-relief)

## **Los Angeles County Property Assessor Announces Property Tax Relief**

The Los Angeles County Assessor's Office has announced property tax relief for those in Los Angeles County whose property has been damaged or destroyed due to the ongoing wildfires.

If your property has been damaged or destroyed or its value is in any other way less than it was on January 1, **you may file an application for a Decline-in-Value-Review. The filing period is from July 2 through November 30.**

If your property has been damaged or destroyed by the fire, and the loss exceeds \$10,000 in value, you may qualify for reassessment.

For more information, including how to apply visit [tinyurl.com/LA-tax-relief](https://tinyurl.com/LA-tax-relief)

If you have questions or need in-person assistance, we encourage you to visit or contact your assigned district or regional Los Angeles County Assessor office. Please visit [assessor.lacounty.gov/contact/officelocations](https://assessor.lacounty.gov/contact/officelocations) to view all office locations and contact information.

## **Disaster Relief Grants Are Tax-Exempt**

Disaster relief benefits from FEMA, from other federal programs or from the state of California are **tax exempt** for both federal and state purposes.

## **Casualty Disaster Losses and Insurance Reimbursements**

- **Individuals** - For more information on Casualty Disaster and Theft Loss visit [tinyurl.com/IRS-Individual-Loss](https://tinyurl.com/IRS-Individual-Loss)
- **Businesses** – For more information on Business Casualty Disaster and Theft Loss visit [tinyurl.com/IRS-Business-Loss](https://tinyurl.com/IRS-Business-Loss)
- The **IRS Toll-Free Disaster Assistance Hotline** is available to help answer your questions at **866-562-5227**.

Victims of the Palisades Fire may deduct their casualty loss as an itemized deduction. You can take the deduction on your 2024 or your 2025 tax return (the one due April 2026). Reducing your 2024 tax liability will increase your refund and then provide you cash at a difficult time. The amount of the deduction is typically the amount you lost as a result of the disaster, reduced by the insurance proceeds you expect to receive or have already received.

Importantly, you may not take a casualty loss for your home in excess of your “basis” in your home, plus what you paid for the various personal property that was damaged or destroyed.

Your “basis” in your home is the amount you paid for it, increased by what you paid for home improvements. If you have used your home as a rental or as business property you may have taken depreciation deductions in previous years, which reduce the basis in your home.

If the amount you receive from insurance exceeds your basis in your home, the excess is treated as capital gain. If the home is your primary residence and has been for at least 2 of the last 5 years, the first \$250,000 of such gain (\$500,000 for a married couple), is tax exempt.

The purpose of this guide is to just give you the basics. You will want to consult with your own tax professional.

# Working with your insurance company

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The California Department of Insurance is hosting a **virtual townhall on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 8:00 PM PT** with California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara to help disaster victims learn how to navigate insurance issues after the fires and learn tips to avoid being victimized by insurance scams.

To register, please visit [tinyurl.com/Insurance-Townhall](https://tinyurl.com/Insurance-Townhall)

The information below provides important recommendations and resources for working with your insurance company.

## **Important Resources Available to You**

The California Department of Insurance provides the following resources to assist you with your insurance company:

- Call the California Department of Insurance Hotline for help at **(800) 927-4357**.
- Top Ten Tips for Wildfire Claimants. Visit [tinyurl.com/10-insurance-tips](https://tinyurl.com/10-insurance-tips)
- The California Department of Insurance has also released a Residential Property Claims Guide. Visit [tinyurl.com/Fire-Claims-Guide](https://tinyurl.com/Fire-Claims-Guide)

## **Immediate Actions to Take**

- Keep receipts of expenses incurred by your household that arise from having to live away from your home such as temporary rent/lodging costs, meals, transportation, etc. even if your home was not damaged by the fires. Many fire insurance policies will reimburse policy holders for additional living expenses incurred by both damage to the residence and for those who evacuated pursuant to a mandatory order.
- Contact Your Insurance Provider:
  - As soon as it is safe to do so, reach out to your insurance company to obtain a complete copy of your residential homeowner's insurance policy and to begin the claims process.

- If you are unable to recall the name of your insurance company. Visit [tinyurl.com/Insurance-Names](http://tinyurl.com/Insurance-Names)
  - If you DO NOT have the contact information for your insurance company or agent, call the California Department of Insurance **800-927-4357**. To view a Residential Insurance Contact List visit [tinyurl.com/Insurance-Contact-List](http://tinyurl.com/Insurance-Contact-List)
  - **Important questions to ask your insurance agent/representative:** Include the damage covered by your insurance policy, Additional Living Expense (ALE) limits, the length of time it will take to process the claim, and whether you should begin the process of obtaining estimates for repairs to your home. Insurers should explain to you the most effective way to claim your coverage benefits.
  - Document all of your conversations with your insurer/adjuster about your claim and policy limitations. Keep a log of all correspondence you send or receive from your insurance company.
- Take pictures to document damage to your home – Only if safe to do so.

### **Working With Your Insurance Adjuster – Avoid Scams**

A claims adjuster will likely visit your home before completion of your claim to assess the damage to your property and will come prepared to do a thorough and complete evaluation of the damage.

In the aftermath of fires, scam artists try to capitalize on the tragedy faced by so many in our community. The following tips are helpful to avoid being a victim of an insurance scam:

- DO NOT sign any contracts for repairs or other needs until you have spoken directly to your insurance agent. Do not call anyone to repair or replace your loss without first getting instructions from your insurance adjuster, since your insurer's inspection of your loss may be necessary before repairs begin. Do not throw away damaged property until your adjuster advises you to do so.
- Ask for identification from anyone contacting you regarding your claim.
- Insurance company adjusters are employed by insurance companies and **do not** charge a fee.
- For more helpful tips to avoid being a victim of an insurance scam visit [tinyurl.com/Fire-Scams](http://tinyurl.com/Fire-Scams)

# U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Operations

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*This update is accurate as of January 23rd, 2025. For more recent updates, check the USPS California newsroom here: [about.usps.com/newsroom/local-releases/ca/](https://about.usps.com/newsroom/local-releases/ca/)*

## **Postal Service Operations Update**

Operations at the **Topanga Post Office**, located at 101 S Topanga Canyon Blvd Topanga, CA 90290-9998, have resumed retail services and mail delivery (delivery limited to accessible areas).

### **Operations have resumed retail services and mail delivery at the following locations:**

#### **Woodland Hills Post Office**

21200 Oxnard St  
Woodland Hills, CA 91367-9998  
Mon – Fri: 8:30 am – 6:00 pm  
Sat: 9 am – 5 pm

#### **Malibu Post Office**

23838 Pacific Coast Highway  
Malibu, CA 90265-9994  
Mon – Fri: 9 am – 5 pm  
Sat: 9:30 am – 1:30 pm

#### **Topanga Post Office**

101 S Topanga Canyon Blvd  
Topanga, CA 90290-9998  
Mon – Fri: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Sat: 10 am – 12 pm

#### **Encino Station**

5805 White Oak Ave  
Encino, CA 91316-9998  
Mon – Fri: 10 am – 5:30 pm  
Sat: 10 am – 4:30 pm

**The following post offices' retail and delivery services have been relocated** and customers are able to pick up mail & packages, submit address changes, and inquire about PO Box services:

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Pickup Location</b>
<b>Pacific Palisades Post Office</b> 15243 La Cruz Drive, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272-9997	<b>Rancho Park Post Office</b> 11270 Exposition Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90064-9998 Mon – Fri: 9 am – 5 pm Sat: 9 am – 4 pm
<b>La Costa Malibu Station,</b> 21229 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, CA 90265-9992	<b>Malibu Post Office</b> 23838 Pacific Coast Highway Malibu, CA 90265-9994 Mon – Fri: 9 am – 5 pm Sat: 9:30 am – 1:30 pm

**If your home is impacted by the fires, the USPS can forward your mail to a temporary location.** Customers may submit an Official Mail Forwarding Change of Address Order (COA) to reroute their mail (including packages and letters) online at <https://moversguide.usps.com/> or by filling out a PS Form 3575 (COA) available at any post office.

For more information about postal products and services, customers may call 1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777) or visit the Postal Service online at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).

# Food Assistance

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Following recent disaster declarations for individual assistance issued by FEMA, several programs through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and California Department of Social Services are now available to provide food assistance for those impacted by the Palisades Fire.

## **Food and Nutrition Service**

The Food and Nutrition Service (part of the USDA) provides food assistance to those in need in areas affected by a disaster. This federal assistance is in addition to that provided by state and local governments. For further information, please visit the FNS website:

[fns.usda.gov/disaster/disaster-assistance](https://fns.usda.gov/disaster/disaster-assistance)

## **CalFresh Benefits Replacements**

Those who receive CalFresh, otherwise known as California's SNAP benefits, can request benefit replacements for lost food if they were impacted by the wildfires. If you are in need of replacement benefits, you may call CalFresh at **877-847-3663**.

For more information please visit [tinyurl.com/CalFresh-Fires](https://tinyurl.com/CalFresh-Fires)

## **Hot Foods Waiver**

SNAP beneficiaries are approved to use their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to purchase hot foods at authorized retailers. For more information, please visit the CalFresh Disaster Response webpage: [cdss.ca.gov/InfoResources/calfresh/disaster-calfresh](https://cdss.ca.gov/InfoResources/calfresh/disaster-calfresh)

**To contact CalFresh with questions or to receive benefits, call 877-847-3663.**



# How to avoid being a victim of fraud

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## **Disaster Benefits Fraud**

**After a disaster, scam artists and identity thieves may attempt to take advantage of disaster survivors. Individuals should:**

- Watch for and report any suspicious activity. Federal agencies such as FEMA and the SBA will never charge individuals for disaster assistance.
- Protect your identity and stay informed. Do not offer any personal information unless you are speaking with a verified federal, state, or local official.
- Stay tuned to trusted local media sources for updates on disaster fraud and scams.
- Share information from trusted sources and discourage others from sharing information from unverified sources.

Individuals can report suspected fraud or scams to the FEMA Investigations and Inspections Division by calling **866-223-0814** or emailing **StopFEMAFraud@fema.dhs.gov**.

Individuals can also file complaints of fraud, waste, or abuse with the U.S. Department of Justice National Center for Disaster Fraud's (NCDF) Disaster Complaint Form. Visit [tinyurl.com/Disaster-Complaint-Form](https://tinyurl.com/Disaster-Complaint-Form)

Individuals who suspect they may be victims of identity theft should check in with local law enforcement and visit [IdentityTheft.gov](https://IdentityTheft.gov) to report and recover from identity theft.

## **Price Gouging**

If you think a store or service provider is committing price gouging, compare prices in areas not affected by the disaster. Consumers are protected from a price increase of 10% or more for 30 days on goods and services and for 180 days on contractor-related services. Keep detailed records of purchases you make during the declared emergency.

If you believe you were a victim of price gouging, contact the Los Angeles County Consumer and Business Affairs Department to file a complaint by calling **(800) 593-8222** or visit [dcba.lacounty.gov/](https://dcba.lacounty.gov/).

## **Insurance Scams**

For helpful tips to avoid being a victim of an insurance scam visit [tinyurl.com/Fire-Scams](https://tinyurl.com/Fire-Scams)

# Additional Resources & Services

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## Access to medical care

During a disaster, please check for information from both your Medicare plan and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) or the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Rules for getting health care or prescription drugs may change for a short time when a declared emergency or disaster happens in your area.

- If you lost your plan membership card or it's damaged and/or don't know your plan's phone number, call **800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227)** to get your plan's contact information (TTY 877-486-2048).
- Please review the following announcement from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for more information on resources: [tinyurl.com/CMS-Disaster-Resources](https://www.cms.gov/medicare/coverage/announcements/2020/20200801-disaster-resources)

## Mental Health Resources

Free mental health support and other forms of care are available for wildfire survivors and their loved ones. Anyone feeling overwhelmed or in distress because of the fires can call or text the following services for free crisis counseling.

### Crisis Lines

- **American Red Cross Disaster Distress Helpline** – Available 24/7 at **800-985-5990**
- **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** – Call or text 988  
The 24-hour, toll-free, confidential suicide prevention hotline is available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. It provides Spanish-speaking counselors, as well as options for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

### Coping Tips for Traumatic Events and Disasters

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides coping tips for traumatic events and disasters that can help you recover from the damaging effects of the Palisades Fire on your mental health.

Visit [samhsa.gov/mental-health/disaster-preparedness/coping-tips](https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/disaster-preparedness/coping-tips) for more information and resources.

**If you are in need of mental health services, consider visiting the Disaster Recovery Center where you can receive free referrals to mental health professionals based on your needs.**

**Disaster Recovery Center Address:**

UCLA Research Park (formerly the Westside Pavilion)  
10850 West Pico Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90064

**Hours:**

9:00 AM – 8:00 PM, 7 days a week

## **Legal Assistance**

FEMA operates the Disaster Legal Services (DLS) program, which provides confidential, free legal assistance to disaster survivors who do not have the means to secure adequate legal services. For individuals seeking DLS, there is no formal application process. Individuals can access these services by contacting the FEMA Helpline at **800-621-3362** or by **visiting the Disaster Recover Center** located at UCLA Research Park (address above).

Services typically provided through DLS include:

- Help with insurance claims for doctor and hospital bills, loss of property, loss of life, etc.
- Drafting of new wills and other legal papers lost in the disaster.
- Assistance with home repair contracts and contractors.
- Counseling and advice about landlord/tenant matters.
- Estate administration, including guardianships and conservatorships.
- Help with consumer protection matters, remedies, and procedures.
- Preparation of powers of attorney and guardianship materials.
- FEMA appeals support, such as identifying and gathering relevant documentation.