

FEMA Offers Recovery Tips for California Wildfire Survivors

While fire suppression activities are still ongoing in parts of Southern California, affected individuals and families are taking steps toward recovery.

FEMA is helping people jumpstart their recovery. You may be eligible for FEMA assistance, even if you have insurance.

More than \$5.3 million so far are in the hands of survivors to help pay for emergency supplies like food, water, and baby formula as well as to replace personal property and pay for a temporary place to stay. Below are tips to help Californians recover from the historic wildfires.

If your primary home was affected by the fires, FEMA may be able to help you cover certain costs – like paying for essential items, finding a place to stay, replacing personal property or making basic repairs to your home. However, FEMA assistance is designed to help you if you do not have insurance or if your insurance policies don't cover basic needs. **If you have insurance, you should file a claim as soon as possible and be ready to provide your coverage information when applying to FEMA.**

There are several ways to apply for FEMA assistance:

- Online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.disasterassistance.gov) and in Spanish language at [DisasterAssistance.gov/es](https://www.disasterassistance.gov/es).
- Calling the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-3362 for assistance in multiple languages.
- On the [FEMA App](#) for mobile devices.
- To view an accessible video about how to apply, visit: [FEMA Accessible: Registering for Individual Assistance](#) or [en Español](#).

Los Angeles County residents and renters should know that FEMA does not hand out gift cards, vouchers, or any other type of credit to guarantee assistance. FEMA only provides assistance through check or direct deposit.

Replace your lost documents.

FEMA understands that people may have lost important documents like passports, property titles, government issued IDs or other vital personal records during the wildfires. Visit [ca.gov](https://www.ca.gov) for a directory of the state's departments to request your driver's license, state tax records, birth certificates and other paperwork.



FEMA

To submit an application for FEMA disaster assistance, people only need:

- Names of everyone living in your home at the time of the fires.
- Social Security number (yours or your child's).
- Household income.
- Contact information.
- Information of property damage/emergency needs.

Clean up safely.

Only return to your property if local authorities say it is safe to do so. Avoid hot ash, charred trees, smoldering debris, and live embers. The ground may contain heat pockets that can burn you or spark another fire.

When cleaning, wear protective clothing – including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, work gloves and sturdy thick-soled shoes. Use a respirator to limit your exposure, and, if possible, wet debris to minimize breathing dust particles. People with asthma, COPD and/or other lung conditions should take precautions in areas with poor air quality, as it can worsen symptoms.

Ask for help if you need it.

The wildfires can take an emotional toll on residents, children and the first responder community. Anyone feeling overwhelmed or in distress because of the fires can call or text the Disaster Distress Helpline 24/7 at 1-800-985-5990 to receive free crisis counseling.

State and nonprofit partners like the American Red Cross and others are providing a safe place to stay, meals and emotional comfort to people. To find a shelter, text SHELTER and your ZIP code to 43362, visit redcross.org/shelter or call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767). You can also call this number if you need assistance locating a missing loved one because of the fires.

Contact Us

If you have any questions, please contact FEMA Office of External Affairs:

- Congressional Affairs at (202) 646-4500 or at FEMA-Congressional-Affairs@fema.dhs.gov
- Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 646-3444 or at FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov
- Tribal Affairs at (202) 646-3444 or at FEMA-Tribal@fema.dhs.gov
- Private Sector Engagement at (202) 646-3444 or at FEMA-Private-Sector@fema.dhs.gov

Follow Us

Follow FEMA on social media at: [FEMA Blog](#) on fema.gov, [@FEMA](#) or [@FEMAEspañol](#) on X, [FEMA](#) or [FEMA Español](#) on Facebook, [@FEMA](#) on Instagram, and via [FEMA YouTube channel](#).

Also, follow Administrator Deanne Criswell on X [@FEMA_Deanne](#).

FEMA Mission

Helping people before, during, and after disasters.