

After a Wildfire Frequently Asked Questions

SAFETY AND PRECAUTIONS

- Q: Is it safe to return home after a wildfire?
A: Wait for official clearance from local authorities before returning home. Be cautious of potential hazards like fallen power lines, sharp debris, and structural damage.
- Q: What should I do if I smell gas or suspect a leak?
A: Open windows, evacuate the area, and call the gas company or emergency services immediately.
- Q: How can I protect myself and my family from ash and debris after a wildfire?
A: [Obtain adequate face masks, N95 or N100, gloves, long-sleeved shirts, and pants to minimize exposure, air purifier, drink lots of water, air humidifier, and saline nasal spray to improve breathing. \(Air purifiers should have little or no ozone emission and be appropriately sized for the room.](#)
- Q: How can I manage stress and anxiety after a wildfire? _
A: Reach out to friends and family, seek professional counseling, and prioritize self-care.
- Q: How can I help prevent future wildfires?
A: Dispose of cigarettes and matches properly, maintain equipment and vehicles to prevent sparks, and support local fire prevention efforts.

PROPERTY AND BELONGINGS

- Q: What should I do if my home is damaged or destroyed?
A: Contact your insurance company, take photos of damage for documentation, and seek temporary housing if necessary.
- Q: How can I salvage belongings from my damaged home?
A: Wear protective gear, prioritize essential items, and consider hiring professionals for hazardous materials handling.
- Q: What should I do with food and water that may be contaminated?
Discard perishable food, empty and clean water contain use bottled or filtered water until tap water is declared safe.

INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Q: What is the first thing I should do when I return to my home?
A: Take pictures and/or video of the damage, document or create a list of the items lost and call your home insurance provider.

- Q: Are there any government assistance programs available?
A: Yes, programs like [FEMA](#) and the [Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#) offer aid. Visit their websites or contact local authorities for more information. (See list of resources here)

ASSISTANCE WITH BASIC NEEDS

- The SAVE card is a \$250 gift card given to eligible survivors of fire and natural disasters who are enrolled in the SAVE program. This allows purchases like food, clothing, gas, medicine, or a place to stay the night in the immediate aftermath of a house fire.
<https://www.cafirefoundation.org/what-we-do-for-communities/save>
- Airbnb, Hilton, American Express, and 211-LA have partnered to house those displaced by fires free of cost. Enroll here:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeffO_8LNOoB-LEwdNHBg6pq6Le3bicFMSmxKUb-JZhaHBJyg/viewform?cid=OH,WW,LAWRRoomApp,MU_LTIPTR,collage,Landing,Brand-Wildfire-Relief
- The Hotel Association of Los Angeles has publicized discounted rates for more than 200 hotels in LA:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1o3k8WKk06GsCmPpQYXUyVONILEt_8jSTzHTk7eIQ4os/edit?pli=1&gid=0#gid=0
More info here:
<https://www.hotelassociationla.com/news/jatfsabkg64jswciaamzm2bh0mqgbm>

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

- Mednet Webpage -over a hundred resources including emotional support services
<https://mednet.uclahealth.org/u-news/resources-for-evacuees/>
- <https://recovery.lacounty.gov/recovery-centers/>
- LA County Recovers -lists resources including recovery centers where you can replace documents
<https://recovery.lacounty.gov/>
- Department of Consumer & Business Affairs – Reporting price gouging amid fire emergencies
<https://lacounty.gov/2025/01/10/los-angeles-county-department-of-consumer-and-business-affairs-cracks-down-on-price-gouging-amid-windstorm-and-fire-emergencies/>
- Elected Official-Federal Representative – Assistance in expediting the replacement of documents and a variety of services. Find-your-representative
<https://www.house.gov/representatives/>

If have a question or need more information, feel free to contact Hallie Young or Gabriela Marquez at Heyoung@Mednet.Ucla.Edu and Gabrielamarquez@Mednet.Ucla.Edu