

Returning Home after the LA County Wildfires

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LOS ANGELES – As more Eaton Canyon and Pacific Palisades neighborhoods impacted by Los Angeles County wildfires open to residents, city and county officials caution that these areas are still dangerous, due to considerable risks remaining from waste, unstable burned buildings, and utility crews using heavy equipment.

Everyone is eager to go home, clean up the burn site and start rebuilding. You may be worried about what you will find when you get back -- but don't rush in. If you find your home has damage, be careful. Improper handling and disposal of ash and materials may impact your health, as well as your neighbors. Recovery calls for caution.

Areas Damaged by Wildfires are Reopening, but Risk Remains

Almost all areas are now open, but some limited access may persist due to downed power lines, landslides, debris, unstable roads, or other utility work. Los Angeles County officials will communicate when re-entry conditions are permissible through public media. To check on your area, visit the county's disaster website at [Eaton Fire – LA County Recovers](#) / [Palisades Fire – LA County Recovers](#).

The more a neighborhood is damaged by wildfire, the more complex and lengthier it will be to make the area safe. Below are some factors that help determine when a disaster area can be considered safe:

- **Fire debris and ash in roadways.** Crews have been working to clear roadways to ensure survivors can safely travel back to their homes or businesses. **Debris removal** has begun in **Phase 1** of two phases. For more information on the process, visit [Debris Removal – LA County Recovers](#)



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- **Household materials removal.** Exposure to certain common household materials impacted by fire may be a risk to human health, animals, and the environment. During Phase 1, the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** has been surveying, removing, and disposing of household materials that may require special handling from properties affected by the wildfires. Items being removed include materials such as paints, solvents, oils, vehicle, and household batteries, and pesticides. For more information visit: [2025 California Wildfires | US EPA](#).
- In **Phase 2**, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was tasked to support FEMA and the Consolidated Debris Removal Program. Corps of Engineers contractors will remove fire-damaged debris from private property. Residents must opt-in to the [Debris Removal Program](#) and obtain a [Right-of-Entry](#) (ROE) form for the Corps of Engineers to access charred properties.
- Property owners are not required to use these services. Residents who do not “opt-in” to the Debris Removal Program are responsible for all associated debris removal costs. In addition, for the safety of the community, property owners who choose to do their own cleanup must still follow local, state, and federal requirements.

Use Caution When Returning Home

- Bring personal protective equipment for working in and around your home: gloves, eye protection, face masks or respirators, and boots with a steel toe and insole.
- Look for damaged power lines, foundation cracks and other exterior damage. Your home may be too dangerous to enter before an inspector checks it out.
- Don’t turn on your electrical breaker if it looks damaged. Keep the main electrical power and water systems off until you or a professional can ensure they are safe.
- Check your gas meter and gas lines for damage. If you smell natural gas or propane, hear a hissing noise, or notice visible damage, leave immediately and contact the fire department.
- If your home and electrical system appear undamaged, but the power is off, turn off all your appliances before you turn the power back on at the main breaker.
- Take it one step at a time. Focus on the most important clean-up tasks first. Don’t try to move large or unstable material by yourself. Ask for help and help others.



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Rebuild with the Future in Mind

You can rebuild or repair your home in ways that reduce your risk from wildfires. Email FEMA Mitigation to request a free individualized plan: FEMA-R9-MIT@fema.dhs.gov. When choosing a contractor, please note:

- Contractors should be licensed and bonded and have disability and workers' compensation insurance. If they don't, you may be liable for accidents on your property.
- Make sure contractors obtain the necessary permits to do the job. Consult your local government and/or LA County to verify that they do.

