

## **January 2025 Los Angeles County, California Wildfires – Situational Report 2**

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### **Scope**

For reporting purposes, Los Angeles County fires beginning on or after January 7, 2025 and flooding-related activities related to heavy rains in late January and early February will be treated as a single complex extreme event, as each impacts response capacity at other sites. Fires included in this report to date are: Palisades\*, Eaton, Hurst, Lidia, Sunset, Woodley, Kenneth, Archer, Sepulveda, and Hughes.

\*Active Incidents

### **Executive Summary**

On January 7, 2025, under “elevated to critical” fire weather conditions, multiple fires ignited across Los Angeles County, California.<sup>1,2</sup> That same day, California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency, and on January 8, President Biden approved a federal Major Disaster Declaration.<sup>3,4</sup> On January 22, the Hughes fire erupted in Northern Los Angeles County, spreading to more than 9,400 acres within eight hours.<sup>1</sup> Five additional fires—Lidia, Sunset, Woodley, Olivias, and Tyler—ignited that day.<sup>1</sup> All fires in Los Angeles County have since been fully contained, and only the Palisades fire remains an open incident, reporting full containment as of February 5.<sup>1</sup> The Hughes fire was fully contained January 30; incident reports were issued through January 28.<sup>1</sup> The Palisades, Eaton, and Hurst fires combined burned an estimated total of 48,153 acres.<sup>1</sup> The federal government has committed to covering 100% of California’s fire management and debris removal costs for 180 days, surpassing the usual 75% coverage.<sup>3</sup> In addition to Individual Assistance grants, Fire Management Assistance Grants were made available to support firefighting efforts for three fires in Los Angeles County: the Palisades, Hurst, and Eaton fires.<sup>3</sup> For details on early fire progression, conditions impacting containment efforts, and response logistics see SitRep 1 (January 24, 2025).

Heavy rains were predicted in Los Angeles County for the dates January 26-27 and February 4-7, leading to official flood watches.<sup>1,5</sup> There was a predicted 10-20% risk of landslides and debris flow in burn scar areas, with the Eaton fire scar identified as particularly at risk.<sup>5</sup> In preparation for this, California Governor Newsom directed specialized crews to install more than 58 miles of emergency protective materials in burn scar areas.<sup>6</sup> The California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), the California Department of Water Resources, California Conservation Corps, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), Caltrans, and the California Department of Conservation have coordinated on comprehensive watershed and debris flow mitigation in an attempt to prevent further damage to fire-impacted areas.<sup>6</sup> As of February 2, this effort had resulted in 7,350 linear feet of straw wattle, 157,675 linear feet of compost sock, and 6,500 linear feet of silt fence for watershed protection around the Palisades fire burn scar.<sup>6</sup> For the Eaton burn area, task force members installed 8,275 feet of straw wattles, and 130,350 linear feet of compost sock.<sup>6</sup> Sandbags were provided to residents by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.<sup>1</sup> As of February 6, risk had been downgraded to “very low” (< 10%) with “very shallow mud on roads in and near burn scars.”<sup>5</sup>

As of February 5, with 100% of damage inspections having been completed, 16,249 structures are estimated to have been destroyed by fire, making this complex event the second most destructive fire event in terms of structural loss in California’s history.<sup>1,7</sup> Taken independently, the Eaton and Palisades fires rank as second and third in terms of destroyed structures, eclipsed only by the 2018 Camp fire.<sup>7</sup> As of January 17, prior to the outbreak of the Hughes fire, California’s January monthly total estimated wildfire carbon emissions for 2025 were already estimated at more than three times the highest reported rates for the period spanning 2003-2025.<sup>8</sup> At the time of this report, the Eaton, Hughes, Hurst, Lidia, Sunset, Woodley, Kenneth, and Archer fires have been contained and are no longer active incidents; the Palisades fire remains an active incident, reaching full containment on February 5.<sup>1</sup>

## **Major Health Outcomes**

The wildfires in Los Angeles County have resulted in significant public health challenges, with immediate and projected long-term health consequences. As of February 4, there have been 29 confirmed fatalities.<sup>1</sup> On January 16, LA County had experienced a 16-fold increase in fire-related hospital visits, including treatment for burns and smoke inhalation.<sup>9</sup> Populations at heightened risk of adverse health effects include children, pregnant individuals, and those with pre-existing respiratory and cardiovascular conditions.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, flu cases in San Diego County rose by 14% between January 18-25, attributed to lingering wildfire smoke.<sup>11</sup>

The ongoing wildfires have significantly impacted public health infrastructure. Eight water districts in Los Angeles County issued water advisories due to concerns of contamination from the Palisades and Eaton fires.<sup>12</sup> Do-not-drink notices are still in place for Palisades residents, although orders for Eaton Fire areas were lifted as of January 29.<sup>13</sup> Public utility disruptions and evacuation orders also resulted in the temporary closure of dozens of medical offices, clinics, and community health centers across major health systems including UCLA Health, Cedars-Sinai, and Kaiser Permanente, though operations have largely resumed.<sup>14,15</sup> At least two clinics, the AltaMed Health Services clinic in Pasadena and the UCLA Health Family Medicine Clinic in Pacific Palisades, were destroyed.<sup>15</sup>

From January 7-15, the national mental health helpline experienced a five-fold rise in calls from the Los Angeles area.<sup>16</sup> On January 26, the Pasadena Public Health Department issued guidance to help parents and caregivers support children returning to school after the wildfires, emphasizing the importance of children's emotional well-being.<sup>17</sup> As of January 31, the American Red Cross has provided over 128,000 meals and snacks, alongside 102,000 relief items to assist affected communities.<sup>18</sup> On February 4, California officials announced eligible families receiving a one-time \$975 food benefit through D-CalFresh of Social Services.<sup>19</sup> The state has allocated \$1 million in emergency funds to distribute food boxes and potable water to those in need.<sup>20</sup>

As of January 17, the Pasadena Public Health Department has confirmed 3 norovirus infections among 28 cases of acute gastrointestinal illness at the Pasadena Evacuation Shelter.<sup>21</sup> The Pasadena Public Health Department is working with American Red Cross personnel to strengthen isolation, disinfection, and prevention measures.<sup>21</sup> On January 21, the City of Pasadena issued an order mandating that all shelter personnel wear face masks to prevent the spread of infectious disease.<sup>22</sup>

## **Systems-Level & Critical Infrastructure Impacts**

### *Transportation*

- Los Angeles County Public Works has reported that several roads in the Santa Monica Mountains, Angeles National Forest, the City of Malibu, and Castaic Lake will continue to be restricted to emergency vehicles.<sup>23</sup>
- Permission for residents to return to their homes remains to be largely determined by the field incident management teams on a daily basis.<sup>24</sup>

### *Water, Power*

- The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) has reported that “no power was lost to LADWP pump stations during the fire, and water supply remained strong to the area.” The statement attributes water pressure loss to extreme demand and lack of aerial support.<sup>25</sup>
- Southern California Edison (SCE) reports 0 current shutoffs and is no longer considering power safety shutoffs due to the firefighting effort.<sup>26</sup>
- SCE has taken responsibility for the Hurst Fire in Sylmar, noting an equipment failure to be the root cause.<sup>27</sup> The utility has also started an investigation on whether their equipment had played a role in the Eaton Fire.<sup>27</sup>
- Boil advisories were also set in place for residents who are able to return to their homes as well as those who are adjacent to mandatory evacuation zones.<sup>28</sup> A Do Not Drink notice remains in effect for the most of the Pacific Palisades.<sup>29</sup>
- LADWP has paused billing for customers in areas directly impacted by the wildfires.<sup>30</sup>

### *Healthcare Facilities, Schools*

- The California Department of Healthcare Services (CDHS) has simplified enrollment for Medi-Cal programs, extended timelines for renewal processes, and waived requirements to allow immediate access prescription medications and medical devices for Medi-Cal members in areas impacted by the wildfire.<sup>31</sup>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that all-cause ED encounters in LA County initially decreased by around 9% after the start of wildfires, while wildfire-associated encounters increased eightfold (0.06% to 0.52%).<sup>32</sup> The CDC attributes the initial decrease in all-cause visits to evacuations or residents seeking care in clinics, urgent care centers or EDs in outside areas.<sup>32</sup>
- All hospitals continue to remain open and operational, including Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, UCLA Health, Providence Health Care, and Kaiser Permanente.<sup>33</sup>
- A total of 5 LAUSD campuses have been reported to be completely destroyed at this time, with varying levels of funding and initiative to rebuild.<sup>34</sup>
- Parents of students attending schools recently opened following the firefighting effort have expressed hesitancy on returning back to school, primarily citing ash and toxic chemicals in the air.<sup>35</sup>

### *Communication Networks*

- CAL FIRE has issued a public announcement warning communities about fake social media accounts soliciting donations for firefighters.<sup>36</sup>
- CAL FIRE is using Genasys Protect to communicate with impacted residents on evacuation and repopulation notices.<sup>37</sup>
- The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) and the Mayor's Office have declined to comment on delayed and lagging evacuation reports in neighborhoods impacted by the Eaton Fire.<sup>38</sup>
- The City of Los Angeles has launched the LA Disaster Relief Navigator, which provides tailored resources for recovery efforts.<sup>39</sup>

### *Aftermath*

- Estimates for economic loss remains between \$250 billion to \$275 billion.<sup>40</sup>

## **Social Impacts**

### *Structures Destroyed*

- Damage inspection teams report having completed inspection on 100% of structures within the Palisades and Eaton fire footprints, with damage inspections ongoing in the Eaton fire burn area as of February 3.<sup>1</sup> As of February 5, approximately 16,249 structures were estimated to have been destroyed in the Palisades and Eaton fires.<sup>1</sup> No structures have been reported destroyed in other fires.<sup>1</sup>
  - Palisades - 6,831<sup>1</sup>
  - Eaton - 9,418<sup>1</sup>

### *Structures Damaged*

- As of February 5, approximately 2,046 structures were estimated to have been damaged in the Palisades and Eaton fires.<sup>1</sup> No structures have been reported damaged in other fires.<sup>1</sup>
  - Palisades - 973<sup>1</sup>
  - Eaton - 1,073<sup>1</sup>

### *Population Displacement*

- As of January 9, evacuation orders affected 180,000 people.<sup>41</sup> By January 14, population levels had returned to baseline in most areas, except for Altadena, Topanga, and Malibu, where they remained 49%, 44%, and 36% below baseline, respectively.<sup>41</sup>
- As of January 22, approximately 31,000 people were given mandatory evacuation orders, with an additional 23,000 receiving evacuation warnings near the Hughes fire.<sup>42</sup>
- Governor Newsom has issued an order preventing evictions of tenants sharing their units with displaced residents.<sup>3</sup>

- AirBnB.org offered free emergency housing for people displaced by the fires. As of January 29, over 17,000 people in Los Angeles had booked over 63,000 nights of free stays.<sup>43</sup>

### **Post-Disaster Recovery**

On January 23, Governor Newsom signed a bill authorizing \$2.5 billion towards initial spending for response and recovery efforts; \$4 million to the for rebuilding homes; and \$1 million to school districts for rebuilding schools.<sup>44</sup> To support rebuilding, permitting and review requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the California Coastal Act have been suspended by Governor Newsom.<sup>3</sup> A number of executive orders have also been signed to support residents, including to prevent predatory land speculation on fire-impacted properties; extend deadlines for state-funded preschool and childcare programs; prevent price gouging on rent; and ensure continuity of services for people with disabilities.<sup>3,45</sup> The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is operating two disaster recovery centers, one at UCLA Research Park West and one in Altadena, to support survivors in applying for financial assistance.<sup>46</sup> As of February 6, FEMA has approved over \$62 million in Individuals and Households Program assistance.<sup>47</sup> As of February 6, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and California Department of Toxic Substances Control have completed 1,153 Phase 1 hazardous waste cleanups of residential parcels, with 10,875 cleanups still needed.<sup>48</sup> 1,546 cleanups have been deferred to Phase 2.<sup>48</sup> At least 6,400 households have completed Right of Entry waivers to enable federal debris removal on their property, including 40% of households in Altadena.<sup>49</sup> An Altadena Recovery Commission has also been established to support community rebuilding, which will be chaired by and include representatives from businesses, philanthropic and faith-based organizations, and local, state, and federal government partners.<sup>50</sup>

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