

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

to *Picking Up the Pieces: Restoring Rural Housing and Communities After a Disaster*

2018 California Wildfires Disaster Guide

Housing Assistance Council

August 1, 2018

As of August 1, there were 18 active wildfires burning in California.¹ The state's largest wildfire, the Carr Fire in Redding, has burned through more than 115,538 acres and is only 35% contained.² The fire was started on the afternoon of July 23, due to the mechanical failure of a vehicle.³ The Carr Fire has destroyed at least 966 structures. More than 4,151 total personnel are battling the flames with 366 engines and 17 helicopters.

The second largest active fire is the Ranch Fire (Mendocino Complex) in Mendocino county. It has burned 59,014 acres and is 15% contained.⁴ Currently there are over 2,000 total personnel working to contain it.

To see current fire information and updates, check the California Fire current incident information online at http://www.fire.ca.gov/current_incidents.

Resources

The following guide provides information for individuals and families affected by the fires about current and potential efforts. For more information, please see HAC's report: *Picking up the Pieces: Restoring Rural Housing and Communities After a Disaster*, available free online at http://www.ruralhome.org/storage/documents/disaster_guide_2012.pdf

If your house is inaccessible or currently uninhabitable, a number of localities are offering temporary shelter. Information on evacuation orders and evacuation centers is available on the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) website at http://www.fire.ca.gov/current_incidents/

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

If federal assistance becomes available for residents affected by the fires, to apply you must complete a multi-purpose application *online* at <https://www.disasterassistance.gov> or *over the phone on FEMA's toll-free helpline*.

Toll-free helpline:

1-800-621-FEMA (3362)

For hearing impaired callers only:

¹ "There Are 18 Active Wildfires Burning Across California. This Map Shows All of Them" TIME. August 1, 2018. <http://time.com/5353749/california-fire-map-2018/>

² "Carr Fire Incident Information". CA Gov. July 31, 2018. http://www.fire.ca.gov/current_incidents/incidentdetails/Index/2164

³ "Carr Fire Incident". 211NorCal. July 31, 2018. <http://211norcal.org/shasta/disaster-response/resources/>

⁴ "Ranch Fire (Mendocino Complex)". CA Gov. July 31, 2018. http://www.fire.ca.gov/current_incidents/incidentdetails/Index/2175

1-800-462-7585 (TTY)
1-800-621-3362 (Video Relay Service)

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD offers a Disaster Recovery Toolkit and makes other related resources available:
<https://www.hud.gov/info/disasterresources>.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

To determine whether USDA has specific assistance available for fire survivors who had USDA Rural Development assistance before the fires, check for information online at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/services/rural-development-disaster-assistance>, or call the USDA Rural Development state office in California at 530-792-5830 for rental housing or 530-792-5816 for owner-occupied housing.

American Red Cross Disaster Service

For referrals and updates on Red Cross shelter services in your area, locate a local Red Cross office through: <http://www.redcross.org/find-help> or by calling the Public Inquiry Center at 1-800-214-0441.

State Housing Agencies

Each state has at least one agency that administers state and federal programs to promote decent affordable housing for low-income individuals. Typically, these agencies and authorities administer some aspects of state or federal programs.

California Department of Housing & Community Development
3220 S Higuera St # 103B
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
916-263-7400
<http://www.hcd.ca.gov/>

California Housing Finance Agency
100 Corporate Pointe # 250
Culver City, CA 90230
310-342-5400
877-9-CalHFA (877-922-5432)
<http://www.calhfa.ca.gov/>

Local Housing Authorities

Shasta County Housing & Community Action Programs
1450 Court Street, Suite 108
Redding, CA 96001-1661
Phone: (530) 225-5160
https://www.co.shasta.ca.us/index/housing_index.aspx

Community Development Commission of Mendocino county
1076 N State St,
Ukiah, CA 95482
Phone: 707-463-5462
Email: info@cdchousing.org
<http://cdchousing.org/>

Housing Authority of the County of Riverside
5555 Arlington Ave
Riverside, CA 92504
Phone: (951) 351-0700
<https://www.harivco.org/>

Mariposa County Human Services
5362 Lemee Lane
Mariposa, CA 95338
Phone: (209) 966-2000
Email: info@mariposahsc.org
<http://www.mariposacounty.org/>

Evacuating and Returning Home

The Red Cross website provides suggestions on actions to prepare for evacuation and returning home after a fire.⁵

IF A FIRE OCCURS Listen to your local media for updates on the fire and be ready to leave quickly. Back your car into the garage or park it in an open space facing your direction of escape. You should also:

- Keep your pets in one room so you can find them quickly if you have to evacuate.
- Arrange for a temporary place to stay outside the threatened area.
- Keep your indoor air clean – close windows and doors to prevent the smoke outside from getting in your home.
- Use the recycle mode on the air conditioner in your home or car. If you don't have air conditioning and it's too hot to be inside, seek shelter somewhere else.
- If smoke levels are high, don't use anything that burns and adds to air pollution inside such as candles, fireplaces and gas stoves.

AFTER THE FIRE Don't go home until fire officials say it is safe. Be cautious entering a burned area – hazards could still exist. Avoid damaged or downed power lines, poles and wires. Other things to do include:

- Keep your animals under your direct control. Hidden embers and hot spots could burn them.
- Wet down debris to minimize breathing dust particles.
- Wear leather gloves and shoes with heavy soles.
- Throw out any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke or soot.
- Recheck for smoke or sparks throughout your home for several hours after the fire, including in your attic. Wildfire winds can blow burning embers anywhere so check for embers that could cause a fire.

If your home has experienced damage, remember to check the outside of your home before you enter. Look for loose power lines, broken or damaged gas lines, foundation cracks, missing support beams, or other damage. It may be safest to ask a building inspector or contractor to check the structure before you enter. Do not force jammed doors open, as they may be providing needed support to the rest of the home. Sniff for gas to ensure there are no natural or propane gas leaks. If you do have a propane tank system, make sure to turn off all valves and contact a propane supplier to check the system before you use it again. Check floors and ceilings to ensure they are not sagging from water damage, this can be especially hazardous. Take photographs of any damage as you may need them for insurance claims or FEMA claims later on.⁶

⁵ “Red Cross Shelters 1,000s as California Fires Burn out of Control,” October 20, 2017, <http://www.redcross.org/news/article/Red-Cross-Helps-as-Fires-Burn-Out-of-Control-in-California>.

⁶ Excerpted from the Red Cross's Guide on “Checking Your Home: Structural Elements” available at <http://www.redcross.org/find-help/disaster-recovery/home-structural-elements>.