



**CITY CLERKS: PLEASE POST**

**AGENDA**

**PALOS VERDES PENINSULA  
REGIONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020  
7:30 A.M.**

**VIRTUAL MEETING**

Pursuant to Section 3 of [Executive Order N-29-20](#), issued by Governor Gavin Newsom on March 17, 2020, the meeting of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Regional Emergency Preparedness Committee for Thursday, May 14, 2020, at 7:30 a.m., will be conducted via teleconference using the Zoom platform. Please see separate cover for public participation options.

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. ROLL CALL**
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMERGENCY SERVICES COORDINATOR**
- V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**NOTE:** *This is the appropriate time for members of the public to make comments regarding items not listed on this agenda. Pursuant to the Brown Act, no action will take place on any items not listed on the agenda.*

**VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 13, 2020**

**VII. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. UPDATE ON THE PENINSULA EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TASKFORCE (VERBAL REPORT)
- B. UPDATE ON FUTURE PENINSULA WIDE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EXERCISE (VERBAL REPORT)

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. OVERVIEW OF PENINSULA CITIES CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND PREPARATION (STAFF REPORT)
- B. WILDFIRE BRUSH MITIGATION PRESENTATION (STAFF REPORT)

**IX. OTHER MATTERS FROM REGIONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**NOTE:** *This is the appropriate time for Committee Members to direct the placement of items for future action on upcoming agendas.*

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

- A. Next regular meeting Thursday, August 13, 2020 at 7:30 a.m.



## THE ROLLING HILLS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS WILL NOT BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Pursuant to Section 3 of [Executive Order N-29-20](#), issued by Governor Gavin Newsom on March 17, 2020, the meeting of the Regional Law Enforcement Committee and Regional Emergency Preparedness Committee for Thursday, May 14, 2020, at 7:30 a.m., will be conducted via teleconference using the Zoom platform. These measures are to protect the public and City employees, and to do our part to help 'flatten the curve' and slow the spread of COVID-19.

To maximize public safety while still maintaining transparency and public access, those members of the public wishing to participate may do so in the following ways:

1. **Viewing the “live” meeting:** To view the City Council meetings live, email Shane Lee at [slee@rpvca.gov](mailto:slee@rpvca.gov) with your name and contact information prior to 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 13, 2020. Upon successful submission, you will receive an email with further instructions on how to connect to the meeting.
2. **Comments on non-agenda and specific agenda item(s):** If you wish to make a comment, please submit via email to [slee@rpvca.gov](mailto:slee@rpvca.gov). Comments received by 3 p.m. on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 will be forwarded to the Regional Law Enforcement Committee and Regional Emergency Preparedness Committee prior to the meeting for consideration. Otherwise, they will be included as late correspondence the following day. Any comments received after 3 p.m. on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 will not be read during the meeting.
3. **Comments on non-agenda and specific agenda item(s) during the “live” meeting:** If you are watching the meeting live and wish to make a comment on an agenda item, as it is being heard, you may submit your brief comment using the following methods below. Please note that there is a maximum allowance of 3 minutes per individual comment, subject to the Chair’s discretion. Your comment will be read or heard during the meeting, if received in real time and prior to the commencement of that item.
  - a. **Email:** Comments will be accepted via email to [slee@rpvca.gov](mailto:slee@rpvca.gov) during the meeting, prior to the close of the public comment portion on an item or during public comments for non-agenda items, and read aloud into the record with a maximum allowance of 3 minutes per individual comment, subject to the Chair’s discretion.
  - b. **Telephone:** If you wish to speak during the meeting, email Shane Lee at [slee@rpvca.gov](mailto:slee@rpvca.gov) with your name, contact information, and the item number on which you wish to comment. Upon successful submission, you will receive an email with further instructions on how to connect to the meeting.

Members of the public desiring to participate in the virtual city meeting are invited and welcome to do so. Please be advised that there exists the possibility of technological interruptions in telephone or Zoom connections which are beyond the control of City staff. Every effort will be made to establish or reestablish uninterrupted virtual participation in the meeting. Your patience and understanding will be appreciated.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you require a disability-related modification or accommodation to participate in this meeting, please contact the City at least 48 hours prior to the meeting via email at [adarequests@rpvca.gov](mailto:adarequests@rpvca.gov). Staff will use their best efforts to provide reasonable accommodations to provide as much accessibility as possible while also maintaining public safety.

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes thanks you in advance for your cooperation and reminds you that abiding by the March 17, 2020, orders issued by Governor Gavin Newsom and the County of Los Angeles mandating that all residents stay home except for essential needs **is the best and most effective tool to slow the spread of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)**.



**PALOS VERDES PENINSULA  
REGIONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2020**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

A meeting of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Regional Emergency Preparedness Committee (Committee) was called to order by Rancho Palos Verdes Mayor Pro Tem Alegria at 7:35 a.m. in the Council Chamber of Rolling Hills City Hall, 2 Portuguese Bend, Rolling Hills, California.

**2. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Kenneth Kao, Councilmember, Palos Verdes Estates  
Velveth Schmitz, Mayor, Rolling Hills Estates  
Patrick Wilson, Councilmember, Rolling Hills  
Eric Alegria, Mayor Pro Tem, Rancho Palos Verdes  
Bea Dieringer, Councilmember, Rolling Hills  
David Bradley, Councilmember, Rancho Palos Verdes  
Greg Grammer, City Manager, Rolling Hills Estates  
Ara Mihranian, Interim City Manager, Rancho Palos Verdes  
Elaine Jeng, City Manager, Rolling Hills  
Shane Lee, Administrative Analyst, City of Rancho Palos Verdes

ABSENT: Judy Mitchell, Councilmember, Rolling Hills Estates

ALSO PRESENT: Alexa Davis, Assistant City Manager, Rolling Hills Estates  
Jessica Slawson, Administrative Analyst, City of Rolling Hills Estates  
Kit Fox, Interim Deputy City Manager, Rancho Palos Verdes  
Teri Takaoka, Deputy City Clerk, Rancho Palos Verdes  
Captain James Powers, Lomita Sheriff's Station, Los Angeles Sheriff Department  
Lieutenant Michael White, Lomita Sheriff's Station, Los Angeles Sheriff Department  
Scott Hale, Assistant Chief, Los Angeles County Fire Department  
Keith Butler, Superintendent, Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District  
Yohana Coronel, City Clerk, Rolling Hills

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Member Bradley led the pledge of allegiance.

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

#### **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

##### **A. MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 10, 2019**

Member Dieringer commented on grammatical changes on pages 2 to 4. Member Bradley moved that the Committee approve the minutes of the November 14, 2019 meeting of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Regional Emergency Preparedness Committee with the amendments as recommended by Member Dieringer. Member Kao seconded the motion, which carried without objection (6-0).

#### **6. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A. PENINSULA EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TASK FORCE UPDATE**

Administrative Analyst Slawson provided an overview of the Peninsula Emergency Preparedness Task Force (PEPT), including the city staff involved and their purpose. She provided an update from the latest PEPT meeting held on January 28, 2020. There will be an upcoming disaster training for staff and elected officials in the spring for the Peninsula. The Peninsula cities have been working with the American Red Cross to develop a facility use agreement with the schools to provide sheltering. There have been six sites approved for the Peninsula, in every city. There will also be a CERT training for the Peninsula in April.

Member Bradley asked for clarification regarding the disaster training for staff and elected officials. Analyst Slawson explained that the training would be open to all elected officials to learn about their roles during major events such as disasters. She explained that there is no established schedule yet, but they are preparing for a spring training. This would be a two hour training during the evening.

##### **B. CAL WATER PRESENTATION**

Analyst Slawson Introduced Korey Bradbury from California Water Service Company (Cal Water).

Korey Bradbury, Operations Manager for Cal Water, oversees water operations in the South Bay area and provided an overview of the other cities he manages (Carson, Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach, and Hawthorne). He shared the steps Cal Water has taken in regards to emergency preparedness, including providing three large emergency generators to all four sites. In the case that power would shut off, these generators would continue to provide water in the Peninsula. No Public Safety Power Shut Offs (PSPS) occurred, but they are prepared in the case it does occur. Cal Water also has permanent generators in place at their project sites. He provided a high-level

update on their Water Reliability Project along Crenshaw Boulevard, sharing that major work would finish by the end of February. Although major work would be finished, there will still be traffic control and some work along Crenshaw Boulevard until May or June. In terms of an Emergency Operations Center, Cal Water provides a training once a year, and they had a training last year with the Peninsula cities with their staff and officials.

In response to Member Bradley's question if the temporary emergency generators are still in place, Mr. Bradbury stated that the generators are still in place, with the intentions to take a few away during the winter season. Member Bradley then asked whether the funding for these generators were incorporated into Cal Water's operating budget or if it is through a rate payer increase. Mr. Bradbury responded that they are currently working with the commission and waiting for their determination.

Member Bradley inquired whether Cal Water incorporates LACoFD in their annual training. Mr. Bradbury explained that LACoFD does participate in their Peninsula training exercise, but that they are not currently included in the internal training exercises. Cal Water regionally does include LACoFD in some other Los Angeles regions, and they are looking to include them in this region as well.

Member Kao asked for clarification regarding the end of February timeline with the Crenshaw Boulevard work, whether it would be a completion of the project. Mr. Bradbury stated that the major pipeline work would conclude around the end of February. After this, the work still includes pipe welding, graveling, sanitation flushing, and sampling. During this time, there will be intermittent one lane closures. Completion of the overall Crenshaw project may be May or June.

In response to Member Wilson's inquiry about the status of the steel plates in the area around Palos Verdes Drive North, Mr. Bradbury stated that those steel plates have been removed. Mayor Schmitz also shared that Cal Water had attended the City of Rolling Hills Estates City Council meetings informing them of these updates. City Manager Grammer stated that there is a temporary patch where the steel plates were removed. He also shared that construction will begin at the intersection of Silver Spur and Crenshaw Boulevard. There will be traffic control officers from 7 am to 7 pm 7 days a week. This work will wrap up by the end of February. Mayor Schmitz would like to encourage public communication that these construction projects are still going to cause traffic impacts.

Mr. Bradbury asked the Committee how public communication is being managed. City Manager Grammer shared that the City of Rolling Hills Estates posts updates on its many social media communication platforms, and City Manager Mihranian indicated that the City of Rancho Palos Verdes would be doing the same.

## **7. OLD BUSINESS**

City Manager Mihranian provided an update regarding the individual who had previously accepted the position of Emergency Preparedness. This individual had chosen not to proceed with the position, but there is another individual who will be joining the City of Rancho Palos Verdes at the end of the month. He will be participating at the next Committee meeting.

## **8. OTHER MATTERS**

Chair Alegria conveyed to staff that he would like a Peninsula-wide emergency preparedness exercise, and asked if that would be a reasonable goal for 2020. In response, City Manager Mihranian stated that Jesse Villalpando, the incoming Emergency Services Coordinator, would work with the Peninsula cities and that it would be a goal for him. Chair Alegria asked that this item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Chair Alegria also shared to the other Committee members that the City of Rancho Palos Verdes' Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) conveyed a willingness to be a resource to the other cities. City Manager Mihranian added that the new Emergency Services Coordinator, Jesse, would have the role to help coordinate among the cities and share resources to build a cohesive regional plan. Member Wilson noted that he would like to receive notice for when the EPC meetings would take place.

In response to Member Kao's reminder that the Committee was looking into having a white paper by March for the benefit of elected officials. City Manager Mihranian shared that this was in anticipation that their Emergency Services Coordinator would be on-board in January, which wasn't the case. He also shared that Jesse would have this on his list of tasks after he comes on-board.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Palos Verdes Peninsula Regional Emergency Preparedness Committee, Chair Alegria adjourned the meeting at 8:00 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, May 14, 2020, beginning at 7:30 a.m. in the Council Chamber at Rolling Hills City Hall, 2 Portuguese Bend Road, Rolling Hills, CA 90274.

Respectfully submitted,



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Shane Lee  
Recording Secretary  
Administrative Analyst,  
City of Rancho Palos Verdes

Approved,

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Eric Alegria  
Chair  
Mayor Pro Tem,  
City of Rancho Palos Verdes



**REGIONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE  
AGENDA REPORT**

**MEETING DATE:** 05/14/2020  
**AGENDA HEADING:** New Business

**AGENDA DESCRIPTION:**

Review the Peninsula Cities Coronavirus Response and Coordination.

**RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE ACTION:**

- (1) Receive and file a report on the Peninsula cities response and coordination to the Coronavirus pandemic; and,
- (2) If warranted, provide direction to Staff and the Peninsula Emergency Preparedness Taskforce.

**STAFF COORDINATOR:** Jesse Villalpando, Emergency Services Coordinator *J. V.*

**BACKGROUND:**

In late 2019, Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) was discovered in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern. On January 31, 2020, the United States Health and Human Services Secretary declared COVID-19 a public health emergency in the United States. Since that time, many declarations of emergency have been adopted:

- March 4, 2020 – State of California proclaimed a State of Emergency relating to COVID-19.
- On March 4, 2020 – County of Los Angeles declared a Local Health Emergency related to COVID- 19.
- March 13, 2020 – President Trump declared a National State of Emergency relating to COVID-19.

On March 12, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N 25-20, which provided local health agencies with the authority to limit gatherings and types of business. This order was issued pursuant to Government Code §§ 8567, 8571 & 8572. The order can be found at <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.12.20-EO-N-25-20-COVID-19.pdf>

On March 19, 2020, both the County of Los Angeles (“Safer at Home” Order) and Governor Newsom (Executive Order N 33-20), citing COVID infection rates on par with Italy, issued shelter in place orders for their respective jurisdictions, with exceptions for essential businesses/organizations. This Governor’s order was issued pursuant to

Government Code §§ 8567, 8627 & 8665. This order can be found at <https://covid19.ca.gov/img/Executive-Order-N-33-20.pdf>.

On March 22, 2020, the President issued a Disaster Declaration to bolster the State's Emergency Declaration. This order can be found at:

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/03/22/california-secures-presidential-major-disaster-declaration-to-support-states-covid-19-emergency-response/>.

On April 10, 2020, the County of Los Angeles issued an extension of the Safer at Home Order through May 15, 2020. The relevant County and County Health Department "safer at home" orders can be found at:

- <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/HOO/FAQ-SaferatHomeOrder.pdf>
- [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/HOO/HOO\\_Safer\\_at\\_Home\\_Order\\_for\\_Control\\_of\\_COVID\\_04102020.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/HOO/HOO_Safer_at_Home_Order_for_Control_of_COVID_04102020.pdf)
- [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/HOO/HOO\\_BeachesandTrails\\_3.27.20\\_FINAL.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/HOO/HOO_BeachesandTrails_3.27.20_FINAL.pdf)

## **DISCUSSION:**

Prior to the time the Safer at Home Orders were issued, the Peninsula Cities began monitoring the spread of the COVID-19 in Los Angeles County and providing the Peninsula community with timely updates that are issued near the end of the business day. As of the date that this report was completed (May 6, 2020), there are 28,644 confirmed cases of COVID-19 across Los Angeles County, including the South Bay. The total includes 71 cases in Rancho Palos Verdes, 40 cases in Palos Verdes Estates, 13 cases in Rolling Hills Estates and 2 case in Rolling Hills. Countywide, 1,367 people have died.

For a list of cases broken down by city, demographic characteristics, and settings, visit: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/locations.htm>

## **General Information**

The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health issued an extended Safer at Home Order through May 15, 2020. The Order requires that all persons continue to remain home or their places of residence as much as possible, except when traveling to and from essential businesses, work, and outdoor exercise. Group gatherings are not permitted.

Additionally, the Order requires that essential workers and anyone entering places of essential businesses must wear face coverings. Safety precautions, such as regular hand washing and physical distancing of at least six feet continue to be practiced.

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health information can be found here:  
[www.covid19.lacounty.gov](http://www.covid19.lacounty.gov)

### Guidance for Cloth Face Coverings

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now recommending the public wear cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus, and do not know it, from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

For more information and frequently asked questions, visit the County of Los Angeles Face Covering Guidance Website: <http://www.covid19.lacounty.gov/face-coverings/>

### **Updates on each Peninsula City**

#### City of Palos Verdes Estates

The City of Palos Verdes Estates (PVE) continues to operate a virtual Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at a Level 3 while maintaining Continuity of Operations with some City Hall staff working from home and City Meetings conducted virtually via the Zoom platform.

PVE is comprised of 26.1% senior citizens (approx. 3,600 residents over 65), which is more than double the State demographic of 12.87%. This reflects an infection rate nearly double the county average. Presently, PVE has 40 known cases, which correlates to 2.73 infected citizens per thousand, while the county has only 1.72. There are no known COVID-19 cases among PVE City Hall or Police Department staff and no known deaths related to COVID-19.

On March 13, PVE implemented its personal call outreach to the City's at-risk population and have been conducting weekly calls to over 500 registered PVE-CARES seniors, as well as approximately 1,400 non-registered seniors. Of note, about ½ of



PVE's volunteers advised that none of the seniors they are speaking with are reporting any symptoms or diagnosis of COVID-19. On about March 19, coordinated grocery shopping and needed prescription pick up efforts began and continue to serve this at-risk population.

PVE's communication efforts consist of weekly updates and as needed daily messaging, often in partnership with Area G cities via Alert SouthBay. As part of the latter, PVE has conducted 2 surveys and focus its messaging efforts towards the largest concerns of survey respondents and address specific requests for information or resources. Additionally, PVE has distributed a Senior Resource Guide and small business/restaurant updates on openings.

More recently, PVE, by means of its Police Department, is working on the development of a program to offer free, in-home COVID-19 testing to qualified PVE residents who have symptoms of COVID-19. PVE residents who are 65 years of age or older and have CDC described symptoms, can call Community Relations Officer Marcelle Herrera and ask for a test.

PVE is actively participating along with 6 of the other South Bay beach cities in developing recommendations to be presented to the Board of Supervisors and the County Health Department. These recommendations will focus on how to relax the current restrictions and reopen coastal recreation areas and trails, when deemed appropriate. The relaxing of restrictions will need to be done in a coordinated, structured and gradual manner. The goal is that one community should not allow the relaxation of certain restrictions resulting in an undue burden on neighboring communities. However, until the County orders expire, PVE continues to maintain the closures in place until it's determined to be safe to do so.

### City of Rancho Palos Verdes

On March 17, 2020, the Rancho Palos Verdes (RPV) City Council adopted Resolution No. 2020-11, proclaiming a local emergency in response to the spread of COVID-19, giving the City additional powers to coordinate local efforts and procure resources to effectively address the emergency as needed. Around that time, RPV activated its EOC at Level 3, the lowest level of activation, in order to maintain continuous communication with government agencies, the City Council, and the community.

RPV staff monitors communications from various government agencies and the public, and provides community updates on a daily basis. As of April 25, the community updates are now being distributed Monday through Friday rather than seven days a week, though any major announcements over the weekend will be shared with the community. The community updates are provided to subscribers to the Breaking News listserv at [rpvca.gov/notify](http://rpvca.gov/notify). A webpage with coronavirus updates, resources and information on local closures is continuously being updated at [rpvca.gov/coronavirus](http://rpvca.gov/coronavirus)

The March 17 City Council, and all subsequent City Council, Planning Commission, and Committee Meetings have been held as virtual meetings via the Zoom platform. All non-essential staff are working remotely and on a rotating schedule. RPV is providing personal protection equipment (PPE) to its staff including facial coverings that are required to be worn while at City Hall in all public spaces. RPV installed hand sanitizing stations at entrances to all City offices, increased the depth and frequency of cleaning hard surfaces and commonly used spaced at all City facilities. The City is seeking reimbursement for COVID-19 related costs incurred through the state and federal government.

City Hall and park buildings are closed to the public, but essential city business continues, through at least May 15. The Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, all City parks, beaches, community centers, amenities and trails were closed until recently. As of April 25, RPV reopened 6 neighborhood parks but kept all park buildings, playgrounds, parking lots, restrooms, game courts, and fields are closed. Additionally, all recreational activities, classes and events at City-operated facilities have been canceled until further notice. As of the preparation of this report, RPV is developing a reopening plan for its City that may include opening additional parks and the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve in advance of May 15.

Construction-related permit and planning activity remains an essential city business. Planning or permit applications may be submitted to RPV electronically, along with payments, or by appointment. The majority of construction inspections occur virtually.

On April 7, 2020, the City Council approved a Small Business Financial Assistance Plan in an effort to provide relief and promote the general welfare of the City's small business community experiencing negative financial impacts stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Small Business Financial Assistance Plan is comprised of the following two components:

- One-time refund of the 2020 business license tax
- Community D Block Grant (CDBG) stimulus

Since the implementation began on April 8, the City has received 14 requests for business license tax refunds. Businesses in need of assistance are encouraged to visit <http://www.rpvca.gov/1284/Financial-Assistance> for information on the program and to submit a request.

The CDBG stimulus authorized the use of \$116,500 to provide loans and grants to low and moderate-income owners of businesses with five or fewer employees. These funds could be used for short-term working capital for operating expenses to retain jobs and support service delivery. In the coming weeks, RPV will provide more details of the small business loan program and how to apply.

City of Rolling Hills

To date, the City of Rolling Hills (RH) has not and has no plans of proclaiming a local emergency. Although the City has not proclaimed a local emergency, the City has been in continuous communication with government agencies, local organizations and the community.

All meetings for City Council, Commissions, Committees, consultants and applicants have gone virtual, effective March 23, 2020. City Hall was closed to the public on March 16, 2020 and all staff continued to work behind closed doors at City Hall until March 20, 2020. Staff began telecommuting between March 23 and April 1, 2020 when the City was made aware that one of its staff members may have been exposed to COVID-19. Staff returned to work at City Hall on April 2, 2020 upon finding out that the person tested negative. Starting on April 2, 2020, staff rotated working remotely, 50% in and 50% at home every other week. City Hall is the only public building the City oversees and it has remained closed to the public since March 16, 2020.

The RH City Council has conducted a handful of Adjourned Meetings to discuss re-opening City Hall to the public. At the April 27, 2020 meeting, the City Council discussed re-opening City Hall to the public on May 15, 2020. The City of Rolling Hills will stay closed until May 15, 2020 and potentially open City Hall to the public on Monday, May 18, 2020. The City is currently working on guidelines for staff and the public to follow while conducting city business at City Hall.

During this pandemic crisis, City staff has continued to provide uninterrupted services to the community and other stakeholders. RH Staff continues to perform site visits and inspections upon request. Electronic submittals of plans for review and approval are accepted and processed on almost a daily basis. The City is in the process of instituting payments through credit card transaction to help facilitate the City processes.

RH has established, through a partnership with its Block Captain Program, a Senior Assistance Program to help provide services to seniors and the vulnerable population. Weekly status reports are submitted to the City by volunteers to assess what services are needed and to ensure welfare checks are being conducted on those who may need them. RH has also increased the frequency of publication of its written news bulletin that goes out to the community once to twice a week, depending on the information that need to be transmitted immediately. Many of RH residents are elderly and may have little access to technology so this form of communication has been very helpful to our community.

The City also has signed up with SouthBay Alert and Joint Information Center (JIC) to help with ongoing information blasts. RH also sends out news alerts from the City directly to the residents when needed. Lastly, RH expedited updating its website so that it can use it to provide more up-to-date information and also allow their residents to report on issues that concern them.

RH has employed measures to minimize the spread of the virus to protect staff and the community while providing service in the field or working at City Hall. RH has provided

its staff with PPE such as gloves, masks, and hand sanitizers. As well as wiping down surfaces a couple times a day. Lastly, with a smaller staff, RH is able to physically distance from one another.

In anticipation of reopening City Hall, staff has taped areas of the lobby to guide people where to stand to receive and wait for service. With limited space, RH will only allow two patrons at a time inside the lobby and all parties, including staff, must abide by the County order of social distancing, wearing masks and then wiping down surfaces after every meeting.

The City continues to look for established policies from other agencies and guidance from the CDC and DPH on how they can minimize transmission and protect all those involved. RH is also in the process of establishing commercial grade cleaning standards to disinfect City Hall in case there's an outbreak and to get City Hall ready for public occupation again.

### City of Rolling Hills Estates

On March 17, 2020, the City Manager proclaimed a local emergency in response to the spread of COVID-19. The City of Rolling Hills Estates (RHE) has activated its EOC at Level 3, the lowest level of activation, in order to maintain continuous communication with government agencies, the City Council, and the community. The City is seeking reimbursement for COVID-19 related costs incurred through the state and federal government.

RHE provides important daily COVID-19 updates to the community. The City established a designated website at [www.rhe.city/covid19](http://www.rhe.city/covid19) and continues to provide the community with important resources that become available. RHE continues to provide essential services to the community and has developed online opportunities for regular business services.

RHE provides PPEs including facial coverings to all staff members. All RHE City Council, commission/committee, and staff meetings are virtual. RHE City Hall is closed to the public until at least May 15, and most staff are working remotely and/or on a rotating schedule basis.

RHE's recreation courts, playgrounds, and hiking trails are closed to the public until at least May 15. Additionally, all recreational activities, classes trainings and events at City-operated facilities are cancelled until further notice. RHE Staff are working to install hand sanitizing stations at park areas and City Hall. The depth and frequency of cleaning for restrooms at all City facilities has increased.

RHE is preparing plans for continuity of services, including the identification of critical services and remote access capability. The City has launched its #RHEresilient campaign to bring the community together during this global pandemic.

## City Specific Information

Additional COVID-19 information can be found for each Peninsula City by visiting the following websites:

[Palos Verdes Estates](#)

[Rolling Hills](#)

[Rancho Palos Verdes](#)

[Rolling Hills Estates](#)

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### Alert SouthBay

Alert SouthBay is a multi-jurisdictional notification system managed by a board comprised of 13 South Bay cities that was established to keep communities informed about disasters and major emergencies with uniform, expeditious alerts. The participating cities include Inglewood, El Segundo, Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills Estates, Rolling Hills, Torrance, Gardena, Hawthorne, and Lomita.

Peninsula residents are encouraged to sign up to receive emergency alerts from Alert SouthBay by choosing one of the following methods:

- Text “alertsb” or your zipcode to 888-777 and complete registration with provided link in text message. For COVID-19-related alerts, text the keyword based on your city:
  - Palos Verdes Estates: CV19PVE
  - Rancho Palos Verdes: CV19RPV
  - Rolling Hills: RHCOVID19
  - Rolling Hills Estates: COVID19RHE.
- Register online at [www.alertsouthbay.com](http://www.alertsouthbay.com)
- Download the free Everbridge app on an iOS or Android device from the App Store or Google Play. Select “Find an organization or subscription” and search “alertsb”

### Joint Information Center (JIC)

On Friday March 13, 2020, the SouthBay cities activated a Joint Information Center (JIC) to help consistent, coordinated, accurate, accessible, timely, and complete messaging to the community around the COVID-19 pandemic. The mission of the Alert SouthBay JIC is to provide a structure and system for developing and delivering coordinated messages in concerning public affairs issues that could affect the COVID-19 Pandemic response efforts; and controlling rumors and inaccurate information that could undermine public confidence. The Alert Southbay JIC is virtually staffed and

physically located at the El Segundo Library in El Segundo. Alert SouthBay JIC participants meet on a biweekly basis to coordinate, draft and distribute weekly “*One Voice Messaging*” regarding the SouthBay cities response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The following cities participate in the SouthBay JIC:

Inglewood  
El Segundo  
Manhattan Beach  
Hermosa Beach  
Redondo Beach  
Hawthorne  
Torrance

Lawndale  
Gardena  
Lomita  
Palos Verdes Estates  
Rancho Palos Verdes  
Rolling Hills Estates  
Rolling Hills

### Senior Resource Guide

In response to the Safer at Home Health Order, the Peninsula cities and community partners have come together to develop a resource guide for senior and disabled residents. The Senior Resource guide includes important information on COVID-19 testing, mental health support, meal and grocery delivery services, as well as ways to stay active while safe at home. With ongoing guidance from State and County officials, such as Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, the Peninsula cities continue to assess the impact of COVID19. The guide is available to anyone who may be interested and can be downloaded at: [bit.ly/2wQtuLi](https://bit.ly/2wQtuLi)

### The Great Peninsula Takeout

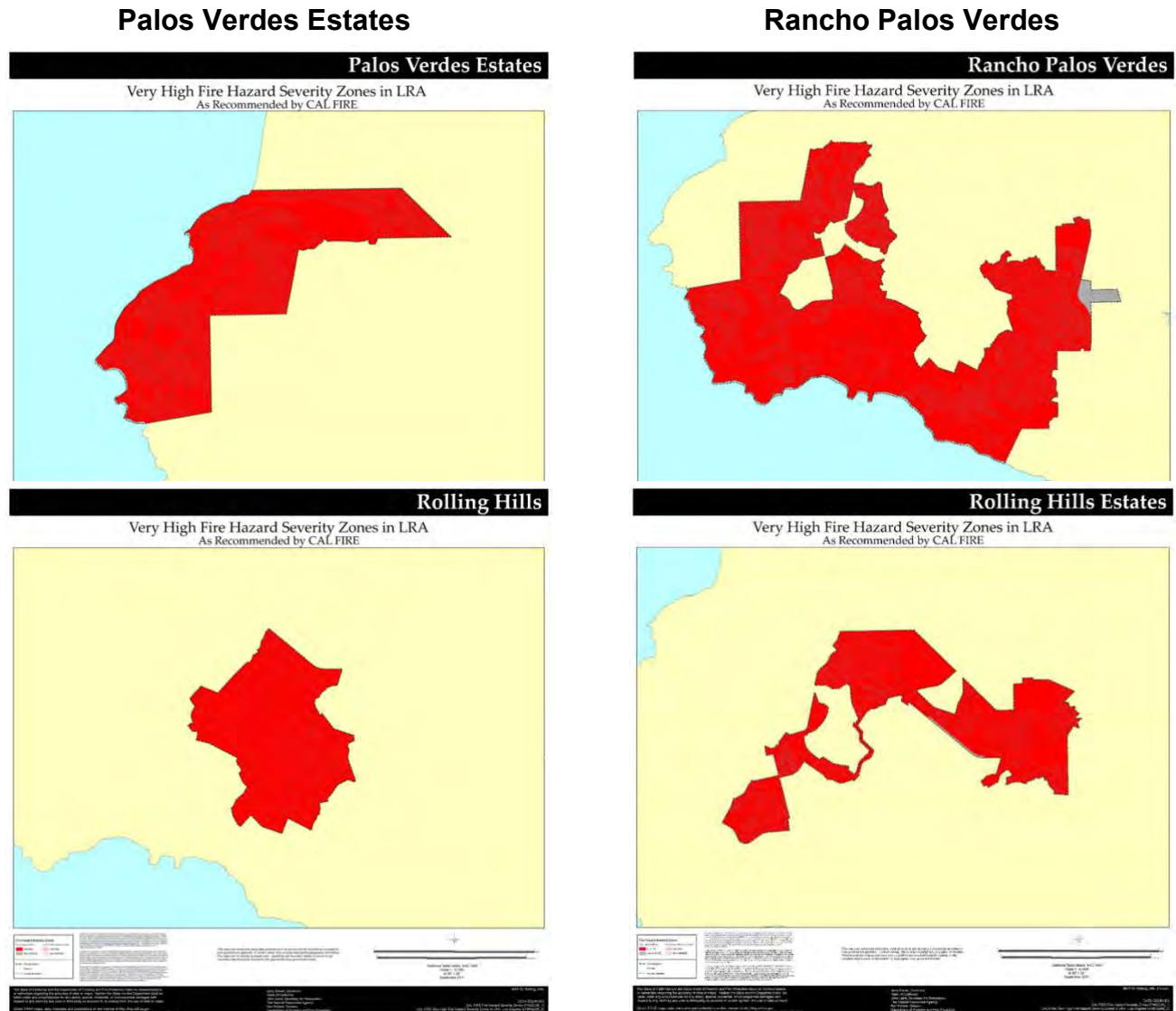
The Great Peninsula Takeout is a Peninsula-wide effort to support local restaurants. The Palos Verdes Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and the Peninsula Cities have compiled lists of businesses that are open with any adjusted store hours and services. For non-dine-in options, restaurants are offering takeout, delivery, curbside pickup, and/or food delivery services. Food delivery services include Uber Eats, DoorDash, Postmates, and Grubhub. All residents are encouraged to participate in The Great Peninsula Takeout, initiative by posting on social media and inviting friends and neighbors to order takeout.





- Ember production and movement - Fire brands are blown ahead of the main fire, spreading the fire and getting into buildings and igniting.
- Likelihood of an area burning - over a 30 - 50 year time period.

Based on the above criteria, the four Peninsula Cities, are generally classified as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, as illustrated in the maps below.

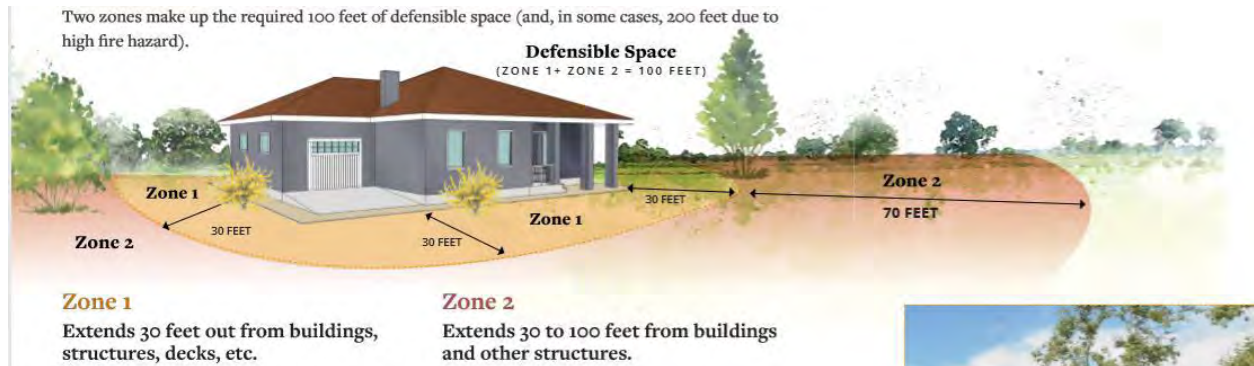


## Defensible Space

Pursuant to the State Government Code, properties located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone must maintain certain defensible space through specific fuel modification (brush clearing) requirements. These fuel modification requirements are enforced wholly by the Los Angeles County Fire Department.



Defensible space is defined as 100 feet from structures in Fire Hazard Severity Zones and 200 feet from structures in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. These spaces are further subdivided into two zones, the first extending 30 feet out from structures, and the second extending the remaining 70 feet (or 170 feet in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones), as shown in the diagram below:



Since the four Peninsula Cities are primarily designated as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones as such, defensible space is generally defined as 200 feet from structures.

### Methods of Fuel Management

There are 5 methods currently being used by the County of Los Angeles Fire Department (not specific to the Peninsula) to manage hazardous vegetation:

- Prescribed fire - The confined application of fire to a preselected area of land in order to minimize the amount of fuel in the area. Prescribed fires are carried out only under specific weather and fuel conditions and is used to mimic nature's own process of regeneration.
- Mechanical brush removal – Defined as the use of mechanical equipment to reduce vegetation in an area. Equipment consists mainly of a bulldozer, in combination with a “brush crusher”, a brushrake, disk or anchor chain, which crushes or removes the vegetation.
- Chemical application – The application of growth inhibitors, defoliators or killers to reduce highly flammable herbaceous or poisonous plants such as annual grasses or poison oak.
- Biological control – The reduction of plant volume using grazing or browsing animals, such as goats, to hold growth back and maintain low fuel volume.
- Hand clearing – The use of manual labor to remove brush with an assortment of tools including the Pulaski, hand axe, Grubbing hoe, chain saw, handsaw and

others to modify vegetation arrangement. This is the most common method used by property owners to meet Fire Code requirements.

The Peninsula cities do not utilize all of the above methods used by LACoFD. Prescribed fire presents obvious community concerns, mechanical brush removal is avoided, if possible, and the use of chemical application would be a violation of Rancho Palos Verdes' Natural Communities Conservation Plan / Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) and would general not be accepted by the community. This leaves biological control and hand clearing as the primary methods used by the Peninsula cities, as listed below:

- Goats
- Hand-operated machinery (i.e. trimmers, “weed eaters,” chain saws, etc.)

### Goats

Goats are an effective and cost-effective way of performing fuel modification in areas of steep and difficult terrain that would otherwise be difficult and/or costly to have performed by human-operated machinery. However, goats are often not the fastest way to address flat areas, require additional fencing to protect habitat and U.S. Department of Agriculture Covered Species, and are not practical for addressing narrow areas (such as the 10-foot-wide areas adjacent to roadways). Moreover, areas where goats are utilized will often require additional efforts (e.g. mowing, disking or trimming) to address stalks left after the grazing, as trampling or “stampeding” efforts prove leaving the area less slightly than desired. Rancho Palos Verdes utilizes goats on an annual basis to conduct fuel modification in its open space areas, the additional Peninsula cities are exploring similar options.

### Educating Property Owners and Residents

Educating property owners and residents is an important aspect of the Peninsula Cities wildfire brush mitigation strategies. Staff continues to enhance educational materials, research education opportunities, or update their respective City's website with information on fuel modification. Additionally, The Los Angeles County Fire Department offers Wildfire public safety programs such as: Fire Weather-Fire Danger, Fire Hazard Reduction, Fuel Modification, and READY! SET! GO! For more information Visit: [www.fire.lacounty.gov](http://www.fire.lacounty.gov)

### Acacia Removal

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes City Council and Rolling Hills City Council have budgeted for the removal of Acacia shrubs to reduce the fuel load inside the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve. This project augments current efforts to maintain fuel modification zones near homes by addressing major threats to property and wildlife habitat that are posed by Acacia throughout the Preserve.

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy (PVPLC) oversees this project to reduce the local fuel load vegetation using a specialized approach to remove the invasive plants from areas including Portuguese Canyon, near Vanderlip and Narcissa Drives, as well as the San Ramon Reserve.

Due to Acacia being comprised of approximately 90% dry plant matter and volatile resins, it is highly combustible and is a high-hazard plant, which puts it on the list for priority removal. Acacia is the number one plant of concern by the L.A. County Fire Department. It is particularly problematic in areas close to power lines. Acacia is designated as a “high-hazard” plant by the L.A. County Fire Department’s recent publication, “Ready! Set! Go!” (Attachment A).

The PVPLC works with the Cities of RPV and RH to implement fuel modification as required by the L.A. County Department of Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures as a part landowner with responsibilities for fuel modification near adjacent homes. Additionally, the PVPLC clears over 90 acres of weeds in restoration sites within the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve and other Peninsula open space areas, and aims to clear overgrowth from 30-plus miles of trails annually.

For more information Visit: [www.pvplc.org](http://www.pvplc.org).

#### Lessons learned from the Woolsey Fire

The Woolsey Fire began on November 8, 2018, killed three people, burned 96,949 acres of land, destroyed 1,643 structures, and led to the evacuation of more than 295,000 people in the 13 days before it was contained. The Woolsey fire, required the collaborative effort of hundreds of Strike Teams from across the nation to protect the homes and people of the Ventura and Los Angeles Counties.

Wildfire events have long been a concern for the residents of the Peninsula Cities, the final after-action report for the Woolsey Fire, which was released by Los Angeles County on November 17, 2019 identifies significant lessons the Peninsula Cities can review in preparing for a wildfire.

The after-action report for the Woolsey Fire, released by Los Angeles County on November 17, 2019 yielded 155 findings and 86 actionable recommendations. The needed improvements identified in the report fell into three overarching themes:

- **Communication:** All Los Angeles County agencies need to increase resource commitments to the crisis communication function. Public Information Officers (PIOs) need more in-depth training for their roles, to work together under a multi-agency, common incident communications strategy and have redundant tools with which to reach the public—at the same quick pace that incidents grow.
- **Collaboration:** County leadership should strive for a more collaborative “One Team LA” mindset. This applies to not just the County agencies, but to the cities and special districts for wide-area multiple-county events. Every large area

emergency must be framed as a unified command operation where key decision makers come together under an Incident Commander who uses policy direction to determine objectives, achieve unity of effort, and direct a single voice for communications. The public may not always know what agency directly serves them—but in these situations, every Southern Californian expects and deserves seamless collaboration.

- ***Situational Awareness:*** Data-driven knowledge from which to command in real time, at the incident's tempo, is crucial in the early hours of an emerging disaster. Most of the Woolsey Fire destruction occurred in the first 30 hours, not unlike what occurred in the communities of Paradise (2018 Camp Fire) and Santa Rosa (2017 Tubbs Fire). An emergency the speed and size of the Woolsey Fire does not wait for intelligence to be gathered slowly or normal incident command decision timeframes. Nighttime, smoke, technology failure, or any other obstacle also cannot be allowed to slow command decisions.

Near-term agency action recommendations from the report include:

1. Improve coordination of multiple-agency emergency public messages.
2. Increase the speed and use of all alerting tools in wide-area, fast-paced disasters.
3. Create more specific evacuation plans that can adapt to major road closures and a fast-paced disaster.
4. Help the public understand the risks and ramifications of not evacuating to protect their property when Fire Front Following and Life Safety First strategies are being utilized.
5. Address the impact of long-distance fire storm ember spotting through education and an emphasis on using layered buffer zones, including appropriate vegetation mitigations, improving soil moisture, and structure hardening techniques.

A copy of the executive summary is included as Attachment B, and the complete report may be reviewed by clicking [here](#).

### California Environmental Quality Act

Fuel modification on both private and public is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which requires measures be taken to protect environmental resources as appropriate (Homeowners are exempt, however, from CEQA requirements for the first 100 feet). This typically involves tracking habitat loss and protection of federally and state listed endangered and/or other sensitive species, if required.



# READY! SET!GO!

YOUR PERSONAL  
WILDFIRE ACTION PLAN



[fire.lacounty.gov](http://fire.lacounty.gov)



# MESSAGE FROM FIRE CHIEF DARYL L. OSBY



Dear Residents,

Los Angeles County is one of the most beautiful places to live, but for those living in “wildland urban interface areas,” it does not come without risks.

Climate change has made fire season year-round and increased our ever-growing number of wildfires. Firefighters and residents alike are now constantly on heightened alert for the threat of wildfires.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department, along with our partnering agencies, stand ready to quickly respond to contain wildfires, utilizing our firefighting resources from the air and ground to help protect you and your property from wildfire.

But, we can’t do this without your cooperation. Preparation and prevention go hand-in-hand. This *Ready! Set! Go!* brochure was designed to provide you with critical information on creating defensible space around your home, retrofitting your home with fire-resistant materials, and preparing you to safely evacuate well ahead of a wildfire. Please protect yourself, your family, and your property from a devastating wildfire by taking the time to learn about *Ready! Set! Go!*

In Los Angeles County, wildfires will continue to be fueled by a build-up of seasonal dry vegetation and driven by dry conditions and locally strong winds, making them extremely dangerous and challenging for firefighters to control. Yet, many homeowners don’t consider how a wildfire could affect them, and very few residents have properly prepared for evacuation until it is too late.

You play the most important role in protecting yourself, family, and property. Through planning and preparation, we can all be ready for the next wildfire. I hope you find the information in this brochure helpful as you prepare your home and family for a wildfire.

As always, if you need additional information about preparing for a wildfire or any other natural disaster, please contact your nearest fire station or visit us at [fire.lacounty.gov](http://fire.lacounty.gov).

**Daryl L. Osby**  
Los Angeles County Fire Chief

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## READY!



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## GO!



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The *Ready!Set!Go!* program is supported by the following partner agencies:





# READY!



## Living in the Wildland Urban Interface

Ready! Set! Go! begins with a house that firefighters can defend.

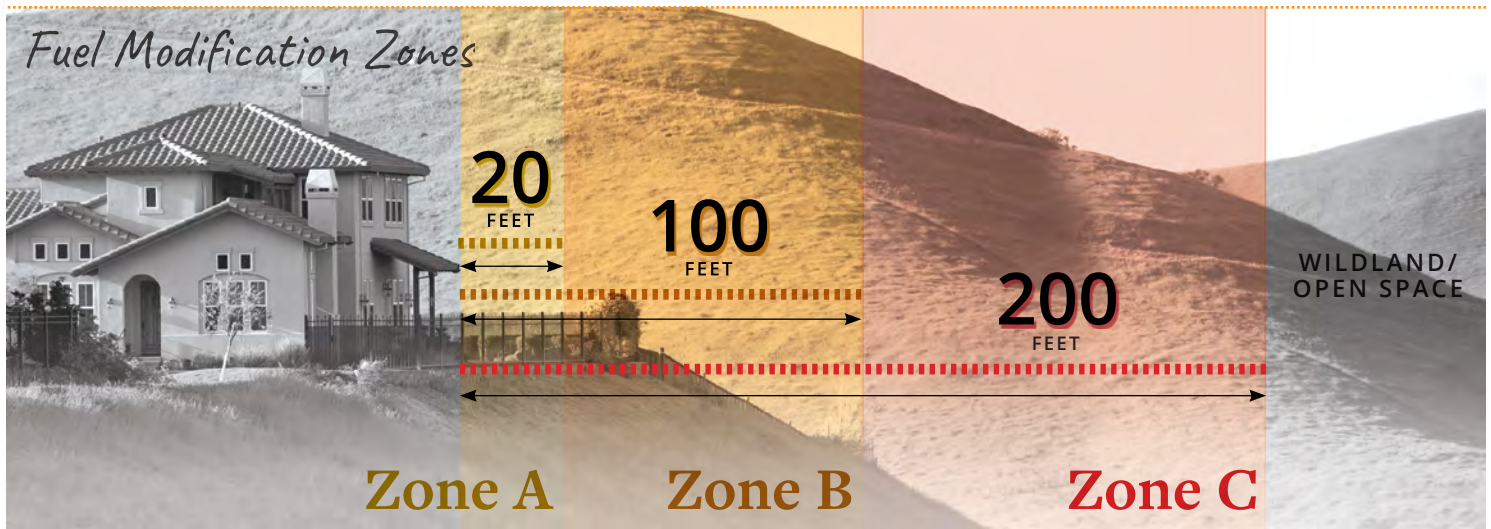
### Create a Defensible Home

A defensible home is a home that has the greatest potential for surviving a wildfire. Defensible homes are those that are in compliance with the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Defensible Space requirements or have been through the Fire Department's Fuel Modification Plan Review Program, and have been constructed in accordance with the latest building standards for the fire zones.

### What Is Fuel Modification?

The Fuel Modification Plan Review Program affects new structures and developments built in the fire hazard severity zones. A Fuel Modification Plan, submitted by applicants, reviews landscaping plans and identifies areas of defensible space within all fuel modification zones around structures.

**For further information please visit:** [bit.ly/fuelmod](https://bit.ly/fuelmod)



#### Zone A EXTENDS 20 FEET FROM STRUCTURE

- Vines and climbing plants shall not be allowed on any combustible structure.
- Irrigated area consisting of low-growing, small herbaceous plants with high-moisture content immediately around structures.
- Occasional accents of woody shrubs or an occasional small patio tree ten feet from structure, if widely spaced and zone appropriate as well as eliminating annual grasses and leaf litter help prevent direct-flame impingement on the structure.

#### Zone B EXTENDS UP TO 100 FEET FROM STRUCTURE

- Also irrigated with an approved slightly dense planting avoiding woody plant species larger than 3 feet at maturity beneath any tree canopy.
- Introducing shade trees that are zone appropriate with adequate spacing by eliminating continuous canopy coverage and continuous fuels to minimize fire transmission.
- Screen plantings can be used; however, continuous hedging is discouraged as it promotes the accumulation of dead litter inside the live hedge.

#### Zone C EXTENDS FROM ZONE B OUTER EDGE UP TO 200 FEET FROM STRUCTURE

- Thinned to remove dead vegetation and prevent overgrowth.
- Designed to slow the fire's progress and reduce its intensity by decreasing the availability of continuous fuels.
- Native vegetation thinned 30 to 50 percent in Zone C.

#### *Ideal Fuel Modification Landscape:*

Limited woody plant material, high moisture content, adequate spacing and inorganic mulch throughout Zone A.

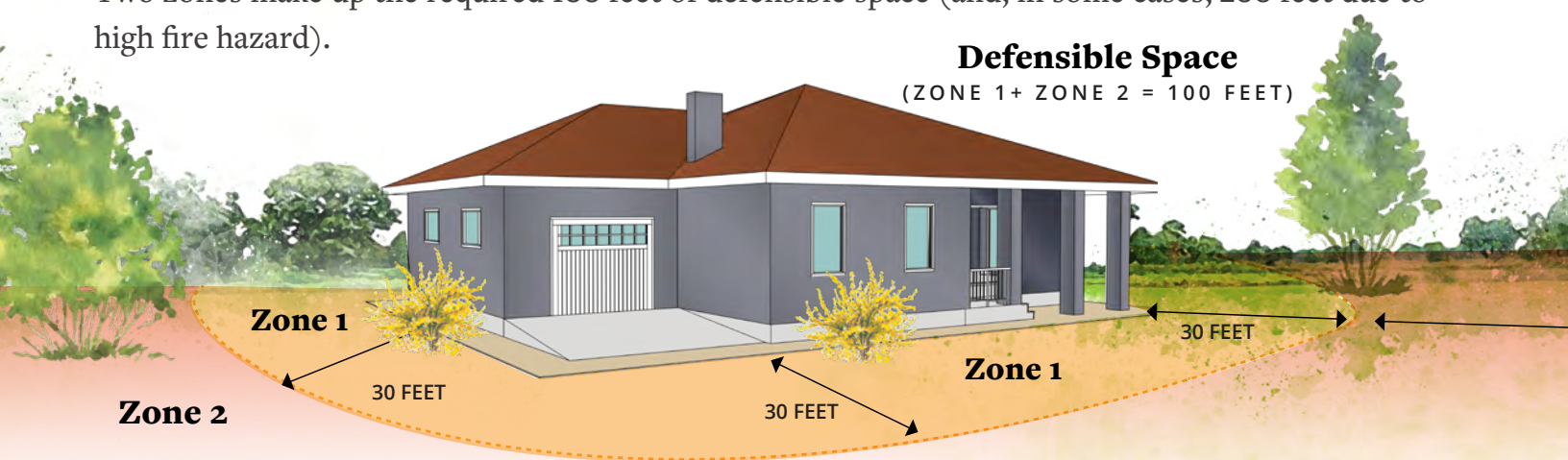




## Defensible Space

Creating and maintaining defensible space are essential for increasing your home's chance of surviving a wildfire. It's the buffer that homeowners are required to create on their property between a structure and the plants, brush, and trees or other items surrounding the structure that could catch fire. This space is needed to slow the spread of wildfire and improves the safety of firefighters defending your home. The defensible space for each structure varies, depending on the type of vegetation and topography.

Two zones make up the required 100 feet of defensible space (and, in some cases, 200 feet due to high fire hazard).



### Zone 1

**Extends 30 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc.**

- Remove all dead or dying vegetation.
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof, and rain gutters.
- Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
- Remove dead branches that hang over your roof. And, keep branches 10 feet away from your chimney.
- Relocate exposed woodpiles outside of Zone 1 unless they are completely covered in a fire-resistant material.
- Remove vines and climbing plants from combustible structures (e.g. bougainvillea, wisteria)
- Remove or prune vegetation near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Create a separation between trees, shrubs, and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, swing sets, etc.

### Zone 2

**Extends 30 to 100 feet from buildings and other structures.**

(Note: The inspecting officer may require an additional 100 feet of thinning or removal, for a total of 200 feet due to high-fire hazard.)

- Cut or move annual grass down to a maximum height of four inches.
- Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
- Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees.
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of 4 inches if erosion control is an issue.

**Note:** Special attention should be given to the use and maintenance of ornamental plants known or thought to be high-hazard plants when used in close proximity to structures. Examples include Acacia, Cedar, Cypress, Eucalyptus, Italian Cypress, Juniper, Palms (remove all dead fronds), Pine (removal within 20' of structures) and, pampas grass. These plantings should be properly maintained and not allowed to be in mass plantings that could transmit fire from the native growth to any structure.





# READY!

## HAZARDOUS ORNAMENTAL LANDSCAPE

Preventing conditions where fire can travel from adjacent fuels, through an ornamental landscape to your structure, is the key to creating defensible space. Fire spreads through convection, conduction, radiation, or embers. Proper maintenance of ornamental vegetation reduces ember production, fire propagation, intensity, and duration of the approaching flames.



### »»»»»»»»»» HIGH-HAZARD PLANTS ««««««««««



*Acacia (Shrub)*



*Eucalyptus*



*Juniper*



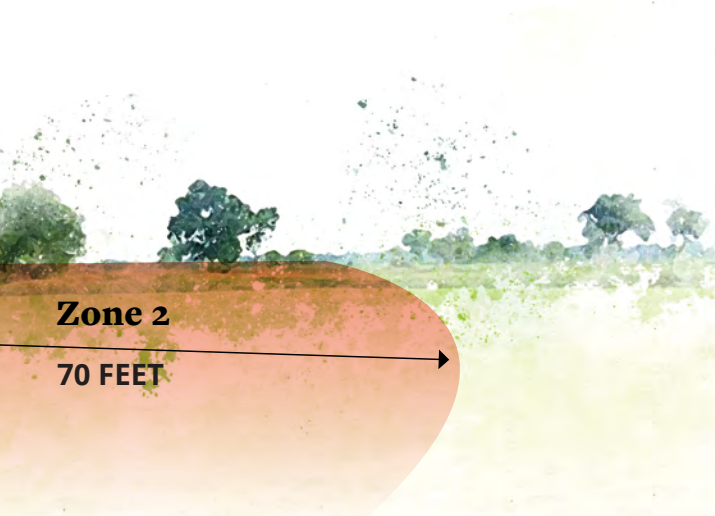
*Palm*



*Pine*



*Pampas Grass*



This home provides a good example of defensible space.



Firefighters in defensible space during a wildfire.

## Safeguard or “Harden” Your Home

The ability of your home to survive a wildfire depends on its construction materials and the quality of the “defensible space” surrounding it. Windblown embers from a wildfire will find the weak link in your home’s fire protection scheme and gain the upper hand because of a small, overlooked or seemingly inconsequential factor. However, there are measures you can take to safeguard your home from wildfire. While you may not be able to accomplish all of the measures listed below, each will increase your home’s - and possibly your family’s - safety and survival.

### *Tour a Wildfire-Ready Home*

#### Address 1

- Make sure your address is clearly visible from the road.

#### Chimney 2

- Cover your chimney and stovepipe outlets with a non-flammable screen of ¼-inch wire mesh or smaller to prevent embers from escaping and igniting a fire.
- Make sure that your chimney is at least 10 feet away from any tree branches.

#### Deck/Patio Cover 3

- Use heavy timber or non-flammable construction material for decks and patio covers.
- Enclose the underside of balconies and decks with fire-resistant materials to prevent embers from blowing underneath.
- Keep your deck clear of combustible items, such as baskets, dried flower arrangements, and other debris.
- The decking surface must be ignition-resistant if it’s within 10 feet of the home.

#### Driveways and Access Roads 4

- Driveways should be designed to allow fire and emergency vehicles and equipment to reach your home.
- Access roads should have a minimum 10-foot clearance on either side of the traveled section of the roadway and should



allow for two-way traffic.

- Ensure that all gates open inward and are wide enough to accommodate emergency equipment.
- Trim trees and shrubs overhanging the road to a minimum of 13-½ (or 13.5) feet to allow emergency vehicles to pass.

#### Garage 5

- Have a fire extinguisher and tools, such as a shovel, rake, bucket, and hoe, available for fire emergencies.
- Install a solid door with self-closing hinges between living areas and the garage. Install weather stripping around and under the doors to prevent ember intrusion.
- Store all combustibles and flammable liquids away from ignition sources.

#### Home Site and Yard 6

- Ensure you have at least a 100-foot radius of defensible space (cleared vegetation) around your home. This means looking past what you own to determine the impact a common slope or neighbor’s yard will have on your property during a wildfire.
- Cut dry weeds and grass before noon when temperatures are cooler to reduce the chance of sparking a fire.
- Landscape with fire-resistant plants that are low-growing with high-moisture content.
- Keep woodpiles, propane tanks, and combustible materials away from your home and other structures, such as garages, barns, and sheds.
- Ensure trees are far away from power lines.



# READY!

## Inside



- Keep working fire extinguishers on hand and train your family how to use them (check expiration dates regularly).
- Install smoke alarms on each level of your home and near bedrooms. Test them monthly and change the batteries twice a year.

## Non-Combustible Boxed-In (Soffit) Eaves

- Box-in eaves with non-combustible materials to prevent accumulation of embers.



## Non-Combustible Fencing 7

- Make sure to use non-combustible fencing to protect your home during a wildfire.

## Rain Gutters

- Screen or enclose rain gutters to prevent accumulation of plant debris.



## Roof 8

- Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home because it can easily catch fire from windblown embers.
- Homes with wood shake or shingle roofs are at a higher risk of being destroyed during a wildfire.
- Build your roof or re-roof with fire-resistant materials that include composition, metal, or tile.
- Block any spaces between roof decking and covering to prevent ember intrusion.
- Clear pine needles, leaves, and other debris from your roof and gutters.
- Cut any tree branches within 10 feet of your roof.

## Vents

- Vents on homes are particularly vulnerable to flying embers.
- All vent openings should be covered with 1/8-inch or smaller metal mesh. Do not use fiberglass or plastic mesh because they can melt and burn.
- Attic vents in eaves or cornices should be baffled or otherwise prevent ember intrusion (mesh is not enough).



## Walls 9

- Wood products, such as boards, panels, or shingles, are common siding materials. However, they are combustible and not good choices for fire-prone areas.
- Build or remodel with fire-resistant building materials, such as brick, cement, masonry, or stucco.
- Be sure to extend materials from foundation to roof.

## Water Supply 10



- Have multiple garden hoses that are long enough to reach any area of your home and other structures on your property.
- If you have a pool or well, consider a pump.

## Windows 11

- Heat from a wildfire can cause windows to break even before the home ignites. This allows burning embers to enter and start internal fires. Single-paned and large windows are particularly vulnerable.
- Install dual-paned windows with an exterior pane of tempered glass to reduce the chance of breakage in a fire.
- Limit the size and number of windows in your home that face large areas of vegetation.

## Utilities

- Ensure that your family knows where your gas, electric, and water main shut-off controls are and how to safely shut them down in an emergency.



# SET!

## Create Your Own Wildfire Action Plan

Now that you have done everything you can to protect your home, it's time to prepare your family. **Your Wildfire Action Plan must be prepared with all members of your household well in advance of a wildfire.** Each family's plan will be different, depending on their situation. Once you finish your plan, practice it regularly with your family, and post in a safe and accessible place for quick implementation.



### 1 Important Phone Numbers

- ☐ A family communication plan that designates an out-of-area friend or relative as a point-of-contact to act as a single source of communication among family members in case of separation.
- ☐ Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers posted near your phone and in your Emergency Supply Kit.

### 2 What to Take

- ☐ Assemble an Emergency Supply Kit (see page 10 in this guide).
- ☐ Keep an extra Emergency Supply Kit in your car in case you can't get to your home because of fire.
- ☐ Have a portable radio or scanner, so that you can stay updated on the fire.

### 3 Prepare to Evacuate

- ☐ Designate an emergency meeting location, outside the fire or hazard area. It is critical to determine who has safely evacuated from the affected area.
- ☐ Several different escape routes from your home and community. Practice these often so everyone in your family is familiar in case of emergency.
- ☐ Necessities and boarding options for your pets and large animals, such as horse and other livestock.





# Your Personal WILDFIRE ACTION PLAN



During High Fire Danger days in your area, monitor your local media for information on wildfires and be ready to implement your plan. Hot, dry, and windy conditions create the perfect environment for a wildfire.

## 1 IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

### EMERGENCY CONTACTS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

(      )  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

(      )  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

### SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

(      )  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

(      )  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

### FAMILY & FRIENDS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

(      )  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

(      )  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

## 2 WHAT TO TAKE



## 3 EVACUATION

### WHEN TO GO

\_\_\_\_\_

### WHERE TO GO

\_\_\_\_\_

### HOW TO GET THERE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### DESTINATION

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### WHO TO TELL (BEFORE AND AFTER)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### ANIMAL SHELTER

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

(      )  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
**IF YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY, CALL 9-1-1**

Public Information Office: (323) 881-2411  
fire.lacounty.gov



# SET!

## Assemble Your Emergency Supply Kit

Put together your emergency supply kit long before a wildfire or other disaster occurs, and keep it easily accessible, so you can take it with you when you have to evacuate. Plan to be away from your home for an extended period of time. Each person should have a readily accessible emergency supply kit.

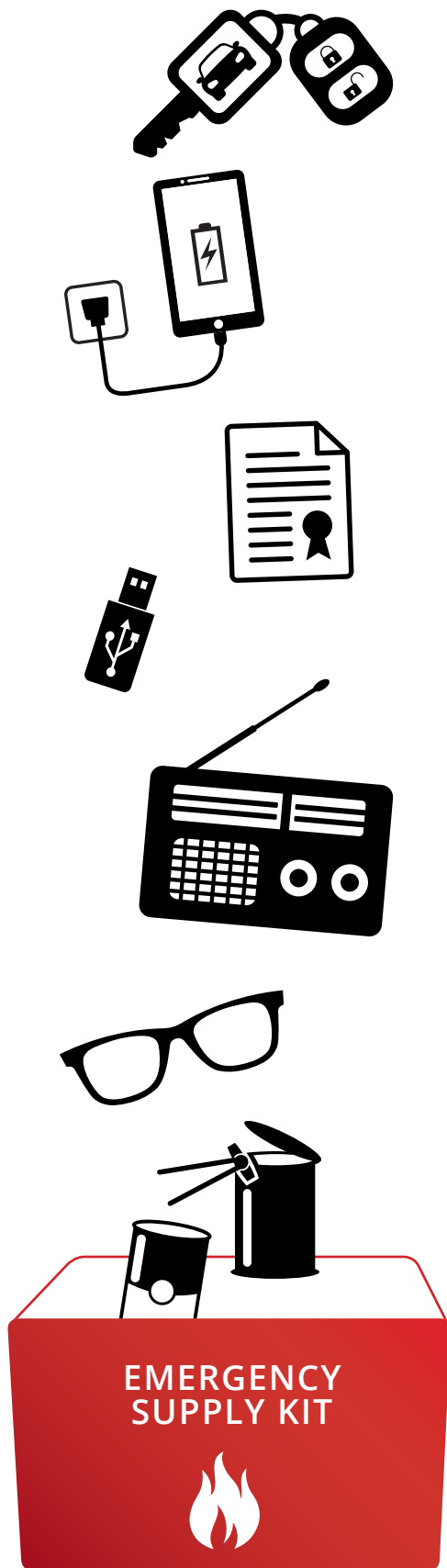
Backpacks work great for storing these items (except for food and water) and are easy to grab. Storing food and water in a tub or chest on wheels will make it easier to transport. Keep it light to be able to easily lift it into your car.

### Essential Supplies

- ☐ Three-day supply of non-perishable food and three gallons of water per person.
- ☐ Map marked with at least two evacuation routes
- ☐ Prescriptions or special medications
- ☐ Change of clothing
- ☐ Closed-toe shoes
- ☐ Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses
- ☐ An extra set of car keys, credit cards, cash, or travelers checks
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- ☐ Sanitation supplies
- ☐ Copies of important documents (e.g., birth certificates, passports, etc.)
- ☐ Don't forget pet food and water!

### If Time Allows

- ☐ Easy-to-carry valuables
- ☐ Family photos and other irreplaceable items
- ☐ Personal computer information on hard drives and flash drives
- ☐ Chargers for cell phones, laptops, etc.



# SET!

## Pre-Evacuation Preparation Steps

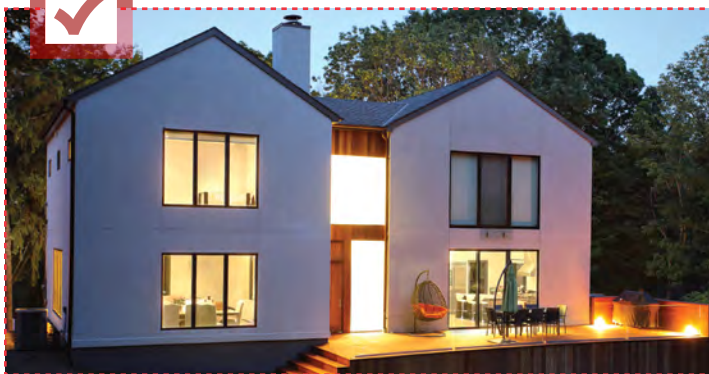
When an evacuation is anticipated and if time permits, follow these checklists to give your home the best chance of surviving a wildfire:

### Animals



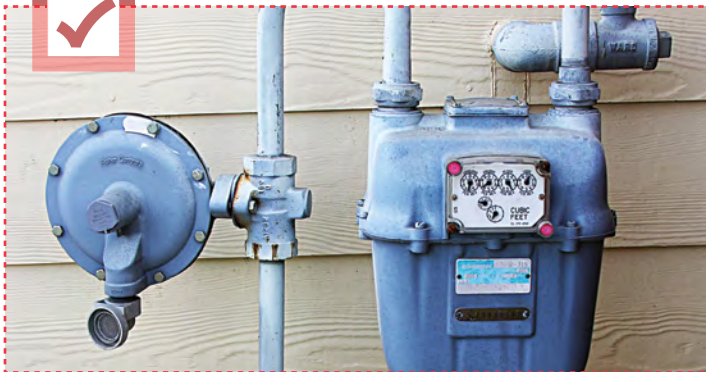
- ☐ Locate your pets and keep them nearby.
- ☐ Prepare farm animals for transport and think about moving them to a safe location early.

### Inside



- ☐ Shut all windows and doors, leaving them unlocked.
- ☐ Remove flammable window shades, lightweight curtains, and close metal shutters.
- ☐ Move flammable furniture to the center of the room, away from windows and doors.
- ☐ Leave your lights on so firefighters can see your home under smoky conditions.
- ☐ Shut off the air conditioning.
- ☐ Shut off the gas meter. Turn off pilot lights.

### Outside



- ☐ Gather up flammable items from the exterior of the house and bring them inside (e.g., patio furniture, children's toys, doormats, etc.) or place them in your pool.
- ☐ Turn off propane tanks. Move propane BBQ appliances away from structures.
- ☐ Connect garden hoses to outside water valves or spigots for use by firefighters. Fill water buckets and place them around the house.
- ☐ Don't leave sprinklers on or water running. They can affect critical water pressure.
- ☐ Leave exterior lights on.
- ☐ Put your emergency supply kit in your vehicle.
- ☐ Back your loaded vehicle into the driveway with all doors and windows closed. Carry your car keys with you.
- ☐ Have a ladder available.
- ☐ Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals, if time permits.
- ☐ Monitor your property and the wildfire situation. **Don't wait for an evacuation order, if you feel threatened and need to leave.**
- ☐ Check on neighbors and make sure they are preparing to leave.

# Remember the Six P's

*People and pets*



*Papers, phone numbers,  
and important documents*



*Prescriptions,  
vitamins, and  
eyeglasses*



# P

*Pictures and  
irreplaceable  
memorabilia*



*Plastic*

*(e.g., credit cards, ATM cards)*

*and cash*



*Personal computer  
hard drives  
and flash drives*







## ⚠️ TAKE ACTION IMMEDIATELY WHEN WILDFIRE STRIKES ⚠️

### Go Early

By leaving early, you will give your family the best chance of surviving a wildfire. You also help firefighters by keeping roads clear of congestion, enabling them to move more freely and do their job.

### When to Evacuate

Leave as soon as evacuation is recommended by emergency personnel to avoid being caught in fire, smoke, or road congestion. Don't wait to be ordered by authorities to leave. In an intense wildfire, they may not have time to knock on every door. If you are advised to leave, don't hesitate! Go!

- Emergency personnel will determine the areas to be evacuated and escape routes to use, depending upon the fire's location, behavior, winds, terrain, etc.
- Emergency personnel make every effort to advise you of potential evacuations as early as possible. You must take the initiative to stay informed and aware. Monitor social media and listen to your local radio/TV for announcements from law enforcement and other emergency personnel.
- You may be directed to temporary assembly areas to await transfer to a safe location.

The terms "Voluntary" and "Mandatory" are used to describe evacuation orders. However, local jurisdictions may use other terminology such as "Precautionary" and "Immediate Threat." These terms are used to alert you to the significance of the danger. All evacuation instructions provided by emergency personnel should be followed immediately for your safety.

### Where to Go

Leave for a pre-determined location. It should be a low-risk area, such as a well-prepared neighbor or relative's house, a Red Cross shelter or evacuation center, Motel, etc.

### How to Get There

Have several travel routes in case one route is blocked by the fire or by emergency vehicles and equipment. Choose an escape route away from the fire.



*Follow these steps as soon as possible to get ready to GO!*

- Review your Wildfire Action Plan evacuation checklist.



- Ensure your Emergency Supply Kit is in your vehicle.



- Cover up to protect against heat and flying embers. Wear long pants, a long-sleeve shirt, heavy shoes/boots, a cap, dry bandanna (for face cover), goggles, or glasses. 100% cotton is preferable.



- Locate your pets and take them with you.



## Survival Tips if You Become Trapped

### In Your Home

- ☐ Stay calm and keep your family together.
- ☐ Call 9-1-1 and inform authorities of your location.
- ☐ Fill sinks and tubs with cold water.
- ☐ Keep doors and windows closed, but unlocked.
- ☐ Stay inside your home.
- ☐ Stay away from outside walls.



### In Your Vehicle

- ☐ Stay calm.
- ☐ Park your vehicle in an area clear of vegetation.
- ☐ Close all vehicle windows and vents.
- ☐ Cover yourself with a wool or cotton blanket or jacket.
- ☐ Lie on the vehicle floor.
- ☐ Use your cell phone and call 9-1-1 to inform authorities of your location.



### On Foot

- ☐ Stay calm.
- ☐ Go to an area clear of vegetation, a ditch or depression on level ground if possible.
- ☐ Lie face down and cover up your body.
- ☐ Use your cell phone and call 9-1-1 to inform authorities of your location.



## Returning Home After a Wildfire

Do not return home until emergency officials determine it is safe. You will receive proper notification to do so as soon as it is possible, considering safety and accessibility.

### When You Return Home

- ☐ Be alert for downed power lines and other hazards.
- ☐ Check propane tanks, regulators, and lines before turning gas on.
- ☐ Check your residence carefully for hidden embers or smoldering fires.







Preparing for a wildfire starts with three simple steps:



**READY!**



**SET!**



**GO!**

Please keep this plan on hand as a quick reference for helping your family and property be safe in the event of a wildfire.

## OFFICIAL



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instagram.com/lacountyfd



youtube.com/user/LosAngelesCountyFD



vimeo.com/user4029934

## PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE



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Download the  
**Ready! Set! Go!**  
Wildfire Action Plan at  
[fire.lacounty.gov/rsg](http://fire.lacounty.gov/rsg)  
or by scanning this  
QR code with your  
smart phone.



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**READY!**



**SET!**



**GO!**



[fire.lacounty.gov](http://fire.lacounty.gov)

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

*Public Information Office*

1320 N. Eastern Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90063

*Produced by the Communications Section  
of the Executive Support Division.  
Revised September 25, 2018.*





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Woolsey Fire occurred in one of the most populous areas of the nation in an area well protected by emergency services. Thursday, November 8, 2018, began with a mass casualty shooting in Ventura County, a wildfire that enveloped and destroyed the town of Paradise in northern California, the fast-moving Ventura County Hill Fire, and, less than an hour after the Hill Fire, the Woolsey Fire started in Ventura County and spread into Los Angeles County.

In Los Angeles County, the responding agencies are large and capable. They are *extremely* experienced with large wildfires, as are many of the affected neighborhoods. While the size and speed of the Woolsey Fire in the first 33 hours challenged the coordinated agencies, the agencies and the public must recognize numerous significant accomplishments despite a *perfect storm* of factors that, when aligned, drove an event never experienced in the Los Angeles region:

- ◆ More than 250,000 people were successfully evacuated
- ◆ Casualties were limited to three, with no significant injuries to civilians or firefighters
- ◆ There were no significant aircraft or fire engine accidents
- ◆ Nine victim shelters and six animal shelters were opened
- ◆ Disaster Assistance Centers (DACs) were operational as soon as possible
- ◆ New private property debris removal practices were effectively implemented
- ◆ Significant care was provided for displaced animals of all types
- ◆ Significant health care was provided for the displaced populations in the shelters

Despite the numerous significant accomplishments in light of such a wildfire, the public understandably experienced frustration. Residents' prior experience and expectations regarding the agencies' capability to successfully confront a fast-moving wildfire were abruptly reset by the many obstacles present. No single fire had ever occurred in the mountains or the Malibu area that did not receive massive quantities of fire engines in time, but the Woolsey Fire was different.

While the Woolsey Fire disaster presented unprecedented challenges, it was still a single, focused incident; it was not Countywide. Imagine the challenges after a great earthquake or similar wide-ranging event. There are two primary, equally important lessons for the public, which are not new:

- ◆ Where wildfire threats are significant, buildings must be hardened against ember ignition and vegetation mitigations must be followed and maintained.
- ◆ The public must be prepared to receive information and follow the advice given.

There must also be an ongoing public policy discussion regarding significant development in Very High or High Fire Hazard Severity areas. A review of California's fire history indicates that five of California's *deadliest* (casualties) wildfires have occurred over the past two years, six of the



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most *destructive* (structures) wildfires occurred over the past 10 years, and 15 of the *largest* (acreage) wildfires occurred over the past 19 years.

As terrible as the Woolsey Fire was, it was not the largest *megafire* in California. We cannot expect that all population growth in Very High or High Fire Hazard Severity areas can be protected simply by increasing resiliency<sup>1</sup> to wildfire and by adding more fire engines. Even if the current fire weather cycle stops, *it will return*. Governor Gavin Newsom’s Strike Force Team, on April 12, 2019, observed that it is critical to “Make communities more resilient by considering updating codes that govern defensible space, encouraging cost-effective hardening of homes, strengthening evacuation, encouraging other emergency planning, *and improving land use practices to reduce the damage to life and property from wildfires.*”<sup>2</sup>

These issues create real tension between public expectations and agency abilities which will require a concentrated effort to overcome. The Woolsey Fire clearly demonstrated that, while the agencies and public are prepared for a typical-to-serious emergency, there is room for improvement in catastrophic incident response and in reducing community vulnerability to a calamitous, fast-paced, dynamic event of any type.

### ***WOOLSEY RESPONSE COMPLEXITIES***

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While the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LA County Fire), the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LA City Fire), and the Ventura County Fire Department (Ventura County Fire) regularly plan for and practice their response to a large fire in the region, they could not have planned for a complete exhaustion of California’s limited firefighting resources brought on by a regional wildfire weather threat in conjunction with the Camp Fire, a mass casualty shooting in Ventura County, and the Ventura County Hill Fire, which began just before the Woolsey Fire started.

As is the case in all fires, the responding fire departments’ top priority was to protect lives. During the initial stages of the Hill and Woolsey fires, all three departments were engaging in fire perimeter control, structure defense, and life safety actions. However, as the Woolsey Fire developed, the Camp Fire and Hill Fire consumed significant mutual aid resources and dry, northeast winds covered much of California, causing extreme fire behavior. As a result, by 2:30 PM on November 8, the southern California agencies that provided mutual aid resources to the Hill Fire now knew that no central or northern California agencies could send help south, and thus were very cautious about sending more of their resources to yet another local fire, which would leave their local areas vulnerable to the same conditions. Approximately 50 percent of requested resources were provided to the Woolsey Fire. Thus, as the Woolsey Fire grew Thursday evening, the fire services mutual aid system was already exhausted.

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<sup>1</sup> Hardening buildings, fuels treatment, and vegetation management

<sup>2</sup> *Wildfires and Climate Change: California’s Energy Future*, April 12, 2019



This necessitated the Woolsey Fire command team to strategically shift all resources to prioritize life safety as the fire rapidly grew, fanned by the Santa Ana winds gusting over 50 miles per hour. This strategy, along with a large, two-county sheriff's department evacuation force, successfully evacuated over a quarter of a million people and their animals from harm.

The initial emergency services response to the Woolsey Fire from two counties and the City of Los Angeles was proportionate to the initial fire; the experienced departments were ready and had planned for a severe fire weather day. Yet, the incident still presented unprecedented complexities:

- ◆ Multiple agencies (fire services, law enforcement, public works, and animal services) experienced an incident speed that, at times, outpaced their historically strong response efforts.
- ◆ Lives, structures, and critical infrastructure were threatened in the initial hours.
- ◆ Extensive evacuations across a multiple-jurisdictional area were required.
- ◆ Extensive infrastructure damage, at times, affected field operations, detoured evacuations, and delayed repopulation.
- ◆ The loss of the electrical system, due to wind and burned-down wooden power poles, created multiple challenges.
- ◆ Simultaneous neighboring and northern California fire incidents caused fire command's mutual aid requests to go significantly unfilled. Of those filled, the majority arrived after the fire reached Malibu.
  - Large Unable to Fill (UTF) mutual aid fire engine orders:
    - November 8: 175 engines UTF (58 percent)
    - November 9: 289 engines UTF (50 percent)
    - November 10 Noon: 874 engines UTF (53 percent)
- ◆ Relative humidity (RH), which plummeted to five percent, at times worsened the dry tinder fuel beds, many of which had not experienced fire for ten to forty years.
- ◆ Winds approaching hurricane force speeds and darkness Thursday evening combined to severely limit fixed-wing and rotor-wing aircraft firefighting drops, except for three LA County Fire Firehawk helicopters and LA City Fire helicopters.
- ◆ Although LA County Fire pulled as many resources as possible from its other fire stations to attack the Woolsey Fire, it was still required to maintain the resources necessary to respond to the nearly 1,100 daily 9-1-1 calls throughout the Department's 2,200-square-mile jurisdiction.
- ◆ All County personnel had to remain fully engaged without relief on the fire in the initial period.



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Despite numerous significant accomplishments in life safety, the severe challenges in the fire response caused an understandable public frustration and desire to know what was preventable, and what was due to unprecedented natural factors.

### ***THE WOOLSEY FIRE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE***

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- ◆ 96,949 acres, or 151.5 square miles, across two counties (appx. 1/3 the area of the City of Los Angeles)
  - 1,643 structures destroyed; 364 structures damaged in both counties
  - Los Angeles County (approximately 36 percent in the City of Malibu)
    - 184 homes and five commercial structures “damaged”
    - 1,075 homes and 46 commercial structures “destroyed”
    - Approximately 57,000 structures were not substantially affected
- ◆ The Woolsey Fire incident incurred approximately \$52 million in fire suppression costs alone (not the full economic cost to the County or the communities); of this, the aviation cost was \$7,717,795
- ◆ Insured losses are expected to total between \$3 billion and \$5 billion

### ***THE FIRE’S DYNAMICS***

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It is hard to envision the speed of the Woolsey Fire from one map or photograph. LA County Fire, Ventura County Fire, and LA City Fire immediately sent resources to stop the Woolsey Fire from ever reaching Los Angeles County and to protect the residents of Los Angeles County and Ventura County, and the City of Los Angeles. This *standard, planned* multi-jurisdictional response was exponentially larger than that of a normal response from a single jurisdiction; however, the fire presented unprecedented complexities *immediately*. From ignition Thursday afternoon, the Woolsey Fire burned to the Pacific Ocean in Malibu by noon Friday. Most the fire growth occurred after the fire crossed Highway 101, taking about 6.5 hours to reach the ocean. This After Action Review (AAR) will discuss the fire’s major dynamics that each presented new challenges:

- ◆ The location and topography, which presented severe challenges for initial attack
- ◆ The early November sunset, which grounded non-night-flying aircraft
- ◆ Early and mid-evening wind shifts when the fire was still outside heavily populated areas
- ◆ The fire’s crossing of the 12-lane Highway 101 before dawn on Friday
- ◆ The defense early Friday of both sides of Highway 101 in the populated areas and in the mountain communities consumed the immediately available fire attack resources as the fire began the run to Malibu Friday after dawn





- ◆ Very limited initial resources in Malibu Friday morning due to fire ferocity, unfilled mutual aid requests, and fire- or wind-caused road damage blocking Santa Monica Mountain roads
- ◆ Road limitations on Malibu evacuation routes due to fire- or wind-caused impacts

### ***EXPECTATIONS VERSUS REALITY***

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Even some of the largest, most experienced agencies in the United States were, at times, overwhelmed in the first hours by this incident's *speed and weight of impact*, exposing some limitations between the agencies and systems as they meshed into a single, wide-area regional response team in less than 24 hours. Prior experiences and expectations by community members regarding the agencies' capabilities to successfully confront a fast-moving wildfire were harshly reset by the many challenges presented by the Woolsey Fire:

- ◆ The expected fire behavior and rate of spread far exceeded the past experience of emergency responders, policy makers, and the public in the Santa Monica Mountains fire corridor areas.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ The public expected a more robust firefighting army of resources in the Malibu coastal area, but many factors prevented that from happening.
- ◆ In large, dynamic wildfires, some life and structure loss are a tragic but expected possibility; however, what occurred in less than 24 hours was not anticipated by any prior plan or preparedness exercise. Three of the four historic Santa Monica fire corridors burning at once was beyond prior experience.
- ◆ The California Fire Master Mutual Aid System is a worldwide model; yet, contributing factors over two decades inhibited rapid resource movement to the Hill Fire and Woolsey Fire commensurate with each fire's rapid pace.
- ◆ The expectation of round-the-clock electrical power and internet connectivity became a myth, with no quick fallback for the public and emergency responders.
- ◆ Social media has led people to expect access to real-time information; yet, the infrastructure and processes could not meet the fire storm's pace demands.
- ◆ Throughout California, no single public communication system exists that successfully crosses social, economic, age, and generational abilities to receive emergency information.
- ◆ The public has not been educated and trained enough regarding evacuation routes and does not understand the complexities of returning. These unmet expectations, and others regarding the level of firefighting resources, are causing some people to consider ignoring the next evacuation orders.

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<sup>3</sup> Canyon or drainage generally running to the ocean



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The public has a perception that public agencies can always protect them. As an incident the size of the Woolsey Fire shows, this is not always possible. The public has a shared responsibility for preparedness which requires ongoing education programs by the agencies.

### ***RECOGNITIONS***

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While the size and speed of the Woolsey Fire, at times, outpaced the early efforts of some of the largest and most experienced and capable agencies in the United States, they all should be recognized for their dedicated work. The following are some examples that deserve recognition:

- ◆ In the days leading up to the strong dry wind event, LA County Fire was preparing; placing additional resources on duty the day of the fire and ensuring its most experienced and qualified personnel were available and dispatched to the incident
- ◆ LA County Fire's early recognition that an unprecedented evacuation operation would be necessary
- ◆ A massive evacuation undertaking by the sheriff's departments of two counties
- ◆ Across the agencies, all available personnel reported for work and the initial *ground* crews and command chiefs went 36 to 48 hours without significant sleep
- ◆ Individual unit and personal initiative to overcome extraordinary conditions
- ◆ Aircrew/mechanic rotations to keep aircraft flying 24 hours per day
- ◆ Positive interagency relationships across all disciplines
- ◆ Annual joint training and planning efforts before the fire season
- ◆ Pre-positioning resources due to extreme fire weather the morning of November 8
- ◆ Public education programs such as Ready! Set! Go!
- ◆ Defensible space close to structures, where it existed, allowed defense of those properties as resource availability allowed
- ◆ By the first anniversary of the fire, the rebuilding effort has yielded nearly 100 reconstruction entitlements and ten building permits for affected structures and homes

### ***THEMES FOR NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS***

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In many respects, an AAR must be a technical document. In the work to follow, the research yielded 155 findings and 86 actionable recommendations across four themes: The Response, Communication, Evacuation/Repopulation, and Transition to Recovery. At an aggregated level, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the public can focus discussion on three overarching themes:

**Communication:** All Los Angeles County agencies need to increase resource commitments to the crisis communication function. Public Information Officers (PIO) need more in-depth training for



their roles, to work together under a multi-agency, common incident communications strategy and have redundant tools with which to reach the public—at the same quick pace that incidents grow.

- ◆ During the initial phases of evacuations, the City of Malibu, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (County Sheriff's Department), LA County Fire, and all other stakeholders worked on the evacuation of over 250,000 residences. While successful, the effort may not be reproducible as, in the early hours, there was not a clear, single, comprehensive voice speaking to evacuation, and not all notification tools were used or used often enough.
- ◆ There was an over-reliance on Twitter; care must also be taken to account for the digital divide in which not everyone is on Twitter or even the internet, creating the need for multiple methods of public emergency communication.
- ◆ Entry and repopulation policies were not well briefed to checkpoints or the public.

**Collaboration:** County leadership should strive for a more collaborative “One Team LA” mindset. This applies to not just the County agencies, but to the cities and special districts for wide-area multiple-county events. Every large area emergency must be framed as a unified command operation where key decision makers come together under an Incident Commander who uses policy direction to determine objectives, achieve unity of effort, and direct a single voice for communications. The public may not always know what agency directly serves them—but in these situations, every Southern Californian expects and deserves seamless collaboration.

- ◆ As this fire demonstrated, wildfires do not respect jurisdictional lines of agencies, cities, special districts, or counties. A Los Angeles sub-regional planning, response, and recovery dialogue must occur across county lines via a Multi-Agency Coordination System for large-scale wildfire, terrorism, and earthquake incidents.
- ◆ As the incident rapidly expanded, command post locations shifted to account for the Woolsey Fire's growing size and subsequent impact. This resulted in commanders not always being able to communicate face to face, which presents unified command communications challenges.
- ◆ The large Los Angeles County agencies are set-up with regional facilities and Department Operations Centers (DOCs) that routinely manage large emergencies without needing to depend on the Los Angeles County Emergency Operations Center (County EOC). As the Woolsey Fire grew, there was a stronger and less practiced need to work on the regional impact between the County EOC Woolsey Incident Command Post (ICP), the DOCs, and each independent city EOC.
- ◆ There is a need for greater inter-agency pre-incident evacuation and repopulation planning for the communities in Fire Hazard Severity Zones.
- ◆ No pre-prepared traffic evacuation plans/scenarios exist for the areas impacted by the Woolsey Fire.



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- ◆ Evacuation plans also need corresponding repopulation plans at the earliest moment.

**Situational Awareness:** *Data-driven* knowledge from which to command *in real time*, at the *incident's tempo*, is crucial in the early hours of an emerging disaster. Most of the Woolsey Fire destruction occurred in the first 30 hours, not unlike what occurred in the communities of Paradise (2018 Camp Fire) and Santa Rosa (2017 Tubbs Fire). An emergency the speed and size of the Woolsey Fire does not wait for intelligence to be gathered slowly or normal incident command decision timeframes. Nighttime, smoke, technology failure, or any other obstacle also cannot be allowed to slow command decisions. As a result, the following are needed:

- ◆ Research and investment in emerging technologies to reduce the “fog of war”
- ◆ Increased practice, procedures, and technologies in melding the large County agency DOCs and Incident Management Teams (IMTs) into a virtual unified command, as if they were in one physical location, to reduce lag time in fast-tempo, complicated decisions
- ◆ Public education regarding alerting and the public’s responsibility to understand incident severity and the need for Ready! Set! Go!
- ◆ Public education to increase awareness regarding public impact when a devastating fire incident shifts from direct control methods to Fire Front Following and Life Safety First tactics<sup>4</sup>
- ◆ Real-time display of fire perimeter, hazards, actions, shelters, and evacuation orders for public consumption

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**NEAR-TERM AGENCY ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Acquiring funding and implementing the technical recommendations across the themes beginning in **Section 5** are largely in the hands of agencies. Key highlights include:

1. Improve coordination of multiple-agency emergency public messages.
2. Increase the speed and use of all alerting tools in wide-area, fast-paced disasters.
3. Create more specific evacuation plans that can adapt to major road closures and a fast-paced disaster.
4. Help the public understand the risks and ramifications of not evacuating to protect their property when Fire Front Following and Life Safety First strategies are being utilized.

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<sup>4</sup> Fire Front Following and Life Safety First are firefighting tactics described in Section 2.3.1



5. Address the impact of long-distance fire storm ember spotting through education and an emphasis on using layered buffer zones, including appropriate vegetation mitigations, improving soil moisture, and structure hardening techniques.

### ***LONGER-TERM POLICY ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS***

In addition, the Woolsey Fire incident shows the need for policy leadership from Los Angeles County and regional elected officials to enable significant changes for multiple agencies and public participation. Citygate suggests the following recommendations receive *policy leadership focus* from the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors:

Premise – Because wildfires and other emergencies do not respect jurisdictional lines, all public jurisdictions should adopt a cross-boundary philosophy that addresses how to prepare, fight, and recover from wildfires without creating silo actions and establish a sub-regional command model to bridge agency/political lines.

1. Utilize an oversight body to institutionalize the Woolsey Fire 2018 lessons learned to ensure that AAR recommendations become reality and will transcend staffing attrition in the future.
2. Advance an initiative with all applicable public agencies and private interest groups that are involved in the Santa Monica Mountains region to develop a unified, comprehensive, and strategic wildfire hazard reduction plan.
3. Encourage the major fire departments in the area to evaluate creating a sub-regional (three county) Multiple-Agency Coordination and Control Center within the State mutual aid system that will utilize technology to enhance situational awareness and create a shared, *real-time* intelligence, information, and command center on an around-the-clock basis. This concept should further existing agreements and enhance the ability of agencies to work collaboratively during the first one to two days of a catastrophic disaster, for the common welfare, at a pace faster than the Statewide mutual aid system can provide.
4. Reset the operation of the County EOC to the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (County Emergency Management) to become the central coordination and support hub for all County agencies and the County Operational Area by activating and managing the County EOC.
5. Work with Federal officials to advocate Federal disaster reimbursement changes as needed. Federal approvals often cover many County costs, but other costs may not be reimbursable, including long-term animal housing costs for the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (County Animal Care). As another example, some private property debris removal (PPDR) policies on items such as foundations do not work in California. In addition, the burn scars that result from wildfires are prone to mud and debris flows from winter rains. This subsequent loss



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is not viewed as a continuation of the wildfire, but instead as a new stand-alone event which may not qualify for State and Federal disaster cost recovery.

If the desired end is more resilient communities to meet the current wildfire risks, the improvements suggested by the Citygate team, taken as a whole, should deliver an enhanced union of government services, community bonds, and personal involvement. Citygate's Project Team hopes the communities' common bonds to one another, and to their environmental treasures, will propel earnest conversations to deal with the wildfire lessons from the Woolsey Fire disaster.

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### **NEAR-TERM NEXT STEPS**

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1. Absorb the issues identified in this AAR.
2. Direct staff to return in 90 days with an assignment and tracking plan for all the AAR recommendations by agency, the lead manager, and the completion timeline.
3. After the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors reviews the assignment and tracking plan, ask the County Chief Executive Office and the finance teams of the agencies to estimate the cost of implementing the recommendations over feasible timelines.

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### **CONCLUSION**

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This AAR details a firestorm of epic proportions; we do not use the cliché lightly. This document cannot tell all the stories of heroism, sacrifice, and professional, community, and individual leadership displayed by firefighters, law enforcement officers, public servants, volunteers, and community members who serve, work, and live in one of the most populated and arguably best prepared areas of the country. More than one senior public safety leader described the Woolsey Fire as “unimaginable in [their] career understanding to date, with a ferocity and speed over great distances that, at times in the early hours, overwhelmed the institutions.”

The Woolsey Fire forever altered thousands of lives and generated enormous personal, business, and economic losses. Returning to normal is slow and, in some cases, never really occurs, but the individuals directly impacted by the Woolsey Fire can know as a result of this AAR, and other follow-up actions, that the agencies involved heard them, care deeply about their protective role, and will take seriously the recommendations in this review.

This review is also a recognition that planning for the unimaginable, in an area prone to wildfires and crossed by more than five major earthquake fault lines, is precisely what must be done.