

2025 EPA ESF 10 Response – Southern California Wildfires



CALIFORNIA

Unusual 'life-threatening and destructive' winds bring risk of winter fires, power outages to Southern California

CALIFORNIA

Palisades fire: Worst is 'yet to come' as winds gain speed, ground aircraft

CALIFORNIA

Pacific Palisades fire explodes to nearly 3,000 acres as thousands of residents flee, homes are lost

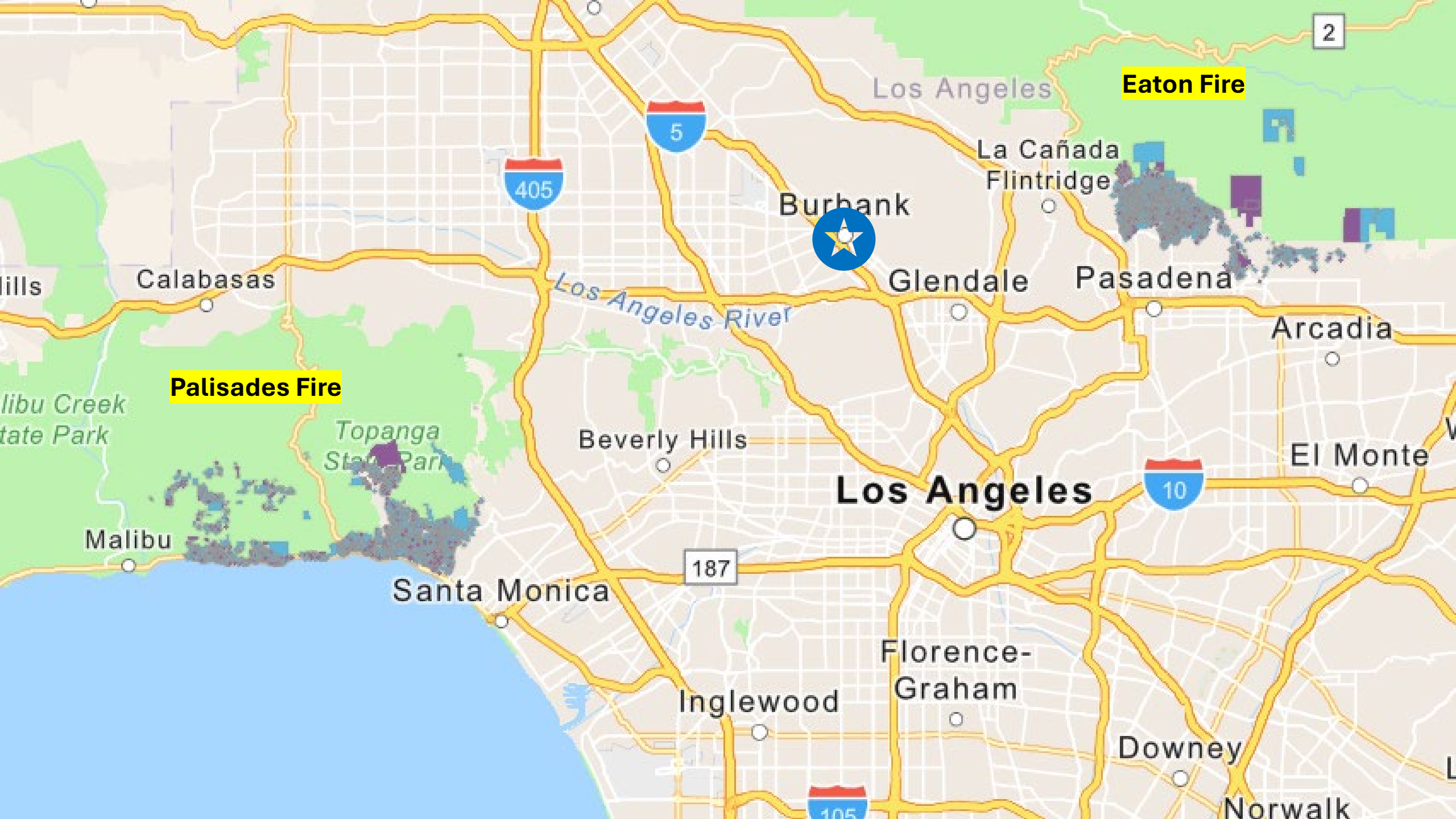
CALIFORNIA FIRES

UPDATED Jan. 10, 2025 4:20 PM PT

What happened during the first four days of the Eaton, Palisades fires in Southern California

Coverage of the fires ravaging Altadena, Malibu, Pacific Palisades and Pasadena, including stories about the devastation, issues firefighters faced and the weather.

By Los Angeles Times Staff



Eaton Fire

Palisades Fire



Los Angeles

Eaton Fire

1,074

Structures Damaged
Residential, Commercial and
Other

9,414

Structures Destroyed
Residential, Commercial and
Other

17

Confirmed Civilian
Fatalities

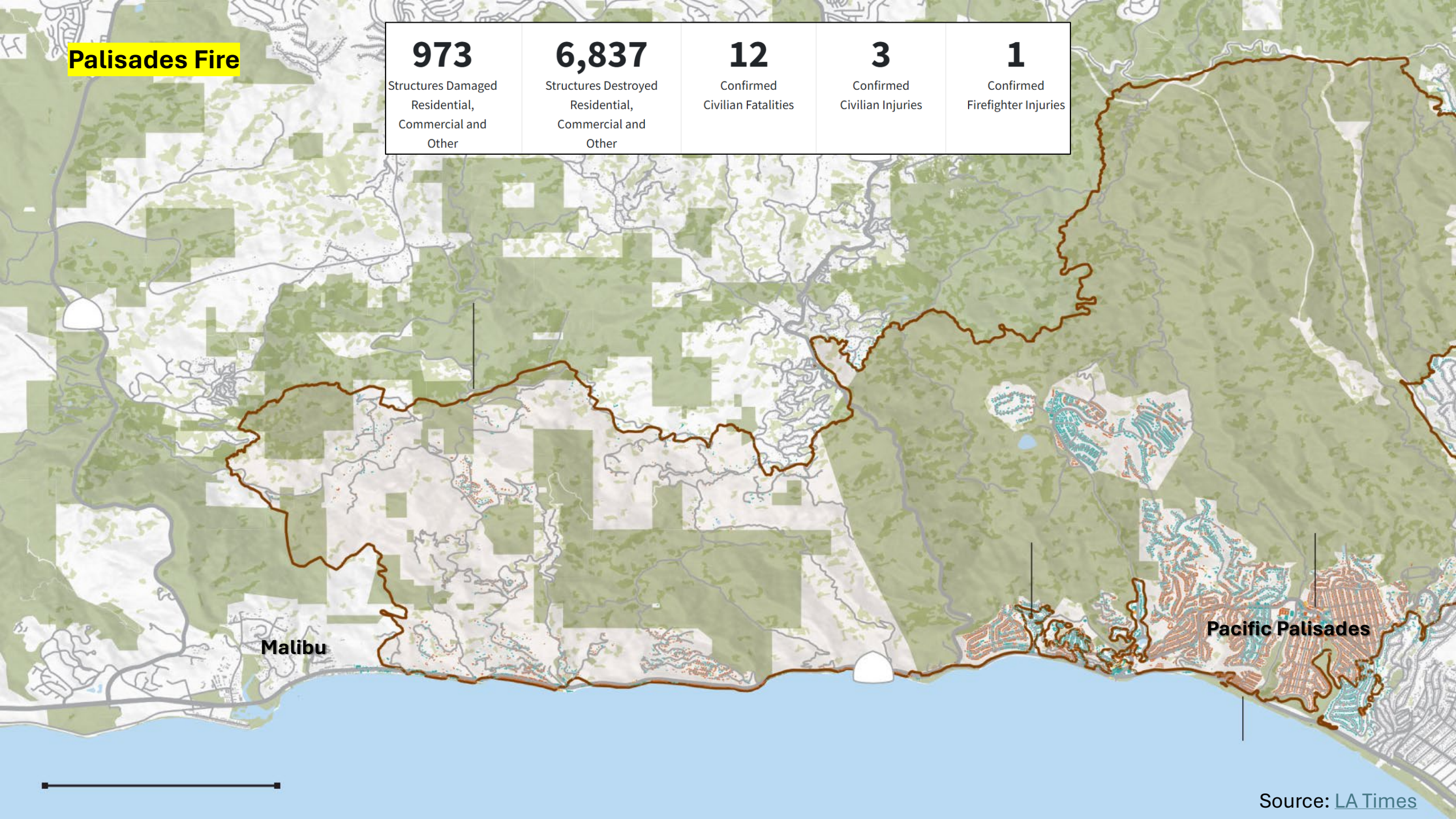
9

Confirmed Firefighter
Injuries

Altadena

Palisades Fire

| | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 973 | 6,837 | 12 | 3 | 1 |
| Structures Damaged Residential, Commercial and Other | Structures Destroyed Residential, Commercial and Other | Confirmed Civilian Fatalities | Confirmed Civilian Injuries | Confirmed Firefighter Injuries |



1/7/25

Multiple wildfires ignite in greater LA area



1/14/25

FEMA MA to EPA for ESF #10 & #3



1/27/25

ESF #10 HHM & LI-B removal begins



Major Disaster Declaration signed

1/8/25



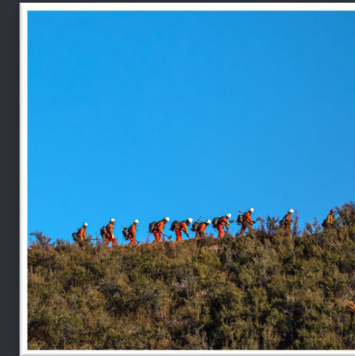
ESF #10 recon begins

1/16/25



LA wildfires reach 100% containment

2/1/25



EPA completes HHM Removal (Phase I – ESF #10)

2/26/25

Source: LA County

ESF #10 Mission Assignments

Phase I Debris Removal - Oil and HHM Only

- Reconnaissance and Initial Assessment
- HHM Removal Operations, including bulk ACM
- Lithium-Ion Battery Operations
- Disposal
- Commercial properties covered under a separate MA to the State of California (DTSC)

Support for limited operations during Phase II debris removal (clearing lots of fire debris) led by US Army Corps (voluntary)



Recon and Site Assessment Operations

Reconnaissance and Site Assessment

- Identifying and marking hazards for HHM and Phase II crews
 - Air monitoring: MultiRAE, Ludlum
 - Included arborist, electrician, and asbestos consultant
 - Septic systems
- Identifying and marking large Li-ion batteries for Battery Team follow-up (EVs, hybrids, and power walls)
- Identifying access issues for follow-up
 - Fully fenced properties with locked gates
 - No trespassing signs
- Identifying properties for deferral due to access/safety concerns
 - Canyon properties
 - Basements
 - Significant overhead hazards
- Identifying properties with no Phase I/II needs (limited damage w/o HHM)

Palisades Recon – January 25 Hazardous Tree Identification

↑
X overhead hazard









HHM Collection Operations

Types of Wildfire HHM

- Car batteries
- Li-ion batteries
- Pesticides
- Bulk asbestos
- Electronic waste
- Ammunition
- Paint cans
- Aerosols
- Gas cylinders – propane, O₂, N₂, etc
- Fluorescent lamps
- Light ballasts
- Cleaners and solvents







Source: LA County

Bulk Asbestos

- Structures pre-1980 (generally)
 - Transite (asbestos cement) pipe
 - Heat resistant; survives fire and remains a health threat
- ‘Suspect’ ACM; readily available to collect (not co-mingled ACM debris – handled under Phase II)
- Additional collection requirements
 - Wetting
 - Collection method
 - CAC oversight



Source: LA County



High Hazard Items

- Ammo >0.5 cal
- Explosives
- Tanks >100 gal
- Rad material
- Bulging drums
- >1 drums of unknown contents
- Cylinders unsafe for transport



Pacific
Palisades
Staging Area
February 2

Segregation of
Flammable
Compressed
Gas Tanks



Sampling at the Altadena Golf Course (Staging Pad – Eaton Fire)



Air monitoring for particulates, hydrogen fluoride, volatile organics, carbon monoxide and ammonia is being performed at all operational staging areas for worker health and safety.

Eaton Staging
Area
February²³12



**HHM evening offloading at Altadena
Golf Course on February 17**



Lithium-Ion Battery Operations





This property's Hazardous Materials
removal is

✓ **COMPLETE**



- ✓ *Ash remains a health hazard*
- ✓ *Read local health advisories before entering burned areas*

Contact us with questions:

**1-833-R9-
USEPA**
(1-833-798-7372)

epa.gov/california-wildfires



EPALAWildfiresInfo@epa.gov

Opting-In as a Community

The more of your neighbors who opt-in, the more efficiently the Army Corps of Engineers contractors can remove eligible debris from your properties.

Debris Removal Notification

The Army Corps of Engineers contractors will call you 72 hours before your property is scheduled for eligible debris removal and invite you to be on site if you choose. If planning to be on site, please wear proper personal protective equipment.

Wet Method

Crews will apply water and mist to keep ash on the ground and prevent it from becoming airborne.

Hazardous Trees

The Corps contractors will only remove trees that: Threaten crew safety; are dead or expected to die within five years due to fire damage (as analyzed by a certified arborist); or pose risk to public health and safety, including work crews.

Participants in the government-run debris removal program can use a [Waiver of Hazardous Tree Removal form](#) to retain specific trees on their property. Download it from recovery.lacounty.gov and submit it in-person to the contractor clearing debris from your property.

Safely Removing Debris

Eligible ash and debris is placed in the bed of a dump truck, tightly wrapped inside a heavy-duty plastic liner, and then covered with a tarp.

Ongoing – Phase II
(US Army Corps)



Soil

Crews will scrape 6 inches of soil around 2 to 5 feet from the structural ash footprint.

Chimneys

USACE contractors will remove chimneys from private property.

Foundation

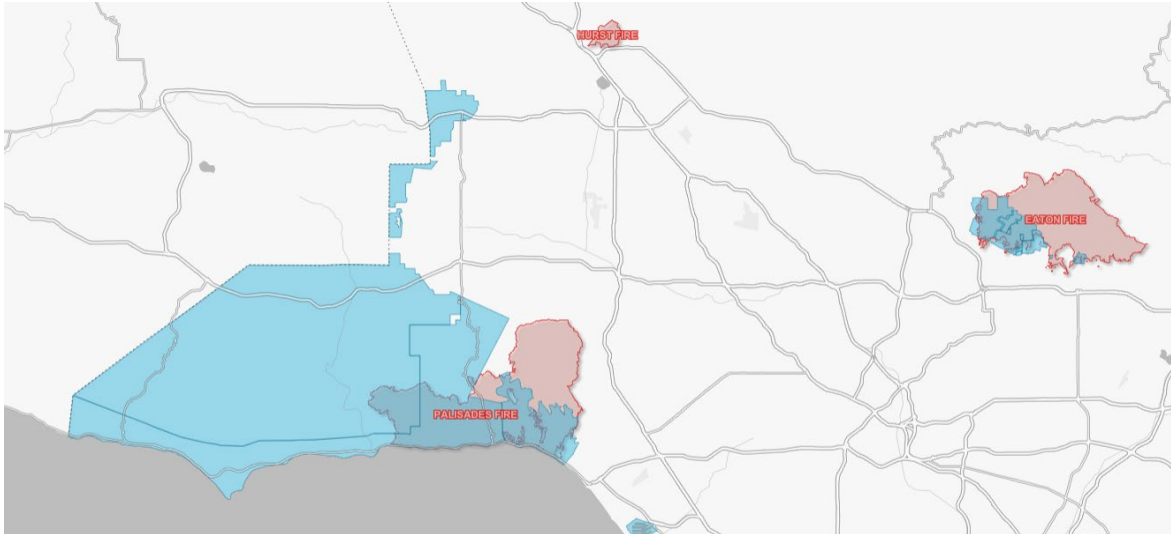
If indicated on your Right of Entry form, the foundation will be removed by the USACE contractor if it can be done so safely.

Vehicles

Burned vehicles on the property will be removed as part of the clean up.



ESF-3 Mission Assignment & EPA's Role in Water Infrastructure Repair and Recovery



- EPA received FEMA Emergency Response Mission Assignment (MA) to support the water sector and a Recovery MA.
 - ***Local mutual aid and assistance networks took the lead in water and wastewater operational response with support from the California drinking water primacy agency and EPA.***
- EPA Response Activities:
 - Liaison with State of California Division of Drinking Water
 - Liaison within Infrastructure Response Task Force & Drinking Water Working Group
 - Subject Matter Expert / Technical Assistance
 - Consultation with FEMA and USACE on emergency water storage tank design and build
- EPA Recovery Activities:
 - Consulting with HQ on resiliency project cost estimates
 - Liaison with Infrastructure Recovery Task Force



Rubio Canyon Reservoir

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



Burned finished water reservoir covers

EPA prioritized Phase 1 hazmat removal at water utilities



EPA worked with FEMA and USACE to fast-track Phase 2 debris removal, then consulted with USACE on structural integrity and emergency storage tank design



Challenges



⌵ PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

EMERGENCY MEASURES TO PROVIDE WATER RESOURCES IN CALIFORNIA AND IMPROVE DISASTER RESPONSE IN CERTAIN AREAS

The White House

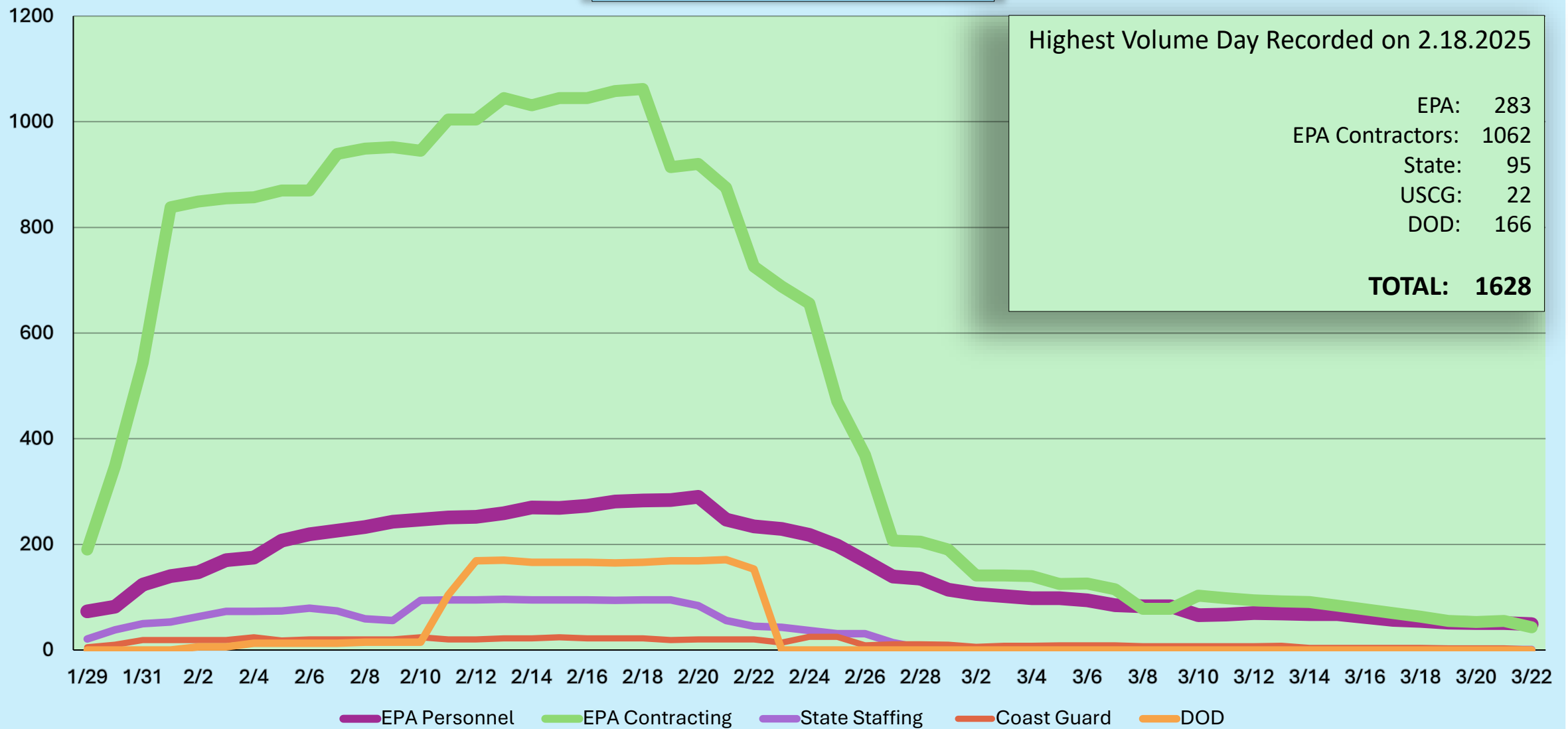
January 24, 2025

***Presidential Executive
Order 14181***

January 24, 2025

(b) Expediting Waste Removal. Within 5 days from the date of this order, to accelerate the rebuilding of areas devastated by the recent Los Angeles wildfires, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Homeland Security, through the Administrator of FEMA, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall develop and execute a plan to expedite the bulk removal of contaminated and general debris.

Total Personnel by Category



Field crews gathering at Topanga Staging Area in the Palisades Branch- February 2





Source: LA Times



Duarte Town Hall January 29



[Los Angeles fires](#)

[Mapping the damage](#)

[Help for Angelenos](#)

[How to help](#)

Strongest storm in a year bearing down on California: What you need to know





Stay
STRONG

Altadena

rebuild
+
remain

