



February 14, 2025

## **What to expect for the Fire Rebuild Process, City of Los Angeles affected Properties**

### **What is happening now and what are the next steps for site access, hazardous waste and debris removal?**

- Utility Agencies (LADWP, SoCal Gas, Cellular etc), Public Works, LAFD & LADBS continue to assess roads, utilities, and structures for safe access. These surveys include power, potable water, flushing hydrants, fiber optics, sewer, trees, roads and structures. Work is underway and we expect many regional utility systems will need repair and potential replacement. Potable water continues to be tested and AQMD is expanding their Air Quality testing, including adding more sensors.

**Debris removal:** All sites are considered hazardous. Separate testing is not necessarily required as it is assumed that all sites are contaminated. Exceptions for sites at higher risk of contamination, such as petrol stations and dry cleaners.

1. **Phase 1, underway,** Hazardous Waste Removal, has begun for each property by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA is actively analyzing and removing hazardous waste from each parcel at no cost to the property owners. Once complete they will post a clearance sign and update their website certifying hazardous materials have been removed. If they cannot complete the work, they will defer the removal to Phase II. Specific Property Look-up Tool: [2025 Southern California Wildfire Response](#) and additional links below for additional information. This process is estimated to take up to 6 months to complete for the Palisades area, current and ongoing.
2. **Phase II,** Debris Removal will follow the completion of Phase I, on an ongoing basis, once properties are certified to have no hazardous materials. Each property owner has the option to either Opt-In and allow the Army Corps of Engineers to remove fire debris, including damaged buildings, foundations, ash etc at no cost to the owner. OR, Opt-Out and hire private certified debris removal companies at your expense.
  - a. **Opt-In Government Provided Service:** Requires each owner to complete a Right of Entry (ROE) form and submit it to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) by March 31, 2025. [Right of Entry Forms – LA County Recovers](#) The

Army Corp recommends, if/when possible, to complete these forms as quickly as possible. This process is expected to take upwards of 6 months to complete and they have already begun removing debris from some properties. They are approaching this work on a block-by-block basis. The amount of time to complete the debris removal depends on where they ultimately start the work and the complexity of each parcel. It may take anywhere from a few days to a week depending on access, size, level of debris etc. They will remove chimneys, hazardous trees, fire ash and debris, foundations with some exceptions, up to 6" of soils in the ash footprint and household hazardous materials not removed in Phase 1 by the EPA. This Opt-In process does require minor coordination with your insurance company to let them know that you have selected the Opt-In debris removal process. The Government will process reimbursement directly.

- i. **The USACE will not provide post removal soil contamination testing commonly known as "confirmatory testing."** This additional testing would need to be provided at the owner's expense. Additional soil removal may still be required post USACE debris removal.
  - b. **Opt-Out Privately Funded Process:** Private Debris Removal is at the owner's expense and requires owner's direct coordination with your respective insurance companies. You will be required to complete the Opt-Out form, hire a certified waste hauler and a Certified Asbestos Consultant (CAC) to survey for asbestos debris, list of certified CACs in links below. If asbestos is found, then a certified abatement contractor must abate the work and coordinate with South Coast AQMD for review and final clearance approval. You will need to obtain a permit with LA County Public Works at [www.PW.LACOUNTY.GOV](http://www.PW.LACOUNTY.GOV) and the Waste Hauler must be certified to haul with both the County and City of LA. They must process these approvals on their own. The application portal is open for applications but as of now, 2/14/25, no one has been issued a permit for private debris removal.
  - c. If you Opt-In and then want to Opt-Out, you must withdraw your Opt-In application with the Army Corps and then follow the procedures to Opt Out. If you Opted out and want to opt back-in, you would need to do this prior to March 31<sup>st</sup> and prior to any work commencing on your property. Otherwise, this change to opt back in would not be possible per current policy.
  - d. LA County Fire Debris Hotline 626-979-5370
- Demo permits will not be required for the removal of the debris or for the majority of buildings. Coordination & notification via the Department of Building and Safety online portal will be required. Note, deep foundations, piles, grade beams, stepped footings and retaining walls shall not be removed unless a permit has been issued to ensure

stability of the site. See the Demolition of Structures Destroyed or Damaged by the 2025 Fires bulletin below.

- Temporary dwellings onsite. Once cleared of hazardous materials, the use of temporary recreational vehicles, tiny homes, modular structures, mobile homes and storage units will be allowed on the property. Permits will be required and can be processed through the LADBS portal.

### **What are my options to rebuild my property?**

- You can initiate the process to rebuild your home, commercial or multi-family property concurrently with the above-required debris removal.
- You have options with your rebuild:
  - “Like for Like” Rebuild up to 110% per the state and local emergency orders. This process allows an owner to replace the previous home with respect to size and location with an allowance to add an additional 10% of your previous homes size, preserving existing non-conforming rights, with an exception for Fire Life Safety setbacks. As of now, with current policies you will need a complete set of plans, Architectural, Structural, Survey, Civil and a Soils Report for the rebuild. The timing for the City response time is expected to be 30-days, however, this does not include the time to respond to corrections and clearances. We expect the process to take 2-4 months. Note, if the previous home was built within the last 5 years the LADBS will accept a submittal of the previous set of plans. The LADBS is actively developing guidelines that will continue to improve the efficiency of permit approval processing. We recommend frequently checking in on process improvements.
  - Design and rebuild up to existing code allowances which will require full plan check and if applicable California Coastal Development Permits or other specific plan or entitlements. The plan check timing for exceeding 110% has not been established but based on current timelines and depending on the type of approvals needed the process could take 4 months to 1.5 years to obtain necessary approvals from the City once a completed package is filed with the necessary approving agencies.

### **Plan check to permit process summary:**

- The mayor’s executive order established the One-Stop Rebuilding Center, now open, — dedicated to help consult about the process and to swiftly issuing permits for eligible projects. This in-person center is located at 1828 Sawtelle Blvd, LA, CA 90025 and open Monday-Friday 10am-8pm and Saturday & Sunday 10-4pm. To note, the LADBS is currently reviewing plans that have been submitted for plan check for fire some rebuild projects.

- Plans can be filed electronically through the LADBS portal or as hard copy plans submitted to the One-Stop Rebuilding Center or any LADBS plan check office.
- For most projects Architectural, structural, civil, soils and geology and survey plans will be required for permitting. The mayor's order does detail an option being explored for architects to self-certify their work to assist with the processing but the policy has not been approved and is not yet effective. This process may be expanded to include Structural Engineers as well. Some projects may be eligible to waive soils and geology studies.
- Discretionary review will be waived for "like to like" replacement projects not exceeding the 110%. Anything over 110% in the coastal zone will trigger Coastal review and/or Specific Plan and any other typical entitlements.
- No haul route hearings will be required for the import or export of >1000 cubic yards of soil. Approval is ministerial and the LADBS is quoting a 15-day approval that can be processed concurrent with Plan Check.
- LAFD/Fire Life Safety and current building code requirements will be required for the rebuild and may impact the location and building type of the replacement structure.
- All outside agency clearances are still required as of now and are supposed to be returned within five days of requesting the clearance. Depending on the location of a property you can receive clearances with the Bureau of Sanitations for Stormwater, Bureau of Engineering, Department of City Planning, Fire Department, Department of Transportation, Department of Water & Power, Urban Forestry, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Flood Division, etc. The City agencies are currently reviewing the clearance process and are working to reduce the number of clearances and agencies that will be required to review, very promising news.
- All Electric Building provisions have been waived.
- **The Department of Building & Safety's dedicated portal is open and plans have already been submitted.**
- Requirements for properties with historic designations remains unclear, to be defined by the Office of Historic Resources shortly.
- These same accommodations are applicable to commercial and multi-family projects as well.

### **When can I begin construction?**

- You will need issued building permits and the completion of Phase 1 & 2 debris removal.
- LADBS Construction-related inspections are expected to be provided within 48 hours of any request.

- Utility connections: Regional utility damage may impact utility connections, the timing is unknown, and may cause delays.
- Certificate of Occupancy (COO) to be allowed to move in: The executive order calls for expedited processing of the COO. Temporary Certificates of Occupancy (TCO) may be needed to support areas that are still impacted by utility delays.

**USEFUL & REFERENCED LINKS:**

**EPA**

- Fact sheet: [Los Angeles Wildfires Fact Sheet: Phase 1 Hazardous Material Removal](#)
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- Detailed EPA presentation: [2025 Southern California Wildfires - Household Materials Removal Presentation](#)

**AQMD:**

- Air quality [Accessible AQI Colors | Air Quality Index App](#)
- Opt-Out Debris Removal AQMD requirements & process: <https://www.aqmd.gov/home/rules-compliance/compliance/asbestos-demolition-removal>

**Certified Asbestos Consultants:**

[https://www.dir.ca.gov/databases/doshcaccsst/caccsst\\_Query\\_1.HTML](https://www.dir.ca.gov/databases/doshcaccsst/caccsst_Query_1.HTML)

**USACE:** <https://www.spl.usace.army.mil/Missions/Emergency-Management/Los-Angeles-County-Wildfire-Debris-Removal-Mission/>

**LA County Recovers Website:** <https://recovery.lacounty.gov/>

**LADBS:** <https://dbs.lacity.gov/>

- Demolition Bulletin: <https://dbs.lacity.gov/sites/default/files/efs/forms/pc17/P-BC-2025-155-Demolition-Final.pdf>

**LAFD Hydrants & Access Plan Check:**

[https://issuu.com/lafd/docs/h\\_a\\_plan\\_check\\_instructions\\_-\\_11-24?fr=xKAE9\\_zU1NQ](https://issuu.com/lafd/docs/h_a_plan_check_instructions_-_11-24?fr=xKAE9_zU1NQ)

**LA CITY GENERAL WWILFIRE INFORMATION & RESOURCES LINK:** <https://lacity.gov/>

**Malibu Fire Rebuild:** <https://malibucity.org/901/Malibu-Rebuilds>

**Altadena Fire Rebuild:** <https://pw.lacounty.gov/rebuild/woolsey/obtainpermit.shtml>

Our hearts go out to everybody impacted and we are here to help anyone along the way to the rebuild and rehome. Interested in learning more, please contact our office.

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