



Fact Sheet

Tips for Wildfire Survivors to Speed FEMA assistance

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Completing an application for assistance starts the process for eligible wildfire survivors to receive FEMA monetary awards to help support you on your road to recovery. To keep the process on track, FEMA urges those who registered for help as part of the Aug. 22 major disaster declaration to keep in touch with the agency.

Create a personal online disaster assistance account. A personal online disaster assistance account helps communication with FEMA. You can use it to update your contact information, see copies of FEMA letters sent to you and upload documents FEMA needs to complete your application.

To create one:

1. Click the green Check Status button at bottom of disasterassistance.gov.
2. Click the blue Create Account button at bottom of page.
3. Enter your date of birth and Social Security number, which you provided previously when registering for assistance.
4. Answer four security questions that are generated from public record data to verify your identity.
5. Create a user ID and password.
6. Enter an email address. FEMA will send a temporary PIN to it within 24 hours. Follow the instructions in the email to finish creating your account.

Keep contact information current. Correct contact information is essential for you to receive prompt decisions about your application. Always let FEMA know when your address or phone number changes.

You may update this information on your personal account at DisasterAssistance.gov or with the FEMA app on your smartphone or tablet.

You may also update contact information by calling the FEMA Helpline at **800-621-3362**. Users of TTY may call 800-462-7585. Multilingual operators are available 7 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. PDT. If you use a relay service, such as a videophone, Innocaption or CapTel, provide FEMA the specific number assigned to that service when you update your contact information.

FEMA encourages you to request direct deposits of disaster assistance to your financial institution. To receive FEMA assistance promptly, let FEMA know of changes to your banking information.

If you requested a FEMA check by mail, it's important to note that FEMA disaster assistance checks cannot be forwarded. If you cannot access your home address, you can request the Postal Service to hold your mail.

Have a property inspection. Due to concern for your health and that of FEMA staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, property inspections are being conducted by telephone.

You must have a property inspection to verify damage — even when your home was destroyed — before FEMA can determine if you are eligible for assistance.

Inspectors come from many different states and use their own phones to conduct inspections. Many cell phone users don't answer calls from unfamiliar numbers and inspectors have found they can't leave voice mail messages because mailboxes are full. Don't let this slow down your access to assistance.

For the latest information on wildfire recovery visit www.fema.gov/4558 and/or follow the FEMA Region 9 Twitter account at twitter.com/FEMARegion9

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All FEMA disaster assistance will be provided without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment), religion, national origin, age, disability, limited English proficiency, economic status, or retaliation. If you believe your civil rights are being violated, call 800-621-3362 or 800-462-7585(TTY/TDD).

FEMA's mission: Helping people before, during, and after disasters.

The U.S. Small Business Administration is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property.

For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955. TTY users may also call 800-877-8339. Applicants may also email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov or visit SBA at SBA.gov/disaster.

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