



Oct. 17, 2020  
DR-4558-CA NR 030  
Cal OES News Desk: 916-800-3943  
FEMA News Desk: 916-718-8540  
SBA: 916-847-2638

# News Release

## Applying for FEMA disaster assistance

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** – If you lost your home or sustained other losses because of wildfires in Lassen or Tulare counties Aug. 14-Sept. 26, 2020, you may be eligible for assistance from FEMA. This applies to survivors of the Sheep Fire and W-5 Cold Springs Fire in Lassen County and Tulare County’s SQF Complex, which includes the Castle Fire and Shotgun Fire.

FEMA gives eligible survivors financial awards to help them pay for such needs as rent, home repair or replacement; medical, dental or funeral costs and other serious disaster-related expenses.

Insurance is generally the best source of funds to recover from a disaster. If you have insurance that covers all or part of your wildfire losses, file your claim immediately before applying for disaster assistance. Get the process started as quickly as possible. The faster you file your insurance claim, the faster you can move ahead with your recovery. If your insurance doesn’t cover all your serious disaster-related expenses, you may be eligible for FEMA assistance to help fill the gap.

Take photographs or video of the damage and keep all receipts related to clearing smoke, home repair or other disaster-related needs.

The only way to determine whether you are eligible for FEMA assistance is to apply. You can do that in three ways: online at [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov), by downloading and using the FEMA app on your smartphone or tablet, or by calling the **FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362** (TTY 800-462-7585) between 7 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. PDT. The helpline has specialists who speak many different languages. If you use a relay service such as a videophone, Innocaption or CapTel, provide FEMA the specific number assigned to that service when you register. Deadline to register is Nov. 23.

You may also call the helpline for answers to your questions about FEMA assistance and to discuss letters that FEMA may send you.

To apply for assistance, be prepared with the following information:

- Social Security Number
- Insurance policy information
- Address of the damaged primary dwelling
- A description of disaster-caused damage and losses
- Current mailing address

- Current telephone number
- Total household annual income
- Routing and account number of your checking or savings account (for direct transfer to your bank account)

After registering, create your own personal account at the [disasterassistance.gov](https://disasterassistance.gov) website or with the FEMA app on your smartphone or tablet. You can use your account to check the status of your application, view messages from FEMA, update your personal information, and upload important documents.

If you are unable to upload your documents, mail them to FEMA at P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville MD 20782-8055 or fax them to 800-827-8112.

### **Inspections**

Before FEMA can determine eligibility for home replacement or repair, the applicant's property must be inspected. During COVID-19, FEMA inspections are being conducted by phone. These remote inspections are comparable to traditional, in-person inspections and can expedite recovery assistance for eligible applicants. For security purposes, the inspector will verify your identity by asking a series of qualifying questions and then provide you with the first four digits of your application to complete the verification.

If you reported that you cannot safely live in your home, a FEMA inspector will contact you by phone and ask about the type and extent of damage sustained. Survivors with minimal damage who can live in their homes will not automatically be scheduled for a home inspection when applying to FEMA, but they may request an inspection.

Home inspections do not impact the types of assistance that may be available for other disaster-related expenses such as for childcare, transportation, medical, dental, funeral, moving and storage assistance and other serious wildfire-related expenses.

### **U.S. Small Business Administration**

Following a disaster SBA makes disaster loans available to homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes and private nonprofit organizations. Many survivors use SBA disaster loans to help fund their recovery. SBA has established a Virtual Disaster Loan Outreach Center to help homeowners and renters. Customer service representatives are available to assist business owners and individuals, to answer questions about SBA's disaster loan program, explain the application process and help each person complete their electronic loan application.

#### [Virtual Business Recovery Center and Virtual Disaster Loan Outreach Center](#)

For customer service:

Mondays – Sundays

5 a.m. to 5 p.m. PDT

[FOCWAssistance@sba.gov](mailto:FOCWAssistance@sba.gov)

(800) 659-2955

For the latest information on wildfire recovery, visit <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4558> and follow the FEMA Region 9 Twitter account at <https://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](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov) or visit SBA at [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster).*