

Wildfire Resource Guide



Congressman Jared Huffman

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Information current as of 8/24/2020

San Rafael District Office
999 Fifth Ave. Suite 290
San Rafael, CA 94901
(415) 258-9657

Fort Bragg District Office
430 North Franklin St.
Fort Bragg, CA 95437
P.O. Box 2208 Fort Bragg 95437
(707) 962-0933

Ukiah District Office
200 South School Street
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 671-7449

Eureka District Office
317 Third Street Suite 1
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 407-3585

Petaluma District Office
206 G Street, Unit #3
Petaluma, CA 94952
(707) 981-8967

Washington, D.C. Office
1527 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-5161

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JARED HUFFMAN

U.S. CONGRESSMAN SERVING CALIFORNIA'S 2ND DISTRICT

A letter from Congressman Huffman

Dear friends,

My thoughts go out to all who have been affected by the recent firestorms in our region. If there's anything that these wildfires in recent years have proven, it's the impressive strength and resiliency of our communities that continue to make me proud to serve you in Congress.

Wildfires are nothing new to us in California, but this year we have an added threat that requires adapting the way we respond to fires – the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to ensure you have the information and resources needed to safely navigate this fire in the face of a deadly pandemic.

I remain grateful for the first responders, the thousands of people who have answered the call to protect homes and save lives, and the thousands more who volunteer and serve in affected communities; all while following new protocols. As these efforts continue, my office is here to help you navigate the available government recovery programs and services.

- If you need help replace missing Social Security cards, passports, other federal documents, or lost or damaged medals for veterans—call us.
- If you are looking for your mail—we can help.
- If you are a farmer, rancher, vineyard owner, or other producer, or if you are in another specialized industry that might need targeted assistance—please don't hesitate to ask.

Most importantly: If you aren't sure where to go to solve your issues, please call [one of my district offices](#). If we aren't the right place to get you what you need, my staff will guide you to the state and local resources too.

My staff and I are here to help—indeed, we are eager to help—in any way we can. We are here for the long haul. As your representative, I will work with my colleagues and government partners to make sure that rebuilding efforts in California are fully supported, just as that support must be there for all the other communities around the country who are dealing with natural disasters.

Sincerely,
JARED HUFFMAN



Member of Congress

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Summary of Assistance

Quick Guide

Summary (see page pp. 9-11 for more details)

Road Closures: Updated information on road closures county-by-county can be found [here](#).

FEMA: Depending on post-disaster conditions and severity, a Major Disaster Declaration may be established for any Northern California counties affected by wildfires. If you are affected by the fires, please start by registering at www.disasterassistance.gov so that you can get the help you need. If you have a speech disability or hearing loss and use TTY, call 1-800-462-7585. Para Español: www.disasterassistance.gov/es o llame al 800-621-3362

Small Business Administration (SBA): SBA has a separate activation process from other emergency declarations. If that process is initiated, Small Business Administration (SBA) loans will be available for the affected area. These low-interest disaster loans are not just for small businesses. They are available to qualifying businesses of all sizes, private non-profit organizations, homeowners, and renters. SBA disaster loans can be used to repair or replace the following items damaged or destroyed in a declared disaster: real estate, personal property, machinery and equipment, and inventory and business assets. Learn more online: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance>

Disaster Unemployment Assistance: If you have lost a job due to the disaster, or if you are an employer who had to shut down operations, you may be eligible for relief from the State of California, including Unemployment Insurance or extensions on state payroll reports and taxes. You can learn more about disaster related services from the California Employment Development Department at http://www.edd.ca.gov/About_EDD/Disaster_Related_Services.htm and you can file for unemployment benefits online at <https://eapply4ui.edd.ca.gov/>. You can also file by phone, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., by calling 1-800-300-5616 for English or 1-800-326-8937 para Español.

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Public Disasters During COVID-19

Preparing to Go to a Public Shelter

- If you may need to evacuate, prepare a “go kit” with [personal items](#) you cannot do without during an emergency. Include items that can help protect you and others from COVID-19, such as hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, bar or liquid soap, disinfectant wipes (if available) and at least two masks for each person. Masks should not be used by children under the age of 2. They also should not be used by people having trouble breathing, or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- [Make a plan and prepare a disaster kit for your pets](#). Find out if your disaster shelter will accept pets. Typically, when shelters accommodate pets, the pets are housed in a separate area from people.
- Find out if your local public shelter is open by checking with your county office of emergency services, in case you need to evacuate your home and go there. Your shelter location may be different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Follow guidance from your local public health or emergency management officials on when and where to shelter.
- Follow [safety precautions when using transportation](#) to evacuate. If you have to travel away from your community to evacuate, follow [safety precautions for travelers](#) to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Protect Yourself and Others in the Shelter

- [Practice social distancing](#). Stay at least 6 feet from other people outside of your household.
- Follow [CDC COVID-19 preventive actions](#)—wash your hands often, cover coughs and sneezes, and follow shelter policies for wearing [masks](#). Avoid sharing food and drink with anyone.
- Follow disaster shelter policies and procedures designed to protect everyone in the shelter, especially those who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including [older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions](#).
- Avoid touching high-touch surfaces, such as handrails, as much as possible. [Wash hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol immediately after you touch these surfaces.
- Keep your living area in the shelter [clean and disinfect](#) frequently-touched items such as [toys](#), cellphones, and other electronics.

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- [If you feel sick](#) when you arrive at the shelter or start to feel sick while sheltering, tell shelter staff immediately.

How You can Protect Others from COVID-19 in Shelters: When to Wear a Mask

Wear a **mask*** any time you are not in an individual room, on your bed or mat, eating, or sleeping.




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

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

How You can Protect Others from COVID-19 in Shelters: In General Sleeping Areas

Make sure your face is **at least 6 feet** away from others.




Sleep **head to toe**.

Wear a **mask** when not on your bed or mat.

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Wildfire Smoke and COVID-19

- The best way to protect against the potentially harmful effects of wildfire smoke is to reduce your exposure to wildfire smoke, for example, by seeking [cleaner air shelters and cleaner air spaces](#).
- Limit your outdoor exercise when it is smoky outside or choose lower-intensity activities to reduce your smoke exposure.

Create a cleaner air space at home to protect yourself from wildfire smoke during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Use a portable air cleaner in one or more rooms. Portable air cleaners work best when run continuously with doors and windows closed.
- If you use a [do-it-yourself box fan](#) filtration unit, never leave it unattended.
- During periods of extreme heat, pay attention to [temperature forecasts](#) and know how to [stay safe in the heat](#).
- Whenever you can, use air conditioners, heat pumps, fans, and window shades to keep your cleaner air space comfortably cool on hot days.

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- If you have a forced air system in your home, you may need to speak with a qualified heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) professional about different filters (HEPA or MERV-13 or higher) and settings (“Recirculate” and “On” rather than “Auto”) you can use to reduce indoor smoke.
- Avoid activities that create more indoor and outdoor air pollution, such as frying foods, sweeping, vacuuming, and using gas-powered appliances.

Know the difference between symptoms from smoke exposure and COVID-19.

- Some symptoms, like dry cough, sore throat, and difficulty breathing can be caused by both wildfire smoke exposure and COVID-19.
- Learn about [symptoms of COVID-19](#). Symptoms like fever or chills, muscle or body aches, and diarrhea are not related to smoke exposure. If you have any of these symptoms, the CDC COVID-19 [Self-Checker](#) can help you determine whether you need further assessment or testing for COVID-19. If you have questions after using the CDC COVID-19 [Self-Checker](#), contact a healthcare provider.
- If you have [severe symptoms](#), like difficulty breathing or chest pain, immediately call 911 or the nearest emergency facility.

Stay informed. Know where to find information about air quality and COVID-19 in your area.

- Use the [Air Quality Index \(AQI\)](#) to check the air quality in your area.
- Visit [airnow.gov external icon](#) to find reliable information about wildfire smoke and air quality.
- If there is a large wildfire in your area, then there is likely an [Air Resource Advisor](#) assigned to provide [wildfire smoke outlooks](#).
- For further information about wildfire smoke and your health, visit, <https://www.cdc.gov/air/wildfire-smoke/default.htm>.
- Visit the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#) for more information about COVID-19.
- Check resources from [state, local, tribal, and territorial health departments](#) for more information on COVID-19 cases and deaths in a given area.

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Local Resources

Local Assistance Centers

Local Assistance Centers (LACs) are a one-stop-shop with critical government services for residents who have been impacted by fires. At these centers, you can replace lost or destroyed vital documents (IDs, financial information, etc.) and get connected with supportive services.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, LACs will now be all virtual. For more information and to receive assistance, visit <https://socoemergency.org/recover/virtual-local-assistance-center/>.

Post Office Closures

Post offices across the Bay Area have been forced to temporarily close due to the fast-moving wildfires. If your usual post office has been closed, go to the **North Bay Processing Facility, 1150 N McDowell Blvd, Petaluma**. Hours for pick-up only, Monday-Friday from **Noon-4pm**. You will need to bring a photo ID.

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Major Disaster Assistance Programs

FEMA

Depending on post-disaster conditions and severity, a Major Disaster Declaration may be established for any Northern California counties affected by wildfires. This declaration includes three programs:

- **Public Assistance:** helps communities – state and local governments and certain nonprofit organizations – absorb the costs of emergency measures such as removing debris and repairing or replacing structures such as public buildings, roads, bridges, and public utilities.
- **Hazard Mitigation:** grants to local governments and tribes for post-disaster mitigation activities to reduce the risk and effects of future disasters, such as acquisition of high-risk properties, retrofitting buildings, and code enforcement.
- **Individual Assistance:** covers individual needs like disaster housing for displaced individuals, grants for needs not covered by insurance, crisis counseling, and disaster-related unemployment assistance.

If you are affected by the fires, please start by registering at www.disasterassistance.gov so that you can get the help you need.

Please have the following information available when you call or visit:

- A phone number and a reliable alternate in case FEMA needs to call you back
- Address of the damaged property
- Social Security number
- Bank account information (or direct deposit information)
- Insurance information (if you have insurance)
- Brief description of damages
- Current mailing address
- Pen and paper to write down your registration number

Government disaster assistance only covers basic needs and usually will not compensate you for your entire loss. If you have insurance, the government may help pay for basic needs not covered under your insurance policy.

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Disaster-related assistance may include:

- Rental payments for temporary housing for those whose homes are unlivable
- Grants for home repairs and replacement of essential household items
- Unemployment payments for workers who temporarily lost jobs because of the disaster and do not qualify for state benefits (self-employed)
- Low-interest loans to cover residential losses not fully compensated by insurance
- Crisis counseling for those traumatized by the disaster
- Advisory assistance for legal veterans' benefits and social security matters.

Assistance for Indian tribal governments:

- A Chief Executive of a federally recognized tribal government may request (through FEMA) the President declare an emergency or major disaster for the tribal government *or* be considered as part of a state's declaration request.
- The tribal government, however, cannot receive the same type of assistance (i.e., Public Assistance, Individual Assistance, Hazard Mitigation) through both tribal *and* state declarations for the same incident.
- Before requesting a declaration, your tribal government must confirm that it has activated its emergency plan.
- Learn more online: <https://www.fema.gov/tribal-declaration-and-disaster-assistance-resources>

Small Business Administration (SBA)

Depending on post-disaster conditions and severity, the SBA can offer low-interest disaster loans. These loans are not just for small businesses. They are available to qualifying businesses of all sizes, private non-profit organizations, homeowners, and renters.

SBA disaster loans can be used to repair or replace the following items damaged or destroyed in a declared disaster: real estate, personal property, machinery and equipment, and inventory and business assets. Learn more online: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance>

The process to apply for disaster assistance is simple. To qualify, your business or home must be in an affected area as stated by a disaster declaration at disasterloan.sba.gov.

- **Step 1:** Check disaster declarations
 - See if the SBA has issued a disaster declaration in your area
 - *If this hasn't happened yet, check back – it's possible a declaration hasn't been requested yet but will still come.*
- **Step 2:** Apply for a disaster loan

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- Loans are available for businesses and homes affected by disaster
- **Step 3: Check your status**
 - Log in to your account and check your email for updates

State taxes and Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

The IRS will automatically identify taxpayers located in the covered disaster area and applies automatic filing and payment relief. But affected taxpayers who reside or have a business located outside the covered disaster area must call the IRS disaster hotline at 866-562-5227 to request this tax relief.

In addition, for wineries and other businesses whose operations were affected by the fires TTB will consider waiving late filing, payment, or deposit penalties on a case-by-case basis. To qualify for such a waiver, a taxpayer must:

- Demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the appropriate TTB officer, that the fires directly affected your ability to timely file, pay, or deposit
- Contact the TTB National Revenue Center (NRC) at: 877-882-3277 or on their online contact form: https://www.ttb.gov/webforms/contact_nrc.shtml

Department of Agriculture (USDA)

The USDA has several disaster assistance programs for crop and livestock losses, to rehabilitate farmland, watersheds, and forests, and to provide support for rural businesses and homes. Please review their disaster resources online at: <https://www.usda.gov/topics/disaster/reference-guide-usda-disaster-resources-farmers-ranchers-and-communities>

And you can contact your local USDA Service Center to get started:

Ukiah Service Center

1252 Airport Park Blvd Ste B1
(707) 468-9223

Petaluma Service Center

5401 Old Redwood Hwy Ste 100
(707) 794-1242 ext 3

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Lost Document Replacement

(Document)	(Who to Contact for Replacement)
EBT Card	California's CalFresh is part of the federal program known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – formerly known as Food Stamps). For lost EBT card replacements call 877-328-9677 right away or contact your local county social services worker.
Birth and Death Certificates	Visit California Department of Public Health online at www.cdph.ca.gov or call 916-445-2684. \$25 fee for replacement.
Lost Green Card	Visit www.uscis.gov and complete Form I-90, application to replace a permanent resident card, and file it online or by mail. Call 800-375-5283 to check the application status.
California Driver License	Visit https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv-online/ or a California DMV office to complete an application. Replacement license forms must be delivered in person. For more information, call 800-777-0133.
Insurance information	The California Department of Insurance has resources available to help. Call their hotline at 800-927-4357 or visit the Department's website for tips and advice at https://www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/140-catastrophes/WildfireResources.cfm
Medicare Cards	Visit www.ssa.gov/medicare or call 800-772-1213 (TTY) 800-325-0778
Social Security Card	Visit www.ssa.gov or call 800-772-1213 (TTY) 888-874-7793
Military Records	Visit www.archives.gov/contact/ or call 866-272-6272
Passport	Visit www.travel.state.gov or call 1-877-487-2778 or (TTY) 888-874-7793
U.S. Tax Returns	Visit www.irs.gov or call 800-829-1040

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Contact my office with any questions

We can assist you with any of these federal forms and processes; ensure that federal agencies are providing appropriate services; help you replace missing Social Security cards, passports, and other federal documents, or lost or damaged medals for veterans; and guide you to any other state or federal services you may need.

Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, my offices are closed to in-person visits. However, my staff is still hard at work and available by phone, mail, and email to assist you.

Start with my San Rafael Office, and my staff can guide you to the most appropriate regional office:

San Rafael District Office
999 Fifth Ave. Suite 290
San Rafael, CA 94901
(415) 258-9657

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P.O. Box 2208 Fort Bragg
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