

# Tips for Homeowners & Businesses Affected by the Los Angeles Fires

Hill Farrer's disaster relief team is equipped to address many of the impending legal issues. And while we know everyone's situation is different, here are some very basic suggestions that might help you start your recovery process.



## Document Your Loss

- Take a photos/videos of damage
- Create an inventory of lost property and gather all available documentation related to losses
- Keep receipts for all costs from the loss (e.g., hotel/rental bills, emergency supplies, etc.)



## Find alternative living arrangements

- If you need immediate temporary shelter:
  1. [California Office of Emergency Services](#).
  2. [American Red Cross](#)
- Open a PO Box and set-up mail forwarding (or have mail forwarded to an address of a family member/friend)
- Search for long-term rentals. Your insurance company may make rental payments directly to the landlord from your "loss of use" funds
- Call your utility companies to freeze or cancel services (e.g., internet, electricity, gas, etc.)



## Property Taxes

- When damage is greater than \$10,000, file an Application for Reassessment - Property Damaged or Destroyed by Misfortune or Calamity (Los Angeles Assessor Form ADS-820) to have property reassessed
- After filing form ADS-820, do not pay second installment of the 2024-25 property tax bill
- If you are over 55 and wish to purchase a new home in the State of California, take advantage of Prop 19 to carryover tax basis from the lost home



## If You Have a Mortgage

- Notify your mortgage lender of the loss and request to "freeze" your loan



## Review Your Insurance Policy Documents

- Locate complete copies of all insurance policies. If you only have the declaration page, contact your broker or insurance company directly for a copy
- Review all copies of your insurance policies to determine which policies may provide coverage (e.g., homeowners, auto, etc.)
- Take note of the Loss of Use or Additional Living Expense (ALE) aggregate and monthly limits (if any) in your policy. Budget accordingly and keep receipts of all expenses related to your relocation (e.g., housing, clothing, food, etc.)



## Contact Your Insurance Company

- Determine the deadline for filing your claim
- Develop a plan for preparing your claim to ensure it is timely submitted
- Hire a licensed contractor. Schedule a time with an adjuster and your contractor to come to your property to determine the cost of rebuilding; insist they work together to avoid disputes about estimates or valuations
- Document all interactions with insurance company. Keep a "claim diary"
- Keep your insurance company informed of any significant work or expenses you incur
- Seek legal advice:
  1. If your insurance company fully or partially denies coverage for your loss
  2. If your insurance company requests an Examination Under Oath
  3. Before signing anything presented to you by your insurance company or adjuster