



January 20, 2025 - Altadena residents survey their home which was destroyed by the Eaton Fire.
(Mayra Beltran / Los Angeles County / CEO Communications)

1. What are the qualifying dates for taking January 2025 Wildfire Leave?

Absences for a qualifying reason effective January 7, 2025, through December 31, 2025, are covered under the 2025 Disaster Leave.

2. Who is eligible for the January 2025 Wildfire Leave?

Any active employee who was employed by or before January 7, 2025 (permanent, temporary, recurrent, or part-time).

3. What are the qualifying reasons that allow an employee to take 2025 Disaster Leave?

Employees may be granted January 2025 Wildfire Leave if they were/are unable to work (including telework) due to the January 2025 wildfires for any of the reasons below. Leave may be applied retroactively for qualifying absences taken beginning on January 7, 2025, and before this program took effect.

Emergency Displacement/Impact:

1. Employee was subject to an evacuation order or an evacuation warning related to the January 2025 wildfire and windstorm disaster beginning on January 7, 2025.
2. If the employee's residence was affected by the failure of public utilities (i.e., electricity, water, or gas) as a direct result of the disaster.

Impact to Residence – Substantial Damage, Loss of Residence, or Unable to Return:

The employee's residence was damaged, destroyed, or is deemed uninhabitable due to the fires and the employee needs to take time off for any of the following disaster-related recovery activities:

1. Securing interim or permanent housing, medical care (e.g., replacing lost medical devices or prescriptions), lost vital documents or records (e.g., birth certificate, driver's license, social security card, recording documents, etc.).
2. Applying for local, state, or federal disaster assistance programs (e.g., FEMA).
3. Other recovery activities to the primary residence (e.g., home repairs, damage assessments).

Disaster-Related to Illness or Injury:

The employee is recovering from an illness or injury due to the disaster.

Caretaking:

1. Caring for a dependent child or dependent adult due to the closure or unavailability of the school or care provider, as a result of the disaster.
2. Enrolling/reenrolling their dependent child or a dependent adult in a school, care center, or with certified childcare provider.

4. How long is an employee allowed to take for the January 2025 Wildfire Leave?

Eligible monthly full-time employees may take up to 80 hours for qualifying reasons related to disaster leave. Eligible part-time employees may take up to 40 hours of paid leave for qualifying reasons related to disaster leave. This leave applies to eligible and active permanent, temporary, recurrent, and part-time employees, who were employed by the (County) on or before January 7, 2025. An employee may choose to take their leave all at once, and/or intermittently, if so required.

5. How does an employee apply for a leave of absence under the January 2025 Wildfire Leave?

Employees can complete the "Request for January 2025 Wildfire Leave" form, which is posted on the DHR website and can be obtained from their department's Human Resources office, or by clicking <https://employee.hr.lacounty.gov/2025-wildfire-recovery>.

Upon completion, employees may submit the leave request forms to their Departmental Leave Management Unit.

Note: Employees should not be prevented from taking time off (either as unpaid time or using accrued/available paid leave) for qualifying reasons under this program, pending the department's evaluation and approval of their January 2025 Wildfire Leave request. As with any leave usage, the employee must notify their supervisor or designee of absences in writing as much as possible in advance of the employee's shift. If the employee is unable to provide written notice in advance due to unforeseen circumstances, they should ensure that they notify their supervisor verbally and provide a written request as soon as practicable.

6. What information should an employee provide to receive January 2025 Wildfire Leave?

When requesting January 2025 Wildfire Leave, employees should complete the "Request for January 2025 Wildfire Leave" form with the following information and provide the relevant verification documents:

1. The employee's name.
2. The date(s) for which the employee requests leave.
3. The reason for leave.

4. Name and relationship to qualifying family member for which they are providing care.

Verification Documents:

1. Proof of residence (utility bill or lease agreement) if it differs from what is contained in their personnel file.
2. Proof the primary residence was in an area impacted by the wildfires during the disaster period. Examples include:
 - a. For employees who were subject to evacuation orders: evidence such as an evacuation notice, a public announcement, or an official statement from a local office.
 - b. Notice of service outage from the utility company.
 - c. Proof of damaged, lost, or uninhabitable residence (e.g., FEMA designation).
3. The name of the school, place of care, or childcare provider that has closed or became unavailable and a statement that no other suitable person is/was available to care for his or her child.
4. Medical certification

7. Are employees required to provide medical certification to support the need for the January 2025 Wildfire Leave?

For leave or absences taken for tending to the employee's own injury, the employee must submit a medical certification from their doctor.

8. How do employees code their timecards when they have been approved to take January 2025 Wildfire Leave?

1. Event Code 026 - Disaster Emergency Leave
2. Reason Code(s):
 - Emergency Displacement/Impact
 - Lost or Damaged Residence
 - Disaster-Related Injury
 - Dependent Care

9. How much will an employee be paid while taking January 2025 Wildfire Leave?

Employees are paid at their regular rate of pay.

10. What is the maximum number of paid leave days provided to employees under the January 2025 Wildfire Leave?

Regardless of the number of applicable qualifying reasons, a monthly, full-time employee may not exceed a total of 80 hours of leave, and a part-time employee may not exceed 40 hours of paid leave (see question 4). Employees who require additional time off that exceeds the paid leave amount allocated for the January 2025 Wildfire Leave, may utilize their benefit time for any additional time off required.

11. Does an employee have to exhaust their available accrued time before being able to use the January 2025 Wildfire Leave?

No. The January 2025 Wildfire Leave is a separate and distinct leave and is not affected by an employee's use of other leave time.

12. Can an employee be denied January 2025 Wildfire Leave for a qualifying reason if they used other accrued leave time before Board approval of the leave on January 28, 2025?

No. The County is permitting the retroactive application of the paid leave, and an employee may request to make a timecard adjustment for any applicable dates on or after January 7, 2025.

13. How can an employee request retroactive designation of the January 2025 Wildfire Leave?

Employees who took leave due to one of the January 2025 Wildfire Leave qualifying reasons on or after January 7, 2025, must complete a *Request Form for Disaster Leave* with retroactive designation of the leave taken on or after January 7, 2025. If the employee's request meets the requirements of January 2025 Wildfire Leave, the employee's request for a retroactive designation of January 2025 Wildfire Leave will be approved, and a timecard adjustment will be processed to cover the retroactive period.

14. What does it mean to be unable to work?

An employee is unable to work if there is work for the employee to complete and one of qualifying reasons for the January 2025 Wildfire Leave (see question 3) prevents the employee from being able to perform that work. If an employee is unable to work at their usual worksite but is able to telework or work at an alternate approved worksite, the employee does not qualify for leave.

15. Who is a "child" for purposes of this leave?

A "child" is the employee's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child to whom the employee stands *in loco parentis*.

16. Does 2025 Wildfire Leave need to be designated concurrently with FMLA/CFRA or other federal and California protected leave laws?

Yes. If an employee's absence qualifies for FMLA/CFRA coverage, the leave would run concurrently for the employment protections offered by FMLA/CFRA.

17. Can employees be disciplined or lose their jobs for using this leave?

No. Employees will not be disciplined or terminated from County service for appropriately using the January 2025 Wildfire Leave.

18. What happens to any remaining leave balance after December 31, 2025, or if an employee leaves County service?

January 2025 Wildfire Leave is separate from an employee's accrued leave calculations. Any unused leave will not be paid out at separation or the leave program's expiration.