

CAL FIRE



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
SAN BERNARDINO UNIT
3800 N. Sierra Way.
San Bernardino, CA 92405**

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT
1320 N. Eastern Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90063**

INVESTIGATION SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

CASE NUMBER:	25-CALAC-009087
CASE NAME:	EATON
DATE:	January 7, 2025
INCIDENT TYPE:	Wildland Fire

INCIDENT INVESTIGATORS:

Charles ELDER, ABI - CAL FIRE
Matthew GILBERT, Battalion Chief - CAL FIRE
Joe GREEN, Battalion Chief - CAL FIRE
Brian HAWKINS, Assistant Chief - CAL FIRE
Wayne HOWERTON, Battalion Chief - CAL FIRE
Matt KIRKHART, Battalion Chief - CAL FIRE

Lead Investigator Rick YARTZ, Fire Captain-LACoFD

Bennet MILLOY, Fire Captain Specialist - CAL FIRE
Raul RAMIREZ, Fire Captain / Investigator-LACoFD
Tim ROGERS, Deputy Chief - CAL FIRE
Nicholas SCHROEDER, ABI - CAL FIRE
Ryan WALLACE, Battalion Chief - CAL FIRE

Eaton Fire Investigation Origin and Cause Supplemental Report:**Incident summary -**

The Eaton Fire occurred on January 7, 2025, at approximately 1811 hours. The Eaton Fire was a highly destructive and deadly wildfire in Los Angeles County that claimed the lives of 19 people, damaged 1,076 structures, destroyed 9,419 structures, burned 14,021 acres, and resulted in 9 firefighter injuries.

The Eaton Fire Investigation was unique, primarily because of the incident's magnitude and complexity. The Eaton Fire occurred within the State Responsibility Area (SRA) in Eaton Canyon, which is under the Los Angeles County Fire Department's jurisdiction. The Origin and Cause investigation (O&C) was a combined effort by the Los Angeles County Fire Department, with the assistance of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

Investigative assistance and expert retention -

Early in the investigation, CAL FIRE retained Electrical Engineer [REDACTED] to assist in investigating possible electrical sources of ignition associated with Southern California Edison (SCE) owned transmission lines in the general area of the origin. Concurrently, during the warehouse exams, CAL FIRE also retained Metallurgist [REDACTED] to assist with laboratory and warehouse examinations and testing of the electrical utility equipment.

Evidence examinations and laboratory testing -

The SCE electrical utility equipment was not available for examination, analysis, or testing at the time of the initial investigation and required extensive planning and resources from SCE to remove and store it. Following SCE's disassembly, removal, and storage of the equipment, examinations began at the warehouse storage facility in late July 2025. Those warehouse exams continued incrementally for several months at the [REDACTED] warehouse in Azusa, California. During these examinations of SCE's electrical utility equipment, specific items of evidence were identified and prepared to be examined in a laboratory setting. During the latter part of 2025, the investigators and experts began conducting laboratory examinations and incremental testing of evidence items identified during the warehouse



1 examinations. The laboratory testing occurred at [REDACTED] Laboratories in El Segundo,
2 CA.

3
4 [REDACTED] large chamber scanning electron microscope.

5 During the laboratory exams, it was found that certain pieces of evidence could not be viewed or
6 examined due to size constraints on the laboratory equipment at [REDACTED] Laboratories.

7 The experts and joint parties involved in the Eaton Fire investigation identified the [REDACTED]
8 [REDACTED] laboratory in Bowling Green, Kentucky as having an exam/testing
9 device large enough to accommodate the examination and testing of the larger pieces of the

10 Eaton Fire evidence. Once the decision was made to utilize [REDACTED]'s laboratory, the transport and
11 chain of custody of the Eaton Fire evidence would remain with [REDACTED] during transport to [REDACTED].

12 Upon arrival at the [REDACTED] laboratory, [REDACTED] personnel opened and inventoried the evidence
13 container, then placed it into the possession of [REDACTED], a lab operator at the [REDACTED]
14 laboratory.

15 The lab testing at [REDACTED] commenced on December 9, 2025, and was completed on December 12,
16 2025. Following the completion of the [REDACTED] lab testing and exams, [REDACTED] took possession of the
17 Eaton Fire evidence from the [REDACTED] laboratory, inventoried the evidence, placed it in a secure
18 container, sealed the container, and transported it back to the [REDACTED] warehouse in Azusa, CA.

19 I personally supervised the Eaton Fire evidence during its transport to and from [REDACTED], ensuring
20 the chain of custody was maintained throughout.

21
22 **Continued evidence testing and examinations.**

23 Upon returning from the [REDACTED] laboratory, further evidence examinations of SCE's electrical
24 utility equipment took place at the [REDACTED] warehouse in Azusa.

25 On July 22, 2026, Cal Fire Assistant Chief Brian Hawkins provided the final versions of the
26 experts' Metallurgy, Failure Analysis, and electrical investigation reports to me. See attachment
27 #10.23, Eaton Fire Electrical Investigation Report, and attachment #10.24, Metallurgy and
28 Failure Analysis Report, Eaton Fire.

On July 22 and July 23, 2026, Metallography took place at the [REDACTED] Engineering lab in Signal Hill, CA. X-ray Diffraction (XRD) took place at [REDACTED] Research in Goleta, CA, on July 24th, 2026.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Department death investigations.

[REDACTED] provided the LASD Homicide death investigation files for all 19 victims on June 30, 2026.

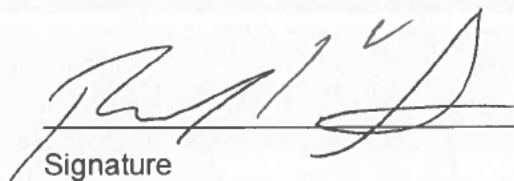
Opinions and conclusions.

The ongoing investigation into the cause of the Eaton Fire has included multiple examinations and testing of evidence, analysis of SCE electrical utility and mechanical systems, analysis of the mechanical and electrical properties of materials, analysis of documents produced by SCE, metallurgical analysis and testing, analysis of photographs and videos taken by witnesses, and aerial drone operations.

Utilizing the totality of the information, including the opinions of the retained expert [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it is the Eaton Fire

Investigation team's opinion that the Eaton Fire was caused by the electrical arcing events that took place on the out-of-service (OS) Southern California Edison Tower [REDACTED]. These arcing events occurred at the southwest conductor paddle of the (OS) Southern California Edison Mesa-Sylmar circuit Tower [REDACTED]. These arcing events ejected hot metal particles that fell to the receptive fuel beds consisting of dry vegetation below the towers. The introduction of this competent ignition source (ejected hot metal particles) into the available and receptive fuel below resulted in ignition, causing the Eaton Fire.

 7/22/2026
Signature Date

Rick YARTZ, Employee # [REDACTED]
LACoFD Captain / Investigator