



# NEW LA-AREA FIRE PROMPTS MORE EVACUATIONS AS OFFICIALS SAY OVER 10,000 STRUCTURES HAVE BURNED - ASSOCIATED PRESS

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*Homes are seen burned while a few still stand, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2025, in the Pacific Palisades section of Los Angeles.*

A new fire prompted evacuations Thursday in and around Los Angeles even as firefighters aided by calmer winds saw the first signs of successfully beating back the region's [deadly and devastating wildfires](#), while the enormity of the devastation started to emerge.

The fast-growing Kenneth Fire started in the late afternoon in the San Fernando Valley near the West Hills neighborhood and close to Ventura County. The evacuation order covered parts of Ventura and Los Angeles counties.

The orders came as Los Angeles County officials announced the Eaton Fire near Pasadena that started Tuesday night has burned more than 5,000 structures, a term that includes homes, apartment buildings, businesses, outbuildings and vehicles. To the west in Pacific Palisades, the largest of the fires burning in the LA area has destroyed over 5,300 structures. Between the Eaton and Palisades fires, more than 10,000 structures have burned.

All of the large fires that have broken out this week in the Los Angeles area are located in a roughly 25-mile band north of downtown.

The Kenneth blaze ignited less than 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) away from the El Camino Real Charter High School, where people are sheltering from the fire in Palisades. The two fires are about 10 miles (18 kilometers) apart.

Dozens of blocks were flattened to smoldering rubble in scenic Pacific Palisades. Only the outlines of homes and their chimneys remained. In Malibu, blackened palm strands were all that was left above debris where oceanfront homes once stood.

At least five churches, a synagogue, seven schools, two libraries, boutiques, bars, restaurants, banks and groceries were lost. So too were

the Will Rogers' Western Ranch House and Topanga Ranch Motel, [local landmarks](#) dating to the 1920s. The government has not yet released figures on the cost of the damage or specifics about how many structures burned.

AccuWeather, a private company that provides data on weather and its impact, on Thursday increased its estimate of the damage and economic loss to \$135-\$150 billion.

City leaders were encouraged Thursday after firefighters made significant gains at slowing the spread of the two biggest fires that had ignited block after block from [Pacific Palisades](#) to inland Altadena, a community near Pasadena.

Crews also knocked down a blaze [in the Hollywood Hills](#), allowing an evacuation to be lifted Thursday. The fire that sparked up late Wednesday near the heart of the entertainment industry came perilously close to igniting the famed Hollywood Bowl outdoor concert venue.

"While we are still facing significant threats, I am hopeful that the tide is turning," Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger said Thursday.

Water dropped from aircraft helped fire crews quickly seize control of the fires in the Hollywood Hills and Studio City, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said. Much of the widespread destruction occurred Tuesday after those aircraft were grounded due to high winds.

Wind gusts were expected to strengthen Thursday evening through Friday morning, with another round of strong winds expected early next week, raising concerns that the conditions could worsen, the National Weather Service said.

But Thursday's daytime forecast provided a window for firefighters — including crews pouring in from neighboring states and Canada — to make progress in reining in blazes that have killed at least seven people and caused thousands of people to flee their homes.

Los Angeles Fire Department Capt. Erik Scott said firefighters were able to keep the Hollywood Hills blaze in check because "we hit it hard and fast and Mother Nature was a little nicer to us."

Fire officials said Thursday that they don't yet know the cause of the fires but are actively investigating.

## Wind fuels the fires

Earlier in the week, hurricane-force winds with gusts up to 80 mph (129 kph) [blew embers](#), igniting the Southern California hillsides.

Right now, it's impossible to quantify the extent of the destruction other than "total devastation and loss," said Barbara Bruderlin, head of the Malibu Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce.

"There are areas where everything is gone, there isn't even a stick of wood left, it's just dirt," Bruderlin said.

Of the seven deaths so far, Los Angeles Fire Chief Kristin Crowley confirmed two were in Pacific Palisades.

Cadaver dogs and search crews are searching through rubble and the death toll is expected to rise, Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna said.

Anthony Mitchell, a 67-year-old amputee, and his son, Justin, who had cerebral palsy, were waiting for an ambulance to come, but they did not make it out, Mitchell's daughter, Hajime White, told The Washington Post.

Shari Shaw told [KTLA](#) that she tried to get her 66-year-old brother, Victor Shaw, to evacuate Tuesday night but he wanted to stay and fight the fire. Crews found his body with a garden hose in his hand.

On Thursday, recovery crews pulled a body from rubble of what was a beachfront residence in Malibu on the scenic Pacific Coast Highway. A charred washer and dryer were among the few things that remained.

While the two main fires were no longer spreading significantly, both remained at 0% containment, officials said.



## 180,000 people are ordered to evacuate

At least 180,000 people were under evacuation orders, and the fires have consumed about 45 square miles (117 square kilometers) — roughly the size of San Francisco. The Palisades Fire is already the most destructive in Los Angeles' history.

At least 20 arrests have been made for looting, and the city of Santa Monica declared a curfew Wednesday night because of the lawlessness, officials said. Luna said to protect properties national guard troops would be stationed near the areas ravaged by fire and a curfew was expected to go into effect from 6 p.m. until 6 a.m., starting as soon as Thursday.

## Actors lost homes

Flames destroyed the homes of [several celebrities](#), including Billy Crystal, Mandy Moore and Paris Hilton.

Jamie Lee Curtis pledged \$1 million to start a “fund of support” for those affected by the fires that touched all economic levels from the city’s wealthy to its working class.

## A longer fire season

[California’s wildfire season](#) is beginning earlier and ending later due to rising temperatures and decreased rainfall tied to climate change, according to recent data.

Dry winds, including [the notorious Santa Anas](#), have contributed to warmer-than-average temperatures in Southern California, which has not seen more than 0.1 inches (2.5 millimeters) of rain since early May.

## Picking up the pieces with nowhere to go

Robert Lara sifted through the remains of his home in Altadena on Thursday with tears in his eyes, hoping to find a safe containing a set of earrings that once belonged to his great-great-grandmother.

“All our memories, all our sentimental attachments, things that were gifted from generation to generation to generation are now gone,” he said.

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Seewer reported from Toledo, Ohio and Watson from San Diego. Associated Press journalists Manuel Valdes, Eugene Garcia and Krysta Fauria, Jaimie Ding in Los Angeles; Ethan Swope in Pasadena, California; Hallie Golden in Seattle; Mark Thiessen in Anchorage, Alaska; Heather Hollingsworth in Mission, Kansas; Jeff Martin in Atlanta; Janie Har in San Francisco; Brian Melley in London; Kathy McCormack in Concord, New Hampshire; Sarah Brumfield in Cockeysville, Maryland; and Tammy Webber in Detroit contributed.