



THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA Disaster Response to the Southern California Fires



Resources for lawyers, fire victims, volunteers and more

On October 24, 2007 President Bush declared the California Wildfires a major disaster making federal resources available for the State of California to help people and communities recover from the effects of wildfires beginning on October 21, 2007. Tuesday, October 23, the State Bar began its disaster response to the Fires in Southern California to assist fire victims and coordinate volunteer legal services. A preliminary disaster assessment was initiated and continues to be conducted with organizations from following counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura.

San Diego County is most affected at this time. San Diego County Bar Association and other local organizations are coordinating relief efforts locally. At this time, a FEMA/ABA Young Lawyers Division Legal Assistance Hotline for victims of the fires sponsored by the State Bar of California, California Young Lawyers Association and generously hosted by the law firm of Foley & Lardner LLP is established in San Diego.

- **RESOURCES FOR FIRE VICTIMS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

State of California Office of Emergency Services

<http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/ALL/876C5DEE11FE66808825737C005B8754?OpenDocument>

Federal Emergency Management Administration

http://www.fema.gov/hazard/wildfire/ca_2007.shtm

- **For Legal Assistance** - If you are a fire victim of any affected county seeking legal information contact the FEMA/ABA Young Lawyers Division **Legal Assistance Hotline** at **1-866-636-9041** Monday through Friday between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. PT; messages may be left after this time. Callers should identify that they are seeking fire-related legal assistance. Spanish speaking individuals can leave a message and a Spanish speaking volunteer will call them back. Also, Asian language speaking clients will be directed to services. The kind of legal help available typically includes:
 - Assistance with insurance claims (life, medical, property, etc.)
 - Counseling on landlord/tenant problems
 - Assisting in consumer protection matters, remedies, and procedures
 - Replacement of wills and other important legal documents destroyed in a major disaster
- **For Native Americans** and other fire victims who reside on California reservations affected by the fires seeking legal services contact California Indian Legal Services: 1-800-743-8941 or 760-746-8941
- **HELPING HANDBOOK for Individuals and Families Affected by the Wildfires**
If you are a victim of the wildfires or an advocate, this handbook provides much-needed and helpful information to Californians who are trying to put their homes and lives back together.
<http://www.mofo.com/about/community/helpinghandbooks.html>
- **Just for Lawyers:** If you are a lawyer affected by the fire and have questions about your ethical obligations contact The State Bar Ethics Hotline: 415-538-2150.
- **Public Protection:** If you are a victim of a disaster it is illegal for lawyers or others to solicit legal work from you. You should consider your need for legal representation, but your choice of lawyer is up to you. If you are solicited or have other concerns about the conduct of an attorney, contact the State Bar's discipline complaint intake hotline 1-800-843-9053.

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- **RESOURCES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

If you are a lawyer or law firm and would like to volunteer or provide support to San Diego County, complete the volunteer intake form on the San Diego County Bar Association's website

<http://www.sdcba.org/>

If you are a lawyer and would like to volunteer for the FEMA/ABA Young Lawyers Division **Legal Assistance Hotline** or at a Disaster Recovery Center in San Diego County, please complete the Disaster Legal Services Volunteer Attorney Form:

http://www.abanet.org/disaster/docs/dls_volunteer_form_ca_wildfires.pdf

The hotline is housed in the law office of Foley Lardner's downtown San Diego office. Volunteer shifts are broken down into two shifts, 9 to 1 and 1 to 5, during business hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Volunteers must be members of the State Bar of California and preference is given to those volunteers who are available locally.

To make donations to the Red Cross for San Diego County:

<https://www.kintera.org/site/apps/ka/sd/donor.asp?c=erKQL4NQE&b=129992&en=kjIOK1MSLqIKL5NSIfLLI0OMKrJ5I9MIKiIRL0PJgIVLdPXIxH>

- **OTHER LEGAL RESOURCES**

How to find a lawyer: The State Bar of California Lawyer Referral Service

415-538-2250 or LRS@calbar.ca.gov http://www.calbar.ca.gov/state/calbar/calbar_generic.jsp?cid=10182

Legal Aid referrals or self-help resources: www.LawHelpCalifornia.org

Please refer here for legal services providers by county.

- **THE ABA's WEBSITE ON THE CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES**

<http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/probono/wildfires.html>

*On behalf of those affected by the fires, the State Bar of California
thanks its members and others who have offered a generous outpouring of assistance.*