



## NEWS RELEASE

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### DIR issues critical guidance for worker safety during wildfire cleanup and recovery

Los Angeles — In response to the ongoing wildfire recovery efforts, the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) has posted guidance for employers and workers on how to proceed rapidly and safely as they navigate the risks associated with [fire debris removal and cleanup](#).

Even after fires are extinguished, hazardous conditions persist. Employers involved in recovery operations within fire-damaged areas must assess these risks, address unsafe conditions, and ensure proper training is provided to all workers.

DIR is committed to protecting workers on the frontlines of disaster recovery, ensuring their safety and health as they help restore what has been lost.

DIR offers extensive information about worker health including a [wildfire cleanup training tool](#) in English and Spanish. Additional resources include information on:

#### Health and safety protections:

- **Physical hazards:** Information is available regarding the risks of structural collapse or contact with live utilities.
- **Hazard Communication:** Informing and training workers about chemical hazards from burned buildings, such as fire retardants, lead or asbestos, and other hazardous materials.

How can we help you today?



- **Cleanup, Debris Removal, and Restoration:** Cal/OSHA provides guidance to employers and workers regarding proper training and equipment for safely handling debris during the cleanup of contaminated areas. Cleanup of fire damaged sites and debris removal must be done in accordance with title 8 section 5192 Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response.

### Wage and retaliation protections:

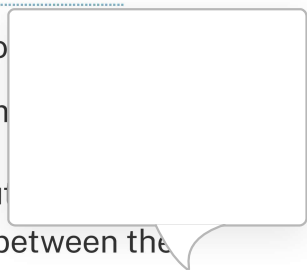
[Workers have special rights during emergency conditions](#), including safety, evacuation, communication – such as access to cell phones – time off, and pay, including potential disability benefits. The Labor Commissioner’s Office (LCO) educates employers and workers about these rights, supporting compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

The LCO provides information on workers’ rights with respect to:

**Protections During Emergency Conditions:** Information on workers’ rights in hazardous situations, including safety measures and employer responsibilities.

- **[Retaliation Protections](#):** Safeguards for workers engaging in protected activities, such as raising health and safety concerns, refusing unsafe work, or serving as volunteer firefighters.
- **Immigration-Related Retaliation:** Protections against employer retaliation based on a worker’s immigration status.
- **Wage and Overtime Regulations:** Guidance on wages, overtime laws, and employer obligations.
- **Public Works:** Information on labor laws specific to public works projects and [prevailing wage requirements](#).
- **Filing Wage and Retaliation Claims:** Instructions on how workers can file [claims for unpaid wages](#) or [retaliation claims](#).
- **Reporting Labor Law Violations:** Steps for workers to [report labor law violations](#) and seek enforcement.

Workers in California are protected regardless of immigration status. Workers who have questions about health in the workplace can call 833-579-0927 to speak with a live bilingual Cal/OSHA representative between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Workers who have questions about labor laws enforced by the LCO can call 1-833-LCO-INFO (833-526-4636) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through



Friday. Complaints about workplace safety and health hazards can be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#).

The LCO in 2020 launched an interdisciplinary outreach campaign, “[Reaching Every Californian](#).” The campaign amplifies basic protections and builds pathways to affected populations, so workers and employers understand legal protections and obligations, as well as the Labor Commissioner’s enforcement procedures. Californians can follow the Labor Commissioner on [Facebook](#) and [X \(Twitter\)](#).

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The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#)

