

# A Resource Guide for the LA Fires

from Experienced California Wildfire Attorneys

**Edelson**<sup>PC</sup>

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# A Resource Guide from Experienced Fire Attorneys

Wildfires can cause life-changing damage to you and your family. If a wildfire has destroyed your property, or caused you to suffer physical or emotional injury, it is critical to find an experienced attorney who can help you navigate your recovery.

The attorneys at Edelson PC have been advocating for wildfire victims throughout the United States. Our lawsuits have held some of the biggest utility companies in the country accountable for the destruction they have caused and have helped individuals recover hundreds of millions of dollars for their losses. Just recently, we were lead trial counsel in the largest wildfire lawsuit in Oregon history, which resulted in a historic jury verdict in favor of our clients, paving the way for potentially billions of dollars in future compensation for wildfire victims.

We created this guide to provide fire victims with information about wildfire recovery, wildfire lawsuits, and how Edelson PC may be able to help you. If you have any questions about the information in this guide, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Phone: 888-675-5006

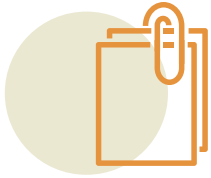
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# Recovering After A Wildfire





### **Document Everything.**

You should collect and save all documents related to the fire, including receipts for emergency expenses and medical records.



### **Take Photos and Videos of the Property Damage.**

Once it is safe to return to your property, take photos of the property damage starting at the street or address marker and include all sides of the building. If it is legal in your area, you may consider using a drone to document footage of the damage if one is accessible.



### **Make a List of Your Losses.**

Document a list of everything you and your family lost in the fire. An item that was destroyed or damaged in the fire may be covered by your insurance policy or recoverable as damages in a later litigation. Recent photos of rooms in your house or previous purchase receipts can be helpful in your documentation.



### **Understand Your Legal Options.**

Even if you are insured it is critical to understand your legal options after a wildfire. Fire victims too often discover that insurance proceeds are woefully inadequate to cover their losses. An experienced wildfire attorney can help you understand what damages are available to you and they can help you fight to recover the compensation you deserve.

## **General Resources**

FEMA App - Receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations nationwide and access emergency safety tips.

InciWeb( <https://inciweb.nwec.gov/>) - The Incident Information System is an interagency information management system which combines information from government agencies on wildfires, prescribed burns, and road closures.

Humane society - The humane society is often allowed into evacuated areas before the general public. If you had to leave animals behind they may be able to help.

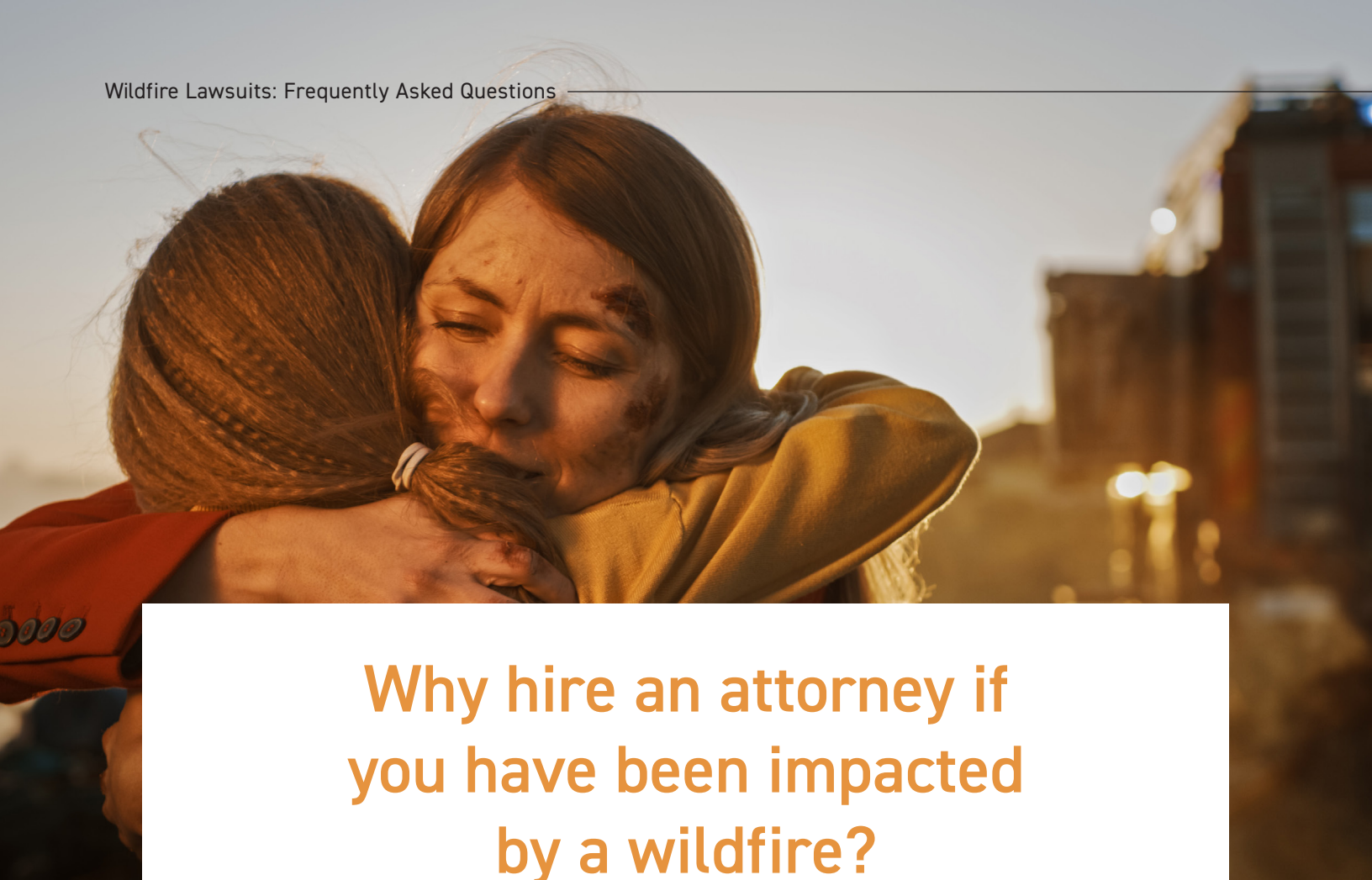
The American Red Cross has a Wildfire Relief guide to help navigate a diverse network of organizations and services to find help.





# Wildfire Lawsuits: Frequently Asked Questions





## Why hire an attorney if you have been impacted by a wildfire?

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Recovering compensation for your injuries and losses after a fire can be a complex, stressful, and adversarial process that lasts for years. Having experienced attorneys in your corner can be critical. They can help you understand what damages are available and they can help you fight to recover the compensation you deserve.

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The attorneys at Edelson PC have represented thousands of wildfire victims over the years, and have helped individuals and businesses recover millions of dollars for their losses, above and beyond money recovered from their insurance companies.





## I feel like I've lost everything. Where do I start?

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Once you and your family are safe, it is important to start taking steps to document your losses and to hold the responsible parties accountable for the damage they caused. Early diligence could help you recover substantially more compensation for your losses. Below is a list of steps you should consider taking immediately after a fire.

- 1 Contact your insurance company and file a claim. Take time to ask your insurance agent questions and call or email them many times, if needed, until you fully understand the details of your coverage, all relevant deadlines, and what information you need to provide them.
- 2 Hire an attorney. An attorney can help you understand what damages are available to you and how to hold the responsible parties accountable for your losses.
- 3 Save all receipts and invoices for purchases you were forced to make as a result of the fire. This includes receipts for emergency food, clothing, and other living expenses, such as hotel rooms.
- 4 Start making a list of your property loss. In your mind, go room by room. List the big, expensive items first, and then turn to the smaller items, itemizing both the type of property and its estimated value. This experience can seem daunting but it is important that you try. In our experience, a robust property list can help clients recover substantially more compensation.
- 5 Take care of yourself. The weeks and months after a fire can be overwhelming. Remember to find time to do things that bring you happiness.



## Why do I need a lawyer if I already have insurance?

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While having good insurance is important, the truth is that insurance rarely—if ever—covers the full extent of a wildfire victim's damages. Often, it doesn't even come close. There are many categories of damages, like emotional distress and income loss, that insurance policies rarely cover at all. And even for categories of damages that insurance companies do typically cover, like property loss, coverage often falls woefully short of a fire victim's true losses. Experienced wildfire attorneys can help understand what damages are available and fight to help you recover as much compensation as possible, above and beyond your insurance coverage.

## How long do wildfire lawsuits take and how much do I need to be involved?

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It depends. Sometimes lawsuits are resolved very quickly. Often, though, they will last for many years. That is especially true for wildfire lawsuits, which typically involve complex facts, the use of many experts, extensive litigation before a judge, and sometimes a trial.

Your involvement will depend on what stage a case is in. But generally speaking, after you sign a retention agreement hiring a law firm, your attorneys will handle the lion's share of the work. Your primary role will be to provide your attorneys with documents and information to help them build your case.

## What Wildfire Damages Could Be Recovered?

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There are typically many different types of damages available to wildfire victims. These may include, but are not limited to, personal property loss, real property loss, emotional distress, personal injury, income loss, business losses, evacuation costs, medical expenses, and punitive damages.





## About Edelston PC

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Edelston PC is a nationally recognized leader in high-stakes plaintiff's work. Over the last several years, our team has achieved multiple historic victories on behalf of wildfire victims across the Western United States. In June 2023, our team won an 8-week jury trial on behalf of Oregonians whose lives were upended by wildfires that were started by a large utility company. This verdict paves the way for fire victims in the state to recover potentially billions of dollars in compensation for their losses. Our team also represents approximately 1,000 people who lost their homes and businesses in the 2018 Camp Fire, which was previously the largest and most destructive wildfire in California history. As part of this effort, we acted as counsel to a court-appointed member of the Tort Claimants Committee, and our work helped lead to a \$13.5 billion settlement with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (resolving all claims related to several Northern California Fires, which included our clients' claims resulting from the Camp Fire). Edelston PC also represents over 500 individuals and businesses in claims against Xcel Energy for its role in the Marshall Fire—the most destructive wildfire in Colorado history.

Beyond our work on behalf of wildfire victims, we have prosecuted some of the largest and most-cutting age lawsuits in recent years against some of the biggest corporations in America, including Facebook, Wells Fargo, Uber, and Google, and have achieved settlements and verdicts totaling over \$20 billion. In every case, our team of trial lawyers, paralegals, client relations specialists, and experts provide hands on and personal attention to each of our clients from day one all the way through final resolution.

**EXPERIENCED WILDFIRE ATTORNEYS**

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