

ORDER OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER

**LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY ORDER PROHIBITING THE UNSAFE REMOVAL,
TRANSPORT, AND DISPOSAL OF FIRE DEBRIS TO PROTECT COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Issue Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025

PLEASE READ THIS ORDER CAREFULLY.

WHEREAS, on January 7, 2025, [Governor Newsome issued Executive Order N-2-25](#) that proclaimed a State of Emergency pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act within Los Angeles and Ventura Counties regarding the Palisades and other Fires and Windstorm conditions;

WHEREAS, on January 7, 2025, the Chair of the Board of Supervisors declared a State of Local Emergency pursuant to Chapter 2.68 of the Los Angeles County Code due to the conditions of disaster and extreme peril due the Windstorm and Critical Fire events experienced in wide areas of Los Angeles County;

WHEREAS, on January 10, 2025, the [Local Health Officer declared a local health emergency](#) due to the serious adverse health impacts to County residents due to the Windstorm and Critical Fire events;

WHEREAS, on January 14, 2025, the [County Board of Supervisors ratified both the proclamation of a local emergency and the local health emergency](#) due to conditions of disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property arising from the January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events, beginning on January 7, 2025, affecting areas throughout the County of Los Angeles (County);

WHEREAS, California Health and Safety Code Section 101040 authorizes the Local Health Officer to take any preventative measure that may be necessary to protect and preserve public health from any public health hazard during a declared State of Emergency and Local Emergency;

WHEREAS, California Health and Safety Code Section 101085 authorizes state agencies and political subdivisions to provide mutual aid to any area affected by a local health emergency;

WHEREAS, the potential for widespread toxic exposures and threats to public health and the environment exists in the aftermath of a major wildfire disaster, and debris and ash from residential and other structural fires contain hazardous substances that can result in adverse health impacts to the public;

WHEREAS, the combustion of building materials such as siding, roofing tiles, and insulation result in dangerous ash that may contain asbestos, heavy metals, and other hazardous substances, and household and business hazardous substances such as paint, gasoline, cleaning products, pesticides, compressed gas cylinders, and chemicals may have been stored in business locations, homes, garages, or sheds that may have burned or released in the fire, also producing hazardous substances;

WHEREAS, exposure to hazardous substances may lead to acute and chronic health effects and may cause long-term public health and environmental impacts; uncontrolled hazardous substances and debris pose significant threats to public health through inhalation of dust particles and contamination of drinking water supplies; and improper handling can expose workers to toxic materials, and improper transport and disposal of fire debris can spread hazardous substances throughout the community;

WHEREAS, the Health Officer of Los Angeles County finds that the Critical Fire and Windstorm events whose conditions have included an ongoing response to a number of destructive and wind-driven fires, which include, among others the Palisades, Eaton, Kenneth, Creek, Hurst, and Lidia Fires (Critical Fire Areas) that started on or about Tuesday, January 07, 2025, have created an imminent threat to public health in Los Angeles County in the form of contaminated fire debris from household hazardous waste and materials and structural debris resulting from the destruction of hundreds of structures;

WHEREAS, areas that have been closed to reentry by residents and the public for safety reasons are being opened or will be open in the near future;

WHEREAS, this hazardous waste debris poses a substantial present or potential hazard to human health in the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed, or otherwise managed;

WHEREAS, the California Office of Emergency Services, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and/or CalRecycle may establish a voluntary fire debris clearance program to ensure the safe removal, transport, and disposal of hazardous fire debris in a manner that protects public health and safety and complies with all legal requirements;

WHEREAS, property owners that do not participate in the established fire debris clearance program must conduct their private debris removal, transport, and disposal in a manner that does not endanger the community and that complies with all legal requirements;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. No removal of fire debris resulting from the Critical Fire Areas in Los Angeles County shall occur from properties without a hazardous materials inspection conducted either by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or California Department of Toxic Substances Control or the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Unified Program Agency, or other participating local government Certified Unified Program Agency. The term "removal of fire debris" as used in this order includes all cleanup or removal of fire debris, but it does not include the removal of personal property from residential sites.
2. Pending the enactment of additional requirements to address the Critical Fire Area cleanup, no debris bin shall be provided to property owners for the purposes of the removal of fire debris without the authorization of the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

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3. Pending the enactment of additional requirements to address the Critical Fire Area cleanup, property owners that opt out of the established fire debris clearance program, if one is established in Los Angeles County, must register with and obtain the permission of Los Angeles County before beginning the removal of fire debris and conduct their private debris removal, transport, disposal in a manner that does not endanger the community and that complies with all legal requirements.

4. This order applies in the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County impacted by the Critical Fires within Los Angeles County.

Copies. The County shall promptly provide copies of this Order by: (a) posting it on the Los Angeles Department of Public Health’s website: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/>

Issue Date. This Order is issued on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, and will continue until it is revised, rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the County Health Officer.

IT IS SO ORDERED:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Muntu Davis, M.D., M.P.H.', is written over a horizontal line.

1/15/2025

Muntu Davis, M.D., M.P.H.

Issue Date

County Health Officer,
County of Los Angeles