

FAQS: HOW REALTORS® CAN ASSIST RENTERS AFFECTED BY DISASTERS

REALTORS® are experts at thinking outside the box and finding creative solutions to housing needs. After a natural disaster, this skill set is paramount. Your homeowner clients may be in need of temporary housing while they rebuild or search for a new home. Rental clients may be searching for replacement properties if their rental property was damaged or destroyed. Both homeowners and renters may wonder how and when to return to partially impacted homes. Below, you'll find the answers to your top questions about working with renters after a wildfire.

How can REALTORS® help displaced clients find temporary housing?

- Your C.A.R. member benefits include complimentary access to [Rental Beast Gateway](#), a rental property MLS. On this platform, REALTORS® can list and search rental properties.
- [Red Cross service sites](#) provide emergency shelter. You can also locate FEMA shelters and other emergency assistance for immediate needs on the US Government's [DisasterAssistance.gov website](#). The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services also maintains this list of open shelters.
- Above all, leverage your vast network and collaborate with your peers to connect housing seekers and housing providers in your spheres of influence.

How can REALTORS® assist clients with renters' insurance issues?

- Direct them to C.A.R.'s Consumer Fact Sheet [7 Essential Steps to Navigate Insurance After a Disaster](#).
- The nonprofit advocacy group United Policyholders created [this guide](#) to help renters access insurance benefits.
- If you've represented a client on their home that is now damaged, review your photos, videos and written descriptions of the property to see if you can help them create their inventory list for the claims process.

How can renter clients determine the rent/fees owed on a partially damaged dwelling, or if it's safe to return to?

- LAist has written this comprehensive [overview of renters' questions](#) about disaster recovery, including questions on housing providers' responsibilities regarding the cleanup of damaged units.
- Questions about paying rent on a partially damaged unit or receiving the security deposit back on an uninhabitable unit? The LA County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs has prepared this [Q & A](#) for post-disaster renters' issues.
- Restoring a dwelling to habitability after a disaster is typically the housing provider's responsibility. However, a renter may have questions about garbage disposal, food safety, and other cleanup issues following a wildfire. The Los Angeles Department of Public Health has created this guide, [Returning Home After a Fire](#).
- If their belongings are damaged by smoke, your clients' renters' insurance should help them find a smoke remediation specialist. Home restoration expert Bob Vila has written this guide to [removing smoke odors](#) from the home.

How can REALTORS® help clients avoid price-gouging and scam artists following disaster?

- Direct them to C.A.R.'s Consumer Fact Sheets, [What You Need to Know About Price-Gouging After a Natural Disaster](#) and [Protect Yourself After a Disaster: Essential Tips to Avoid Scams and Fraud](#).

How can my clients and I stay up-to-date on new developments in disaster recovery process?

- Visit [Smart Zone's CA Wildfire/Natural Disaster Resources](#) page for new developments impacting real estate and resources for clients.
- For general questions regarding client work and transactions, contact [C.A.R.'s Legal Hotline](#).