

Southern California Wildfire Response

A COMMUNITY WILDLAND FIRE
DEPARTMENT FOR LOS ANGELES

Fire Chief
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Emergency Network Los Angeles
August 19th, 2026

What we'll cover today...

- Who SCWR is
- Why the department exists
- Our operations since 2021
- Our response during January 2025
- Who we work alongside
- Where the department is growing
- Why every Angeleno should have LAIT911
- What community partners can do before the next fire

WHO IS
SCWR?

A Community Wildland Fire Department

- Duly Recognized Authority
- Founded in 2021
- Stationed in Santa Monica Mountains
- 24/7 On-Call, 24/7 Response
- Focused on wildland fire, the wildland-urban interface and community emergencies
- Built for the terrain and risks of Southern California



Wildfire moves faster than traditional response systems can scale.

- Fires can grow dramatically within minutes
- Extreme wind events can create incidents across the region simultaneously
- Wildland-urban interface communities have unique access and evacuation challenges
- Major incidents quickly exhaust available city and county resources
- Local, pre-positioned personnel close those critical gaps



What We do...

Wildland Fire Operations

Patrol, initial attack, fire watch, mop-up and incident support

WUI Protection

Pre-positioning, neighborhood patrols, evacuation support and hazard identification

All-Hazard Response

Storm incidents, fallen trees, traffic hazards, medical support and major emergencies

Community Risk Reduction

Defensible-space education, public alerts, fuels work and preparedness programming



How We Operate

- National Wildfire Coordinating Group training standards
- Department Chain of Command
- Structured dispatch and incident documentation
- Pre-deployment during elevated fire weather
- Apparatus, personal protective equipment and communications systems
- Local knowledge of canyons, access roads and evacuation routes



Department Standards

The minimum standard every member must meet to represent SCWR safely, professionally, and operationally is as follows:

- Training & Qualifications to the FFT2 (NWCG Standard)
- Physical Readiness
- Uniform and PPE
- Conduct and Professionalism
- Operational Readiness
- Safety and Compliance

JANUARY FIRES

January Began Before the Fires

December 30, 2024

- Critically dry vegetation
- Severe Santa Ana winds forecast
- Extreme regional fire potential
- SCWR pre-deployed in the San Fernando Valley
- Crews operated from Hansen Dam Park Ranger Station on behalf of the City of Los Angeles



January 7: The System Was Being Stretched

“ *Send everyone we got. I don't care who it is. Send them all. Pickup trucks. Water tanks. Anything!* - LAFD Battalion Chief to MFC Dispatch

- The Palisades Fire placed enormous demand on regional resources
- The Hurst Fire ignited near Sylmar later that day
- Oakridge Mobile Home Park faced a renewed wildfire threat
- Available fire and law-enforcement resources were already heavily committed
- SCWR responded directly from its Hansen Dam deployment for immediate evacuation support.

The Work Between the Headlines

While major fires consumed regional resources, SCWR handled:

- Repeat vegetation fires around Hansen Dam & Sepulveda Basin
- Traffic control and accident response at dark intersections caused by wind-damaged traffic signals
- Fallen trees and blocked roads
- Reports of smoke and possible new fires



Granada Hills

- SCWR Firefighters encountered a fully involved structure fire upon routine patrol.
- The normal response system remained severely depleted due to the Palisades response.
- SCWR assisted with immediate evacuation, held exposures in check, and evaluated a resident severely affected by smoke inhalation.
- SCWR was the only resource on-scene for the first ~15 minutes.



Still re-building one year later. (2026)

Three Weeks of Continuous Operations

- Approximately 2,500 volunteer hours
(800+ hours per week)
- Continuous deployment and patrol operations
- Command personnel working 17- to 18-hour days
- Firefighters completing extended shifts while maintaining outside employment
- Collaborating with other agencies including LAFD and LA City Park Rangers
- Repeated return to duty throughout the emergency period



What January Taught Us

The lesson was not that Los Angeles lacks capable agencies. The lesson was that no system has unlimited capacity...

- Pre-deployment works
- Local knowledge matters
- Small incidents still require attention during major disasters
- Community organizations can provide critical support before, during and after emergencies
- Preparedness must be sustained between fire seasons

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Who we work alongside

SCWR has worked alongside and supported operations involving:

- Los Angeles Fire Department
- Los Angeles Park Rangers
- Los Angeles Police Department
- Los Angeles City Council offices
- Community organizations and land-management partners



Our Community Footprint

- Stationed at Coldwater Canyon in the Santa Monica Mountains
- Wildland-urban interface response across the Los Angeles region
- 24/7 response teams, 24/7 dispatch.
- Have worked throughout the SFV, Greater LA County, Ventura County & Metropolitan Los Angeles.



Interagency Coordination

Fellow Agency Partners



The U.S Forest Service, Cal Fire, Los Angeles County Fire Department, and LAFD all maintain type-two handcrews and firefighting capabilities. Our job is to complement what they do and be ready coordinate with our agency partners when the mission comes.

Where SCWR Is Growing

More Water

Add a water tender to improve water supply in areas with limited or distant hydrants.

More Firefighters

Recruit, train and retain additional personnel for dependable 24/7 staffing.

More Community Connections

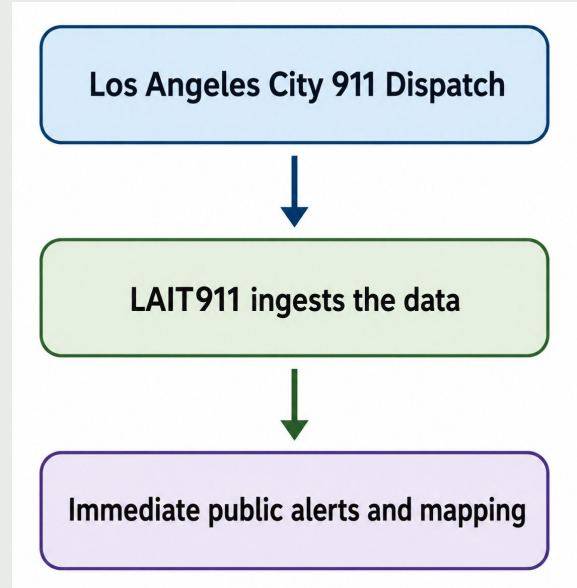
Build relationships before emergencies occur.



LAIT911

LAIT911

The public-safety alert platform operated by Southern California Wildfire Response



LAIT911 During January 2025

During the January fires, LAIT911 became the **most current and authoritative source** for active fire information in Los Angeles County.

- Used by approximately 100,000 residents throughout the region
- Trusted by members of LAFD and LAPD
- Updates driven by direct 911 dispatch data, not hearsay.
- Information available before many broader public notifications

LAIT911 vs WatchDuty

	LAIT911	WatchDuty
Primary Focus	All-hazard public safety	Wildfire and selected disaster information
Geographic	Deep Los Angeles coverage	Broad national coverage
Data	Direct, immediate Los Angeles 911 dispatch feed	Human reporters monitoring multiple sources
Operator	Local Fire Department	501(c)3 Tech Startup
Best Use Case	24/7, up-to-date awareness of perils in Los Angeles	Broader awareness of wildfire incidents taking place nationally.

LAIT911 vs Citizen

	LAIT911	Citizen
Primary Focus	All-hazard public safety	Consumer Safety & Media Platform
Geographic	Deep Los Angeles coverage	Broad national coverage
Data	Direct, immediate Los Angeles 911 dispatch feed	Human reporters monitoring multiple sources
Operator	Local Fire Department	Venture-backed, for-profit company
Best Use Case	24/7, up-to-date awareness of perils in Los Angeles	Awareness of trending major news throughout Los Angeles.

Every Angeleno Should Have It

- Free public-safety alerts
- Built specifically for Los Angeles
- Direct Los Angeles City 911 dispatch data
- Fire, police, medical, rescue, traffic and hazardous-material incidents
- Available for free on the iOS App Store or Google Play.
Search LAIT911 or Scan QR



PREVENTION

(AND YOUR ROLE IN IT)

Lack of Prevention



Response Cannot Outrun Prevention

The next wildfire outcome is shaped before ignition.

- Vegetation management
- Ember-resistant construction
- Clear access
- Evacuation planning
- Reliable information
- Prepared residents and organizations

Defensible Space

0-5 feet

Use ember-resistant and noncombustible materials immediately around structures.

5-30 feet

Keep vegetation lean, clean, maintained and appropriately spaced.

30-100 feet

Reduce fuel continuity and maintain vegetation to slow fire spread.

Throughout the property

Keep roofs, gutters, decks and access routes clear.

Home and Facility Hardening

Priority improvements:

- Class A roof assemblies
- Ember-resistant vents
- Enclosed or protected eaves
- Tempered or multi-pane windows
- Noncombustible materials near structures
- Protected decks, fences and attachments
- Clearly marked and accessible driveways

What Community Partners Can Do

Introduce SCWR

Connect the department with neighborhood leaders, property owners, institutions, agencies and potential supporters.

Share LAIT911

Put public-safety alerts in front of employees, residents, members and families.

Build Relationships Before the Emergency

Do not wait for the next Red Flag Warning to exchange contact information.

CLOSING

Three Things to Take With You

Understand SCWR

Los Angeles has a community wildland fire department that is trained, volunteer-staffed and available around the clock.

Download LAIT911

Every Angeleno should have direct access to local authoritative public-safety information.

Make The Connection

Introducing SCWR's mission to one organization, community leader or property owner who should know the department.

SCWR.org
OPS@SCWR.org
@SoCalWildfireHQ

Ways to Support SCWR

Awareness

Follow and Share our Social Media on Facebook and Instagram for updates on us. Spread the word.

Download LAIT911

Every Angeleno should have direct access to local authoritative public-safety information.

Direct Support

As a Community Resource, we rely on the public to keep us going. Help us, Help you.

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