THE PALISADES FIRE RECOVERY FIELD MANUAL

A Step-by-Step Guide to Rebuilding

Environmental • Medical • School • Rebuilding

2026 Edition

Prepared by Jeremy Wineberg
Pacific Palisades Resident
info@votewineberg.com

FOREWORD

A note from Jeremy Wineberg

One year after the Palisades Fire, many families are still living in the rebuild. Some have moved back. Many are rebuilding. Others remain displaced – and almost everyone is living near active demolition, grading, or construction.

My family lost everything. I am rebuilding on a street that lost every home.

In the aftermath, I wrote a 120-page Palisades Fire Report that connected the January 1 ignition and the January 7 disaster as one event. That connection was later confirmed by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and acknowledged publicly by City leadership. The goal was simple: make sure this could not be treated as two separate incidents – and that accountability could follow.

Now it is time to rebuild – and to rebuild safely. Whether you are constructing a whole new home or remediating and returning to a standing home, our goal is the same: to help you and your family stay safe through the process, and in the years after.

Why this manual exists

A central handbook for practical answers to the questions people ask at night: soil, dust, windows, remediation quality, school safety, and how to protect kids while the neighborhood rebuilds.

THE PALISADES FIRE RECOVERY FIELD MANUAL

A practical guide to urban wildfire recovery: environmental safety, remediation, health, school re-entry, and rebuilding decisions.

What this is

A field manual and workbook for families navigating post-fire cleanup and rebuilding. It is designed to be printed, annotated, and shared.

What this is not

Not medical, legal, or engineering advice. Not a substitute for licensed professionals. Not a political argument. This manual is about practical safety and recovery.

FRONT MATTER

Disclaimer and how to use this manual

This manual is for informational and educational purposes only. It does not provide medical, legal, environmental, or engineering services. Always consult licensed professionals for site-specific decisions.

This manual emphasizes a single recovery principle: measured vigilance. Avoid denial. Avoid panic. Ask specific questions. Document answers. Re-test when conditions change.

How to use:

- Start with the Quick Start section and complete the checklists that match your situation.
- If you are rebuilding or planning to re-occupy, read the Soil + Remediation chapters before making decisions.
- If you have children, read the Pediatric and School chapters. They are practical and script-driven.
- Use the worksheets at the end to track tests, contractors, insurance calls, expenses, and symptoms.
- Keep this manual as a living binder: add lab reports, receipts, photos, emails, and clearances.

FRONT MATTER

Roadmap

This is a structured roadmap. Page numbers may vary by layout; use the section headers and checklists to navigate.

- Quick Start: 72 hours • 7 days • 30 days
- What happened: one event, multiple phases (public documents and investigations)
- Urban wildfire vs. brush fire (what is different and why it matters)
- Exposure pathways: dust, soil, indoor surfaces, HVAC, and food
- Independent testing: how to sample, how to choose a lab, how to retest
- Reading lab reports: ppm, screening levels, hotspots, and decision thresholds
- Proper remediation vs sloppy remediation (field indicators + clearance testing)
- Indoor recovery: furniture, appliances, kitchens, porous materials
- Air quality: PM2.5, HEPA, ventilation, wind events, and DIY monitoring
- Health monitoring: respiratory, skin, pediatric baseline labs, when to see a doctor
- Mental health: trauma patterns, resources, scripts, boundaries
- Kids + school: what to ask, what good looks like, how to talk to teens
- Neighbors + survivor guilt: what to say, what not to say, community stability
- Financial recovery: FEMA, SBA, California resources, insurance tactics
- Contractor and legal safety: licensing, scopes, fraud, and record retention
- Appendices: worksheets, templates, checklists, glossary, references

QUICK START

Your first 72 hours, 7 days, and 30 days (after re-entry)

This section is written for families returning, rebuilding, or living near active dust. Start here.

The goal of Quick Start

Stabilize your environment, reduce avoidable exposure, and create a documentation trail that protects you later.

First 72 hours after re-entry (focus: stabilize + reduce exposure)

- If you enter a smoke-impacted structure, wear at least an N95 and avoid stirring dust.
- Do not dry sweep ash. Use HEPA vacuuming and wet wiping where appropriate.
- Close windows during windy conditions and run filtration if available.
- Photograph everything: property, contents, appliances, attic, HVAC, and any visible ash layers.
- Start a single digital folder for: lab reports, insurance, receipts, contractor bids, and communications.

First 7 days after re-entry (focus: testing plan + decision control)

- Commission independent soil testing if you plan to rebuild or re-occupy. Test multiple locations and depths.
- If demolition or grading is active nearby, treat dust as an exposure pathway and increase filtration.
- Create a re-occupancy checklist: soil clearance, HVAC cleaning, indoor dust protocol, and child play rules.
- If you have children under 6, discuss pediatric baseline testing with your pediatrician using CDC guidance.

First 30 days after re-entry (focus: remediation standards + documentation)

- If remediation occurs: require a written scope, before/after photos, and post-remediation clearance testing.
- If clean fill is imported: document source and request material specifications; consider verification testing.
- Set boundaries for school and outdoor activity on high dust days.
- Track symptoms and triggers (wind, demolition, school days) in the worksheet section.

Quick reality check:

Most recovery mistakes happen when families are forced into fast decisions without a testing plan. Your leverage is structure: independent verification + documentation.

PART 1

The Palisades Fire: one event, multiple phases

Public documents describe the January 2025 fire as connected to an earlier ignition through a holdover/continuation mechanism.

Multiple public documents describe the January 2025 Palisades Fire as connected to an earlier January 1 ignition. Federal court filings described the Palisades Fire as a 'holdover' continuation of the Jan. 1 fire.[12]

A Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) after-action statement discussed underground smoldering and reactivation under extraordinary wind conditions.[13]

For practical recovery decisions, the key point is not the investigative terminology. The key point is that residents experienced a single disaster with a long recovery arc.

PART 2

Urban wildfire vs. brush fire (why it matters)

Urban wildfires burn structures, vehicles, treated wood, wiring, plastics, and household products. This changes the composition of ash and dust compared to vegetation-only fires.

Post-urban-fire concerns commonly include:

- Heavy metals (lead, arsenic, cadmium) in soil and dust
- Combustion byproducts (PAHs) in soot and settled dust
- Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) that re-aerosolizes during demolition and grading

Not all homes experience the same deposition. Wind channeling and burn intensity produce hotspots.

Key recovery concept

After an urban wildfire, 'it looks clean' is not an environmental clearance standard. The standard is verification: testing + documented remediation + clearance.

PART 3

Exposure pathways: how people actually get exposed

Risk is driven by pathway, dose, and duration. The most common residential pathways are:

- Inhalation: breathing dust/PM2.5 during wind events or construction
- Ingestion: hand-to-mouth contact (especially in children) after touching soil/dust
- Tracking: dust carried indoors on shoes, pets, clothing, strollers, sports gear
- Indoor reservoir: HVAC systems, carpets, upholstery, insulation, and settled dust on surfaces

Short visits usually do not equal chronic exposure. Concern rises when exposure repeats daily or when children have frequent soil contact.

PART 4

Independent soil testing (the backbone decision)

Rule #1

Developers are in the development business. You are in the family protection business. Hire independent testing and test more than once.

California DTSC notes that soil with total lead at or below 80 mg/kg (ppm) is usually considered acceptable for reuse without restriction, and values above that level generally indicate the need for further evaluation.[1]

EPA's federal lead hazard standard for bare soil in play areas is 400 ppm (with different thresholds for other yard areas in regulation).[2]

EPA has also used lower screening levels (e.g., 200 ppm and in some contexts 100 ppm) in lead-contaminated soil initiatives, emphasizing additional protection for children.[15]

Why neighbors can test differently

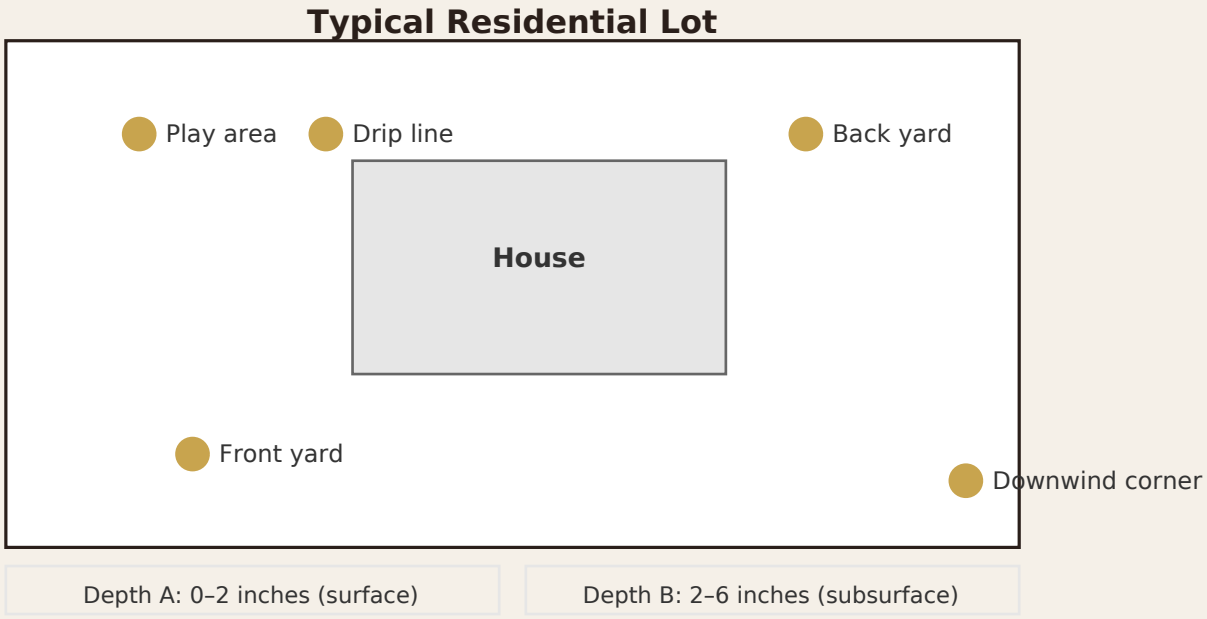
Urban-fire contamination is patchy. Wind channeling, burn intensity, and debris location create hotspots. One sample in one corner is not a property assessment.

Sampling plan (minimum viable)

- 3–5 samples for small lots; more for larger properties
- Include: front yard, backyard, downwind corner, drip line, and any child play zone
- Two depths: 0–2 inches and 2–6 inches
- Avoid composite-only sampling if you can; composites can hide hotspots
- Ask what analytes are included (lead, arsenic, cadmium; consider PAHs if ash intrusion was heavy)
- Plan retesting after remediation or major grading

Soil sampling diagram (example)

Sampling points (example). Adjust to your property.



Note: adjust sampling locations to prevailing wind direction and where ash visibly accumulated.

PART 5

Hiring an independent testing company: what to ask

You do not need to become a chemist. You need to ask operational questions.

Ask the tester/lab:

- Will you provide a written sampling plan before collection?
- How many samples are you recommending and why?
- What depths will you sample (0–2 inches and 2–6 inches)?
- Are samples individual or composited?
- What lab method is used for metals (often ICP-MS/ICP-OES)?
- Which metals are tested by default (lead, arsenic, cadmium) and what does the package include?
- How will results be compared to California screening references and/or federal hazard standards?
- Will you provide a plain-language interpretation and a retesting plan?

Red flag

A one-sample 'all clear' for an entire property after an urban wildfire is rarely defensible. At minimum, sample multiple locations and prioritize play areas and downwind corners.

PART 6

Reading a soil lab report (without panic)

Most reports list metals as ppm (parts per million). First confirm units, then compare to reference levels.

Step-by-step:

- Check sample ID, location, and depth. If depth is missing, ask.
- Confirm the analyte list: lead, arsenic, cadmium (and others depending on package).
- Identify hotspots: a single elevated sample can drive remediation decisions for specific zones.
- Ask whether the report uses screening levels or hazard standards (they are not the same thing).
- Plan retesting after remediation or major grading.

Neighbor says: “My soil is fine but yours is toxic.”

This can be true and still be incomplete. Ask: How many samples? What depth? Composite or individual? Which analytes? Which lab? This is not accusatory. It is normal due diligence.

If you visit a neighbor’s property, short visits are generally lower risk than daily exposure. Avoid letting children play in bare soil; wash hands; take shoes off inside; keep visits short on dusty/windy days.

PART 7

Proper remediation vs sloppy remediation

Remediation is not odor removal. It is contaminant removal and pathway control.

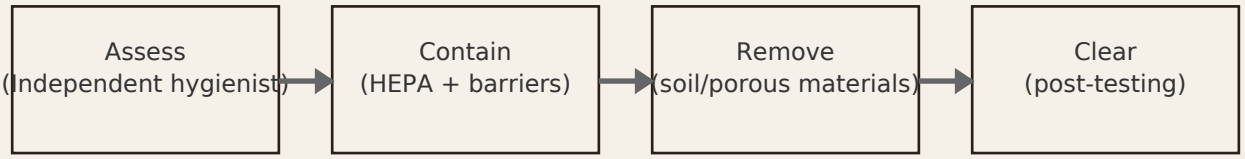
Proper remediation looks like:

- Independent assessment (not only contractor opinion)
- Containment: barriers, negative air, HEPA filtration during work
- Removal: documented soil depth removal where needed; removal of impacted porous materials
- Cleaning: HEPA vacuum + wet wipe protocols (not dry sweeping)
- HVAC: filter replacement plus duct cleaning or replacement where indicated
- Clearance: post-remediation testing and a written clearance report

Sloppy remediation looks like:

- Ash swept into the street or dry blown off surfaces
- Uneven scraping without documented depth
- No post-remediation sampling or clearance documentation
- Ozone machines used as a substitute for contaminant removal
- 'Looks clean' used as the final metric

Proper Remediation Workflow



Key principle: work is not 'done' until clearance testing is documented.

PART 8

Indoor recovery: furniture, appliances, and the kitchen

After smoke/ash intrusion, porous materials can hold soot and contaminants. Decisions depend on exposure intensity and material type.

Decision matrix (simple):

- Hard, washable surfaces: cleanable with HEPA vacuum + wet wipe, then reassess.
- Porous materials with deep soot/odor: often replace (especially for children’s rooms).
- Filters (HVAC, fridge water filters, air purifiers): replace; do not try to 'wash'.
- Items used on the body (pillows, bedding, plush toys): replace if heavily impacted.

Is my sofa OK?

If soot penetrated upholstery or foam (persistent odor, visible staining, heavy ash infiltration), replacement is often safer than cleaning. Surface HEPA vacuuming helps but does not fully remove embedded contamination.

Is there lead in my refrigerator?

The refrigerator is not a lead source by itself; concern is ash/dust residue on surfaces, seals, and shelves if ash entered the home. If you cannot confidently clean interior surfaces or if contamination was heavy, replacement may be the conservative option.

PART 9

Personal protection and decontamination routines

Small routines reduce exposure without turning life into a hazmat situation.

Outside-to-inside routine (especially during demolition):

- Shoes off at the door (or dedicated outdoor shoes)
- Wash hands immediately (kids first)
- Change clothes after visible dust exposure; bag dusty clothes before washing
- Wipe pets’ paws and fur if they were outside in dusty zones
- HEPA vacuum entryway frequently

Masks:

For dusty conditions, a properly fitted N95 can reduce particulate inhalation. Avoid counterfeit masks; fit matters more than brand.

PART 10

Air quality: HEPA, PM2.5, and DIY monitoring

PM2.5 is a practical metric for particulate pollution. EPA strengthened the annual PM2.5 standard to 9.0 µg/m3 and retained the 24-hour standard at 35 µg/m3.[5,6]

What PM2.5 monitors do (and do not do)

- They measure particulate concentration (how much fine dust is in the air).
- They do not identify chemical composition (they do not tell you 'lead' vs 'pollen').
- They are useful for detecting spikes from wind events, construction, and indoor activities.

Air purifier buying guide (minimum standard)

- True HEPA filter (not 'HEPA-type')
- Appropriate CADR for the room size
- Sealed filter housing (minimal bypass)
- Affordable replacement filters and a realistic replacement schedule
- Place purifiers where you sleep first; run continuously during dust phases

Wind Event Protocol (Quick Card)

1. Close windows and doors
2. Run HEPA purifiers continuously
3. Avoid outdoor exercise near grading/demolition
4. Keep kids off bare soil
5. If you must be outside in dust: wear an N95
6. Wash hands before eating; change clothes after dust exposure

If symptoms persist (cough, wheeze, headaches): consult a clinician.

PART 11

Demolition, grading, and recontamination

Even after initial cleanup, neighborhoods can experience recontamination when demolition and grading re-aerosolize dust.

Highest-risk windows:

- Dry demolition or scraping without water suppression
- Windy days during grading
- Uncovered debris transport
- Adjacent lot excavation next to occupied homes or schools

What responsible dust control looks like:

- Active water suppression during demolition and grading
- Covered hauling
- Stabilized soil before forecast high winds
- Restricted access to disturbed soil areas

Practical rule

If you can see dust plumes, controls are inadequate. Increase indoor filtration and reduce outdoor exposure until conditions improve.

PART 12

Health monitoring: what to watch and when to act

Most people want a binary answer: safe or unsafe. Recovery is not binary. The body responds to dose and duration.

Common short-term symptoms after dust exposure:

- Coughing, wheezing, throat irritation
- Headaches (especially on high-dust days)
- Eye irritation
- Skin irritation or rashes
- Asthma flare-ups

When to seek clinical care

- Persistent cough/wheeze lasting more than several days
- Chest tightness, shortness of breath
- Repeated headaches associated with specific exposures (school days, wind events)
- New or worsening asthma symptoms
- Any severe reaction or concerning change

PART 13

Pediatric considerations: lead and child exposure

Children have higher hand-to-mouth exposure and absorb lead differently than adults. CDC uses a blood lead reference value (BLRV) of 3.5 µg/dL to identify children with higher blood lead levels compared to most children.[3,4]

When a baseline blood lead test is reasonable:

- Soil results exceed screening references or show hotspots in play areas
- Frequent play in bare soil or dust exposure from nearby construction
- A child under 6 living or spending significant time near disturbed soil
- Pediatrician recommendation based on exposure history

Use CDC clinical guidance for follow-up actions and intervals.[4]

PART 14

Talking to kids and teens (scripts that sound like parents)

Kids usually want to know: Are you sure I’m safe? Parents can be honest without dumping adult fear.

If your child asks: “Am I going to get sick?”

For teens:

> “That’s a fair question. I wouldn’t send you if I thought it was unsafe. If anything feels off - headaches, cough, irritation - tell me immediately and we’ll respond.”

For younger kids:

> “You’re safe today. If your body feels yucky, you tell me and I help.”

What not to say:

- “You’re fine.” (dismisses their instincts)
- “Don’t worry.” (does not give a plan)
- “The school says it’s safe.” (outsources trust)
- Over-sharing toxicity details (creates chronic fear)

PART 15

School reopening: parent verification checklist

This chapter applies to any school reopening in a post-fire, active rebuild environment.

Request these items in writing:

- Air filtration details for classrooms/trailers (HEPA units? HVAC MERV rating?)
- Filter replacement schedule and maintenance logs
- Indoor air monitoring (PM2.5) and response thresholds
- Dust suppression protocol during nearby construction
- Soil/dust testing for play fields and high-traffic zones
- Cleaning protocol (HEPA vacuum + wet wipe schedule)
- Symptom reporting protocol and point of contact

Email template:

> “I’m trying to make informed decisions for my family. Can you share the environmental mitigation plan currently in place, including filtration, monitoring, and dust control? Thank you for transparency.”

PART 16

Mental health and trauma recovery

After a disaster, anxiety often attaches to safety questions. That does not mean the question is irrational. It means the nervous system is scanning for threats.

Common trauma responses:

- Hypervigilance (can’t relax, scanning the wind/air)
- Sleep disruption
- Irritability
- Avoidance (won’t enter certain areas)
- Guilt (survivor guilt in both directions)

Disaster Distress Helpline (24/7): call or text 1-800-985-5990.[7]

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988.[8]

Los Angeles County mental health ACCESS Line (24/7): 1-800-854-7771.[16]

PART 17

Neighbors and survivor guilt (what to say / what not to say)

Recovery timelines differ. Loss levels differ. The community stabilizes when people stop ranking pain.

Talking to a neighbor who did NOT lose their home:

> “I’m glad you’re okay. I’m trying to understand your testing approach - how many samples and what depth did you do?”

Talking to a neighbor who DID lose everything:

> “I’m really sorry. That’s devastating. I’m here if you need anything.”

What not to say:

- “At least you’re safe.”
- “Everything happens for a reason.”
- “You’ll rebuild better.”
- “We’re all in this together.” (often invalidates unequal loss)

Better framing: “We’ve all been affected differently.”

PART 18

Financial recovery: FEMA, SBA, and California resources

Start with insurance, then federal and state programs if eligible. Keep documentation centralized.

FEMA Individuals and Households Program: apply online or call 1-800-621-3362.[9]

SBA disaster assistance provides low-interest disaster loans for homeowners and renters in declared disaster areas.[10,11]

California wildfire recovery resources (state hub):[18]

CAL FIRE / Ready for Wildfire recovery assistance guide:[19]

Documentation basics:

- Photograph damage, contents, and all major assets before disposal
- Keep receipts and track expenses (temporary housing, repairs, essentials)
- Log every insurance call: date, person, summary, promised next step
- Request all decisions in writing

PART 19

Contractor safety and rebuild integrity

Disaster rebuilding attracts great contractors and predatory contractors. Your protection is verification.

Minimum contractor due diligence:

- Verify license status and insurance coverage
- Demand a written scope, timeline, and payment schedule tied to milestones
- Avoid large upfront cash deposits
- Require dust control and cleanup protocols during work
- Require post-remediation clearance documentation when relevant

Red flag

If someone discourages independent testing or refuses post-clearance verification, treat that as a serious warning.

PART 20

Legal, disclosure, and record retention

Even if you never plan to sell, documentation protects you. If you do sell, documentation protects you twice.

Keep permanently:

- All soil and dust lab reports (pre- and post-remediation)
- Clearance reports
- Clean fill documentation and delivery receipts
- HVAC cleaning/replacement invoices
- Photos (before/after) and contractor scopes
- Insurance communications and final determinations

APPENDIX A

Resource directory (start here)

These are starting points. Availability may change by disaster declaration and time. Use official sites to confirm current eligibility.

Financial assistance

- DisasterAssistance.gov (FEMA portal and resources)[9]
- SBA Disaster Assistance (home and personal property loans)[10,11]
- California wildfire recovery resources hub[18]

Mental health and crisis support

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call/text 988)[8]
- SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990[7]
- LACDMH ACCESS Line (24/7): 1-800-854-7771[16]
- FindTreatment.gov (treatment locator)[17]

APPENDIX B

Glossary (plain language)

PM2.5 — Fine particulate matter with diameter 2.5 microns or smaller; penetrates deep into lungs.

HEPA — High-Efficiency Particulate Air filter; captures fine particles; look for true HEPA.

MERV — Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value; HVAC filter rating (higher captures smaller particles).

Screening level — A conservative level used to decide whether further evaluation is needed; not a diagnosis.

Clearance testing — Post-remediation sampling to confirm goals were met and work is documented.

Composite sample — Multiple subsamples mixed into one; can hide hotspots.

Hotspot — A localized area with higher contamination than surrounding areas.

Holdover fire — A fire that continues to smolder (often underground) and later reactivates under conditions like high wind and low humidity.

NOTES

References & sources are consolidated in Appendix R at the end of this manual.

NOTES

References & sources are consolidated in Appendix R at the end of this manual.

APPENDIX D

Interpreting air monitor numbers (AQI vs PM2.5)

Consumer monitors often show either (a) an Air Quality Index (AQI) number or (b) a PM2.5 concentration in micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³). They are not the same. AQI is an index (0–500) that maps pollutant concentrations to health guidance.[20]

If you see “100” on a device, do not assume the air is “clear.” AQI 100 is the top of the 'Moderate' range; AQI above 100 becomes unhealthy first for sensitive groups. If your device reports µg/m³, a PM2.5 value near 100 µg/m³ is high and corresponds to unhealthy air in EPA breakpoints.[20,21]

AQI range	Category	Practical guidance (post-fire rebuild setting)
0–50	Good	Normal routines. Still control dust near grading; keep entryway clean.
51–100	Moderate	Sensitive people (asthma, kids, older adults): reduce prolonged outdoor exertion.
101–150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Limit outdoor exercise; keep kids off bare soil; run HEPA indoors; consider N95 if outside in dust.
151–200	Unhealthy	Avoid outdoor activity; keep windows closed; HEPA on high; postpone outdoor sports if possible.
201–300	Very Unhealthy	Stay indoors; treat as a high-risk day; consult clinicians if symptoms flare.
301+	Hazardous	Avoid exposure; consider relocating for the day if safe shelter is available.

Note: EPA updated AQI breakpoints for PM2.5 in 2024 to align with the revised annual PM2.5 standard.[22]

WORKSHEETS

Recovery binder worksheets

Print these worksheets or keep them digitally. The objective is simple: decisions backed by documentation.

Worksheet 1: Soil Sampling Log

Tip: Include a sketch map or photo of sampling points and label them to match sample IDs.

Date	Location / Zone	Depth	Lab / Kit	Analytes	Result summary	Next step

Worksheet 2: Lab Results Tracker (Metals)

Use this table to compare hotspots and track pre- vs post-remediation.

Sample ID	Depth	Lead (ppm)	Arsenic (ppm)	Cadmium (ppm)	Other	Interpretation / action

Worksheet 3: Remediation Scope Checklist

For each item, keep at least one piece of evidence (photo, invoice, clearance report).

Item	Planned	Completed	Evidence (photo/report)	Notes

Worksheet 4: Indoor Air & HVAC Log

Pattern beats opinion. Track spikes and correlate to wind, construction, and symptoms.

Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Filter changed?	Notes (wind/demolition/symptoms)

Worksheet 5: Child Symptom Tracker

Bring this to pediatric visits. It helps clinicians evaluate exposure patterns.

Date	Where (home/school/outdoors)	Symptoms	Duration	Possible trigger	Action taken

Worksheet 6: Adult Symptom Tracker

If you have asthma or chronic conditions, track baseline vs flare patterns.

Date	Symptoms	Location	Exposure (wind/dust)	Medication/relief	Notes

WORKSHEETS

Worksheet 7: School Safety Request (copy/paste)

Subject: Request for environmental mitigation plan (filtration, monitoring, dust control)

Hello [Principal/Administrator Name],

I’m a parent/guardian of a student at [School Name]. I’m trying to make informed decisions for my family and would appreciate transparency on the current environmental mitigation plan in place as the campus reopens/operates in the post-fire environment.

Could you please share:

- Classroom/trailer filtration details (HEPA units and/or HVAC MERV rating)
- Filter replacement schedule and maintenance logs
- Any indoor air monitoring approach (PM2.5) and response thresholds
- Dust suppression protocols during nearby construction or grading
- Any soil/dust testing performed on campus play fields or high-traffic areas
- Cleaning protocols for dust (HEPA vacuuming and wet wiping schedules)
- Point of contact for environmental health questions

Thank you for your time and for keeping students safe.

Sincerely, [Name] • [Phone/Email]

Worksheet 8: Insurance Call Log

Always confirm major decisions in writing (email).

Date	Company/Adjuster	Topic	What was promised	Next step	Follow-up date

Worksheet 9: Expense & Receipt Tracker

This supports insurance and FEMA/SBA applications.

Date	Category	Vendor	Amount	Paid by (card/cash)	Receipt saved? (Y/N)	Notes

Worksheet 10: Contractor Interview Scorecard

Scorecards prevent impulsive decisions under pressure.

Contractor	License/Insurance verified	Scope clarity	Dust control plan	Testing/clearance support	Red flags	Score (1-10)

WORKSHEETS

Worksheet 11: Neighbor Conversation Prep

Use this page before difficult conversations. The goal is empathy + operational clarity.

What do I want from this conversation?

Example: understand their testing method / share resources / offer help.

What is one sentence I will not say?

Example: 'At least...' or 'Must be nice...'

What is my opening line?

Example: 'I’m glad you’re okay. How did you approach testing?'

What boundary do I need?

Example: 'I can’t discuss timelines right now.'

What offer can I make?

Example: share lab contact / contractor bid template / a meal / childcare.

Workbook module: Monthly indoor air and dust log (12 months)

Use these pages during active demolition/grading months or whenever symptoms spike.

Monthly Air Log: January

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Monthly Air Log: February

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Monthly Air Log: March

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Monthly Air Log: April

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Monthly Air Log: May

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Monthly Air Log: June

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Monthly Air Log: July

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Monthly Air Log: August

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Monthly Air Log: September

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Monthly Air Log: October

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Monthly Air Log: November

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Monthly Air Log: December

If you don't have a monitor, leave PM2.5 blank and track wind + dust observations.

Week/Date	PM2.5 indoor	PM2.5 outdoor	Wind/Construction notes	Actions taken (HEPA/masks/windows)	Symptoms observed

Workbook module: Monthly expense tracker (12 months)

Use this for insurance, FEMA/SBA documentation, and tax records.

Monthly Expense Tracker: January

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Monthly Expense Tracker: February

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Monthly Expense Tracker: March

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Monthly Expense Tracker: April

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Monthly Expense Tracker: May

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Monthly Expense Tracker: June

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Monthly Expense Tracker: July

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Monthly Expense Tracker: August

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Monthly Expense Tracker: September

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Monthly Expense Tracker: October

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Monthly Expense Tracker: November

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Monthly Expense Tracker: December

Keep receipts in a single folder matching the month.

Date	Category	Description	Amount	Receipt saved?	Reimbursed?

Workbook module: Room-by-room contents assessment

Complete one page per room. This reduces decision overload.

Room Assessment: Entryway

Rule of thumb: high-contact items and items for kids should be held to a higher standard.

Item	Porous? (Y/N)	Visible soot/odor?	Cleaned / replaced	Evidence (photo/receipt)	Notes

Room Assessment: Living room

Rule of thumb: high-contact items and items for kids should be held to a higher standard.

Item	Porous? (Y/N)	Visible soot/odor?	Cleaned / replaced	Evidence (photo/receipt)	Notes

Room Assessment: Kitchen

Rule of thumb: high-contact items and items for kids should be held to a higher standard.

Item	Porous? (Y/N)	Visible soot/odor?	Cleaned / replaced	Evidence (photo/receipt)	Notes

Room Assessment: Primary bedroom

Rule of thumb: high-contact items and items for kids should be held to a higher standard.

Item	Porous? (Y/N)	Visible soot/odor?	Cleaned / replaced	Evidence (photo/receipt)	Notes

Room Assessment: Child bedroom 1

Rule of thumb: high-contact items and items for kids should be held to a higher standard.

Item	Porous? (Y/N)	Visible soot/odor?	Cleaned / replaced	Evidence (photo/receipt)	Notes

Room Assessment: Child bedroom 2

Rule of thumb: high-contact items and items for kids should be held to a higher standard.

Item	Porous? (Y/N)	Visible soot/odor?	Cleaned / replaced	Evidence (photo/receipt)	Notes

Room Assessment: Bathroom 1

Rule of thumb: high-contact items and items for kids should be held to a higher standard.

Item	Porous? (Y/N)	Visible soot/odor?	Cleaned / replaced	Evidence (photo/receipt)	Notes

Room Assessment: Bathroom 2

Rule of thumb: high-contact items and items for kids should be held to a higher standard.

Item	Porous? (Y/N)	Visible soot/odor?	Cleaned / replaced	Evidence (photo/receipt)	Notes

Room Assessment: Garage

Rule of thumb: high-contact items and items for kids should be held to a higher standard.

Item	Porous? (Y/N)	Visible soot/odor?	Cleaned / replaced	Evidence (photo/receipt)	Notes

Room Assessment: Office / Study

Rule of thumb: high-contact items and items for kids should be held to a higher standard.

Item	Porous? (Y/N)	Visible soot/odor?	Cleaned / replaced	Evidence (photo/receipt)	Notes

Workbook module: Contractor daily log (dust control + progress)

Use when you have active work. This is a simple accountability tool.

Contractor Daily Log (Day 1)

If dust controls are missing, document and pause work until corrected.

Date	Crew on site	Work performed	Dust control used (water/HEPA/barriers)	Issues observed	Photos taken (Y/N)

Contractor Daily Log (Day 2)

If dust controls are missing, document and pause work until corrected.

Date	Crew on site	Work performed	Dust control used (water/HEPA/barriers)	Issues observed	Photos taken (Y/N)

Contractor Daily Log (Day 3)

If dust controls are missing, document and pause work until corrected.

Date	Crew on site	Work performed	Dust control used (water/HEPA/barriers)	Issues observed	Photos taken (Y/N)

Contractor Daily Log (Day 4)

If dust controls are missing, document and pause work until corrected.

Date	Crew on site	Work performed	Dust control used (water/HEPA/barriers)	Issues observed	Photos taken (Y/N)

Workbook module: School communication log

Track every email/call/meeting. Consistency protects kids and reduces conflict.

School Communication Log (Page 1)

Request written documentation for filtration, monitoring, and cleaning protocols.

Date	Who (school/teacher)	Topic	What they said (summary)	Documents received	Next step

School Communication Log (Page 2)

Request written documentation for filtration, monitoring, and cleaning protocols.

Date	Who (school/teacher)	Topic	What they said (summary)	Documents received	Next step

School Communication Log (Page 3)

Request written documentation for filtration, monitoring, and cleaning protocols.

Date	Who (school/teacher)	Topic	What they said (summary)	Documents received	Next step

School Communication Log (Page 4)

Request written documentation for filtration, monitoring, and cleaning protocols.

Date	Who (school/teacher)	Topic	What they said (summary)	Documents received	Next step

Workbook module: Permits, inspections, and rebuild milestones

Rebuild fatigue is real. Tracking milestones prevents drift and reduces stress.

Permits & Inspections Tracker (Page 1)

Keep copies of permits, approvals, and conditions of approval.

Date	Permit/Inspection	Status	Inspector/Agency	Notes	Next step

Permits & Inspections Tracker (Page 2)

Keep copies of permits, approvals, and conditions of approval.

Date	Permit/Inspection	Status	Inspector/Agency	Notes	Next step

Permits & Inspections Tracker (Page 3)

Keep copies of permits, approvals, and conditions of approval.

Date	Permit/Inspection	Status	Inspector/Agency	Notes	Next step

Permits & Inspections Tracker (Page 4)

Keep copies of permits, approvals, and conditions of approval.

Date	Permit/Inspection	Status	Inspector/Agency	Notes	Next step

Workbook module: Contacts directory

One place for all contacts (labs, contractors, insurers, school, health).

Contacts Directory (Page 1)

Keep this updated; recovery involves many rotating contacts.

Name/Organization	Role	Phone	Email	Notes

Contacts Directory (Page 2)

Keep this updated; recovery involves many rotating contacts.

Name/Organization	Role	Phone	Email	Notes

NOTES

Notes

Use these pages for lab IDs, meeting notes, and next actions.

SUPPLEMENT

New sections added: keeping the home clean, window guidance, grants/aid, and shop local.

How to use this supplement
These pages can be printed and inserted into your binder. They also work as stand-alone checklists you can share with neighbors, schools, or contractors.

In this supplement

APPENDIX E

Keeping your house clean during rebuild

When debris removal, grading, or nearby construction is active, the most realistic exposure pathway for families is **fine dust** that settles on surfaces and gets resuspended. The goal is not to sterilize your home - it is to keep dust load low using methods that **trap particles instead of kicking them up**.

Core rules

- **Wet beats dry.** Use damp wiping/mopping instead of dry dusting or dry sweeping.
- **HEPA beats standard vacuum.** Standard vacuums can resuspend fine particles; use a sealed HEPA vacuum if possible.
- **Entryway control is everything.** Most dust comes in on shoes, pets, and strollers.
- **Clean the 'high-touch + low-to-the-ground' zones.** Kids' floors, couches, window sills, and play surfaces matter most.

A simple cleaning schedule (good enough to be effective)

When	What to do	Why it matters
Daily	Shoes-off entry; wipe entry floor; run HEPA purifier in main room/bedrooms	Prevents tracking dust inside; reduces airborne particles
2-3x/week	Damp microfiber wipe (tables, counters, sills); damp mop high-traffic floors	Captures settled dust before it becomes airborne
Weekly	HEPA vacuum rugs/sofas; launder bedding; replace/clean pre-filters	Soft surfaces store dust; filters clog during dusty phases
After a visible dust event	Close windows; HEPA on high; damp wipe + damp mop; shower/change clothes if exposed	Resets indoor dust load after outdoor spikes

What to avoid (these stir dust): dry sweeping; leaf blowers near doors/windows; shaking dusty rugs indoors; vacuuming with a non-HEPA vacuum; burning candles/incense during dusty periods.[S1]

APPENDIX E (continued)

A practical 'clean enough' checklist

Entryway setup

- Shoes-off rule; store shoes in a bin or mat by the door.
- Two mats: one outside + one inside the entry.
- If you have pets: wipe paws on return; keep a towel by the door.

Living areas

- Damp microfiber wipe surfaces weekly (more often if construction is close).
- Use a HEPA vacuum on sofas and rugs weekly (soft goods store dust).
- Keep toys in bins; rinse washable toys periodically.

Bedrooms

- Run HEPA purifier where people sleep (bedrooms are priority rooms).
- Wash bedding weekly during dusty phases.
- If a child has asthma: consider a bedroom 'clean room' approach.[S2]

After being outside near dust

- Change clothes; put dusty clothes straight into laundry.
- Shower if you were in visible dust or ash.
- Do not sit on beds/couches in dusty outdoor clothes.

When to hire professional help

If you have persistent smoke odor, heavy soot, or HVAC contamination concerns, use a licensed remediation contractor and ask for containment + HEPA filtration + documentation. Avoid 'fogging only' as a stand-alone solution.

APPENDIX F

What happens if I keep windows open?

In a post-fire rebuild environment, opening windows is a tradeoff between **fresh air** and **importing outdoor dust/smoke**. If the outdoor air is clean, short ventilation can be helpful. If outdoor PM2.5 or dust is elevated, open windows can quickly bring indoor particle levels closer to outdoor levels.[S3]

Simple rule

If there is active grading/demolition nearby *or* outdoor air quality is not 'Good', keep windows closed and filter indoors.

Decision table (practical)

Outdoor AQI (PM2.5)	Outside conditions	Windows?
0-50 (Good)	No nearby dust activity	OK to vent briefly (10-20 min). Run HEPA during/after.
51-100 (Moderate)	Dust possible; sensitive people affected first	Prefer closed. If you must vent, do it briefly and filter.
101-150	Unhealthy for sensitive groups	Keep closed. Avoid outdoor exercise; HEPA on.
151+	Unhealthy to hazardous	Keep closed. Treat as a high-risk day; consider relocating for the day if needed.

Important notes

- If you rely on air conditioning: use **recirculation** mode during smoky/dusty periods.
- Avoid whole-house fans or systems that pull outdoor air when smoke/dust is present.[S4]
- If your home is very leaky, keeping windows closed helps but filtration becomes even more important.[S3]

APPENDIX F (continued)

Create a 'clean room' at home (one-page setup)

A clean room is a room where you spend time (often a bedroom) with doors/windows closed and active filtration. This is one of the most practical ways to reduce indoor exposure during smoke or dust events.[S2,S5]

Clean room checklist

- Pick a room with a door (bedroom is ideal).
- Close windows/doors; seal obvious gaps if practical (towels at door cracks).
- Run a correctly sized HEPA purifier continuously.
- Avoid indoor particle sources: smoking, candles/incense, spraying aerosols, frying/broiling when air is bad.[S1,S5]
- Clean with damp cloth/mop; avoid vacuuming unless your vacuum is HEPA-rated.[S1]

If you need ventilation

Ventilate when outdoor air is best (often early morning) and for short periods. If outdoor PM2.5 rises, close back up and filter.

Parent rule of thumb
If you can smell smoke or see dust in the air, treat it as a closed-window day.

APPENDIX G

Grants and recovery help: where to start

Programs change over time. Use this section as a map and always confirm current eligibility and deadlines on the official program page.

Official assistance (most common pathways)

Program	Who it helps	What it can cover (examples)	Start here
FEMA Individual Assistance (DR-4856)	Homeowners & renters with uninsured/underinsured losses	Temporary housing/rental assistance, home repairs, personal property and other needs[S6]	FEMA / LA County recovery
LA County Relief Fund	Residents, workers, small businesses & nonprofits impacted by 2025 wind/wildfire disaster	Household relief; worker grants (reported up to $2,000); small business/nonprofit grants (reported up to $25,000)[S7,S8]	LA County Relief Fund
CA Disaster Grant Assistance / Disaster Case Management	Eligible residents by disaster declaration	Case management + links to benefits; supplemental services[S9]	CDSS
HUD disaster assistance	Disaster victims in declared areas	Loan info, foreclosure relief, access to HUD programs[S10]	HUD
Insurance navigation help	Policyholders	Free guidance on claims, documentation, disputes[S11]	United Policyholders

Tip: Keep a single 'Aid Tracker' page in your binder: program name, date applied, confirmation number, documents submitted, and follow-up date.

APPENDIX G (continued)

Palisades-focused hubs and vetted charities

This list is not exhaustive. It is a starting point of widely referenced hubs and organizations. Verify legitimacy before donating or sharing personal information.

Palisades-focused recovery hubs

- **Pali Strong** - recovery & rebuild hub with resources, permit info, and community updates.[S12]
- **Pali Long-Term Recovery Group (Pali LTRG)** - local group coordinating unmet needs support and case management.[S13]
- **Palisades Recovery Coalition (PRC / PaliRecovery)** - community-led recovery coordination and solutions work.[S14]

Regional/national organizations frequently active in LA wildfire recovery

- American Red Cross (response + long-term recovery programs).[S15]
- Direct Relief (medical supply and health facility support).[S16]
- Catholic Charities of Los Angeles (disaster relief assistance).[S17]
- CORE (community organizing + longer-term recovery work).[S18]
- California Community Foundation - Wildfire Recovery Fund (philanthropic fund supporting recovery).[S19]
- Charity Navigator 'Los Angeles Fires' list (vetted charities to support).[S20]

Local mutual-aid examples (community-specific)

- Kehillat Israel (KI) Palisades Fire assistance fund for impacted community members.[S21]
- American Legion Post 283 recovery/resource hub initiatives (local distribution + coordination).[S22]

APPENDIX G (continued)

Avoiding scams and protecting your information

Disasters create a second crisis: scams. Use a high bar before sharing personal information or sending money.

Donation hygiene

- Verify the charity via Charity Navigator or the Better Business Bureau (BBB) Wise Giving Alliance.
- Do not donate through unsolicited texts or DMs; go directly to the official website.
- Be cautious of 'upfront fee' offers for grants, debris removal, insurance help, or contractor referrals.

Protect your identity

- Never share passwords or PINs.
- Do not provide Social Security numbers unless you are on an official government application portal.
- Keep copies of any forms you submit and track confirmation numbers.

For additional scam-awareness tips specific to the Palisades wildfire context, see community resource pages that explicitly address scams and verification.[S23]

APPENDIX H

Support local: a practical shop-local guide

Recovery is not only rebuilding homes. It is rebuilding the local ecosystem: hardware stores, restaurants, childcare, fitness, professional services, and the workers who keep the area functioning.

High-impact ways to support local businesses

- Buy gift cards now (cash flow matters during disrupted months).
- Use local service providers when possible (repairs, childcare, wellness).
- Choose local restaurants/coffee spots for meetings instead of driving elsewhere.
- Leave reviews and share hours/updates to help them be discovered again.

Where to find up-to-date business lists

Use official directories because hours and locations can change during recovery.

- Malibu Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce business directory.[S24]
- Pacific Palisades Chamber / community business listings.[S25]
- Pali Strong hub (often links to local business support and updates).[S12]

APPENDIX H (continued)

Shop-local starter list (by category)

Because businesses change during recovery, this page is intentionally category-based. Use the directories on the prior page to fill in the most current options.

Category	Examples to look for	Your go-to (write in)
Groceries & pharmacy	Grocery, pharmacy, household essentials	_____
Hardware / building supply	Lumber, hardware, paint, safety gear	_____
Home services	HVAC, remediation, cleaning, electricians, plumbers	_____
Food & coffee	Coffee, restaurants, catering for crews	_____
Kids & family	Childcare, tutoring, sports programs	_____
Wellness	PT, fitness, mental health, support groups	_____

Note: If you are displaced and commuting, consider stacking errands locally when you visit (hardware + grocery + coffee) to keep dollars in the Palisades ecosystem.

WORKSHEET

Local business support tracker

Use this page to track the businesses you want to support during recovery. Add notes on hours, best contact, and how to help.

Business / service	Category	Notes (hours, contact, how to support)

NOTES

References & sources are consolidated in Appendix R at the end of this manual.

NOTES

References & sources are consolidated in Appendix R at the end of this manual.

SUPPLEMENT (continued)

New sections added: water safety and hazardous materials guidance (rebuild year).

How to use this extension
These pages are designed for the 'one-year later' phase: moving back, living near demolition, and restarting rebuilding with better safety controls.

In this extension

- Appendix I: Water safety and plumbing (Palisades one-year edition)
- Appendix J: Hazardous materials + safe cleanup during rebuild
- Worksheets: water log + dust day action plan
- Sources (continued - for these new sections only)

APPENDIX I

Water safety and plumbing (one-year edition)

Pacific Palisades experienced a Do Not Drink notice in January 2025. LADWP reports tap water was confirmed safe to drink in previously impacted Palisades areas effective March 7, 2025, and encourages customers to flush household plumbing before first use. LADWP also recommends replacing plumbing on the customer side of the meter for homes affected by the fire during rebuilding.S26

Core rules

- Verify current water status for your address/pressure zone (do not rely on a neighbor's situation). Use LADWP's restoration page and dashboard.S26
- Do not 'filter your way out' of a Do Not Drink or Do Not Use advisory. If an advisory is active, use bottled/alternative water until it is lifted.
- Boil Water advisories address microbes. Boiling does not remove volatile organic compounds (VOCs) like benzene.S28,S29
- After official clearance, do a full plumbing reset: flush cold and hot lines, run fridge/dispensers, clear ice makers, and replace filters.S26,S29
- If you notice gasoline/chemical odors or unusual taste after flushing, stop using that water and contact your provider. Sensory checks are not a lab test, but they are a reason to pause.S31

One-year rebuild reality
Even after the main system is restored, water can sit stagnant in household plumbing during displacement. Flushing + filter replacement is a normal part of safe re-occupancy.

APPENDIX I (continued)

Do Not Drink vs Boil Water: what it means

In wildfire recovery, you may hear different types of water advisories. The name matters because the recommended action is different. When chemical contamination (like VOCs) is possible, boiling is not the solution.S28,S29

Common advisories (plain language)

- Boil Water: issued when microbial contamination is possible (loss of pressure, bacteria). Follow your provider's boiling instructions.
- Do Not Drink: do not ingest (drink, cook, brush teeth). Often used out of caution when chemical contamination is possible; use bottled/alternative water.
- Do Not Use: do not ingest or use for bathing/washing (rare, but possible). Follow the utility and public health instructions exactly.

Why wildfire can change water safety

After major fires, VOCs have been found in some impacted water systems, including in mains, service connections, and building fixtures. VOCs can also permeate some plastic and rubber components and slowly release back into the water. Testing is the only way to confirm safety; flushing and replacement are primary tools.S28

If you are unsure what applies to you

- Confirm your water provider (most Pacific Palisades addresses are LADWP). Check the latest restoration status and maps for your zone.S26
- If you are in a condo/building, ask the building manager: Has the building been flushed? Were any internal lines replaced? When were filters changed?
- If you are still worried, talk to your provider about where to obtain certified testing and what method to use (e.g., VOC methods).S29

APPENDIX I (continued)

Plumbing reset checklist (after official clearance)

If your area was previously under a Do Not Drink notice and is now cleared, use this checklist to reset household plumbing. If LADWP (or your provider) publishes a specific flushing guide, follow that first.S26

Checklist

1. Document: screenshot or print the utility notice/map showing your address is cleared; keep it with your rebuild records.
2. Cold water: run each cold tap (sinks, showers, outside hose bibs) for about 5 minutes. You can run multiple taps, but maintain vigorous flow.S29
3. Hot water: run each hot water tap until the water turns cold.S29
4. Refrigerators/dispensers/under-sink filters: run water for several minutes, then replace the filter (if equipped).S29
5. Ice makers: follow manufacturer cleaning steps; discard existing ice; discard the ice from three refills.S29
6. After any plumbing work (service line replacement, new water heater), repeat flushing and replace filters again.

If you choose to test water

The California State Water Resources Control Board recommends using an ELAP-certified laboratory and requesting benzene testing using U.S. EPA Method 524.2 (and related VOC methods as advised).S29 Do not rely on at-home water test strips for VOCs; they are not designed for that use.

WORKSHEET

Water safety and plumbing log

Use this page to track your water status, flushing, filter changes, and any odor/taste notes. This is especially useful if you are displaced and returning in phases.

Re-entry checklist (check off)

- [ ] Verified current advisory status for my address/zone (date: _____).
- [ ] Flushed cold lines (about 5 minutes each tap).
- [ ] Flushed hot lines (until cold).
- [ ] Ran refrigerator dispenser; replaced filter.
- [ ] Cleared ice maker (3 refills discarded).
- [ ] Replaced or flushed water heater / consulted plumber.
- [ ] Saved photos/screenshots of utility guidance in my rebuild folder.

Log entries

Date	Status	Actions	Notes

APPENDIX J

Hazardous materials and safe cleanup (rebuild year)

One year after an urban wildfire, the most realistic day-to-day exposure pathway is often fine dust from demolition, grading, and rebuilding - not the original smoke. That dust can include ash particles, heavy metals, asbestos fibers, and respirable crystalline silica depending on what is being disturbed.S32,S33,S37

Core rules

- Wet beats dry. Avoid dry sweeping. Do not use leaf blowers for ash or dust. Use gentle wet methods and/or sealed HEPA vacuums.S33,S34
- Assume older building materials may contain asbestos or lead until proven otherwise. Do not disturb suspect materials without a survey and proper controls.S35,S36
- If you are not the worker: your job is to keep dust out of the living space (windows closed on work days, HEPA filtration, shoes-off entryway, damp wipe high-touch areas).
- Keep kids and pets away from work zones and bare soil. Hand washing + changing clothes after dusty days reduces take-home exposure.

Important context from wildfire debris operations
CalRecycle notes that Phase 1 hazardous waste removal does not remove all asbestos, and toxic materials can remain under debris and mixed into ash/soil.S32

APPENDIX J (continued)

Asbestos and lead: proper vs sloppy remediation

This is not about paranoia - it is about dust control and documentation. If asbestos or lead is present, the difference between a professional job and a sloppy job is containment, wet methods, and clearance.

What proper remediation looks like

- Pre-work survey (asbestos/lead) before demolition or major renovation; keep a copy of the report. Rule 1403 requires specific work practices and notification for many jobs.S35,S36
- Containment: plastic sheeting, sealed work area, negative pressure where appropriate; wet methods to prevent dust.
- HEPA-equipped tools and cleanup; sealed waste handling; proper disposal documentation (waste shipment records).
- Clearance: visual inspection + (when appropriate) air/dust clearance testing before re-occupancy.

What sloppy remediation looks like (red flags)

- No survey; 'we do this all the time' with no documentation.
- Dry demo, dry sweeping, leaf blowers, open dumpsters; visible dust leaving the site.
- No worker PPE; no containment; debris dragged through clean areas.
- No final cleaning standard, no clearance testing, and no paper trail.

Questions you can ask a contractor

- Will you perform (or provide) an asbestos survey before demolition? Who is qualified to do it?
- If asbestos is found, what containment and wet methods will you use? Who is the on-site supervisor?
- What is the plan for disposal and documentation (waste manifests)?
- Will you submit any required notifications (including to air regulators where applicable) and provide proof?S35

APPENDIX J (continued)

Silica and construction dust: protecting your family

Concrete, brick, tile, stucco, and stone contain crystalline silica. Cutting, grinding, or drilling these materials can create respirable silica dust, which can cause serious lung disease. Employers are required to control exposures, but neighbors can still be impacted if dust controls are sloppy.S37,S38

What to look for (good site vs bad site)

- Good: wet cutting or saws with water feed; HEPA vac attachments; perimeter misting; debris covered when hauled.
- Bad: dry grinding/cutting; visible dust clouds; dust leaving the property line; leaf blowers; uncovered debris piles.

If your neighbor is demolishing: a simple script

"Hey - we're trying to keep dust down for the kids. Can you use wet methods and keep debris covered? If you have a cutting day coming, a quick text helps us close windows and run filtration."

Home-side protections on high dust days

- Close windows and doors; avoid whole-house fans that pull outdoor air in (unless you have high-grade filtration).
- Run HEPA air purifiers on high in the rooms you actually use (sleeping rooms and main living space).
- Shoes-off entryway; damp wipe window sills and 'kid height' surfaces after visible dust events.
- For outdoor activity, choose lower-dust times (after rain, when wind is calm) and avoid active work zones.

WORKSHEET

Dust day action plan (for families)

Use this worksheet on days when demolition, grading, or cutting is active nearby, or when wind picks up dust. The goal is practical: keep dust out and reduce tracking it inside.

Today (check off)

- [ ] Windows closed; doors closed; weatherstripping checked.
- [ ] HEPA purifier(s) on high for _____ hours.
- [ ] Shoes-off entry; entry mat wiped; kids/pets cleaned after outdoors.
- [ ] Damp wipe window sills + kid surfaces; damp mop high-traffic floors.
- [ ] Clothes changed after dusty outdoor time; shower if visibly dusty.
- [ ] Outdoor play moved away from active work sites and bare soil.

Notes / triggers

If a contractor is on-site (quick checks)

- [ ] Wet methods used? ____ Visible dust leaving site? ____
- [ ] Debris covered for hauling? ____ Work area contained? ____
- [ ] Advance notice given for cutting days? ____

NOTES

References & sources are consolidated in Appendix R at the end of this manual.

SUPPLEMENT EXTENSION

Rebuild-zone questions we keep hearing

These pages address common one-year-later Palisades scenarios: rebuilding on a street where many homes burned, living next to active construction, keeping dust out of a finished home, and evaluating whether a fast remediation was actually thorough.

In this extension

- Appendix K: Rebuilding while your street is rebuilding (windows, dust, and open framing)
- Appendix L: My neighbor remediated in a fraction of the time - did they do it correctly?
- Appendix M: Additional essentials (mold/moisture, cars, pets, and sensitive households)
- Sources (continued) for these new pages

Use this section as a handout

Print these pages and share them with your contractor, neighbors, or school administrators. They are designed to stand alone.

APPENDIX K

Rebuilding while your street is rebuilding

Dust, windows, and open framing - one-year-later reality

Common Palisades scenario

You are rebuilding on a street where many (or all) homes burned. Nearby lots are being demolished or rebuilt. You are trying to keep your family safe without living in constant fear of dust.

Q: Should I keep my windows closed all the time?

Not all the time. The practical rule is conditional: keep windows closed during active dust generation (demolition, grading, cutting/grinding) and during high-wind periods. Ventilate when outdoor air is cleaner and construction activity is low. Filtration and entryway control do most of the work.

Simple window rules (good enough to work)

- If you can see or smell dust leaving a job site, keep windows closed and run filtration.
- If wind is strong (roughly 15-20+ mph) and work is active nearby, keep windows closed.
- If you need fresh air, do short, controlled ventilation when activity is low (early morning / after work hours), then return to filtration.
- Avoid using whole-house fans on dusty days unless the intake air is well-filtered.
- Use a PM2.5/AQI app or a small indoor monitor to spot patterns and reduce guesswork. S1,S4,S5

Bottom line

You do not need permanent lockdown. You need a simple decision rule: close on dust days, ventilate when clean, and keep filtration running.

APPENDIX K (continued)

Will my home become 'toxic' from the rebuild around me?

Q: Will I forever be worried that construction dust will make my home toxic?

This worry is common - especially on blocks where multiple builds are happening at once. The good news: a finished home with windows mostly closed on dusty days, a shoes-off entry, and true HEPA filtration can keep indoor dust load low. The goal is not to eliminate every particle; it is to keep dust accumulation low enough that exposure pathways are controlled.

Most families feel less anxious when they replace rumination with a simple routine: monitor, filter, wipe, and document. As construction slows over time, dust events become less frequent.

Q: During my rebuild, if the wood framing is exposed, will dust get into my house and make it unsafe?

During the open-shell phase (framing exposed, openings not fully sealed), dust can enter and settle on studs, subfloors, and inside cavities. That does not mean the house is permanently contaminated - but it does mean you should prevent unnecessary dust deposition and clean before you close walls and ceilings.

Open-shell protection checklist

- Keep house wrap and sheathing intact; tape seams; cover rough openings when work is not active.
- Do not store porous items (rugs, mattresses, upholstered furniture) inside an open shell.
- Delay installing insulation and HVAC registers until after heavy dusty work is complete (or keep openings sealed).
- Before insulation and drywall: do a rough clean (sealed HEPA + damp wipe) of floors and horizontal surfaces. S33
- After drywall sanding/texture: do a second fine-dust clean before HVAC start-up. S33,S37,S38

APPENDIX K (continued)

Rebuild-phase dust controls: what good looks like

Builder/GC checklist (copy/paste into your scope)

- Dust control plan: wet methods for cutting/grinding; no dry sweeping; no leaf blowers; debris covered when hauled. S33,S37,S38
- Seal the envelope as you go: keep house wrap intact; cover/tape rough openings when work is not active; limit open doors/windows on windy days.
- Protect HVAC: cover returns/register openings until after fine-dust cleaning; use a high-grade filter and change it frequently during dusty phases.
- Cleaning milestones: rough clean before insulation/drywall; fine-dust clean after sanding/texture; document with photos.

Home-side protocol while your street is under construction

- Shoes-off entry + a doormat you actually use. Most dust comes in on shoes, pets, and strollers.
- Run a HEPA purifier in bedrooms (and main living space if possible) continuously during high-dust months. S1,S5
- Damp wipe/damp mop floors, sills, and window tracks. Wet beats dry. S33

When to consider extra verification

- Repeated visible dust intrusion into an open-shell structure before it was sealed.
- Dust plumes repeatedly crossing property lines from demolition/grading.

Neighbor script (simple and non-accusatory)

"Hey - we're living here during the rebuild and trying to keep dust down for the kids. Can you use wet methods and keep debris covered? If you have a heavy cutting day coming, a quick text helps us close windows and run filtration."

APPENDIX L

My neighbor remediated in a quarter of the time. Did they do it correctly?

Remediation speed is not, by itself, proof that work was sloppy - or thorough. Timelines vary based on scope, crew size, insurance decisions, and how much porous material was replaced versus cleaned. The question is not "How fast?" The question is: "What was done, and was it verified?"

What matters more than timeline

- Was there a written scope of work (what rooms, what materials, what methods)?
- Was HVAC addressed (filters, returns, ducts, coils) - and is it documented?
- Were porous reservoirs evaluated (attic insulation, carpets, rugs, upholstered furniture)?
- Were wet methods and HEPA containment used (not just odor treatment)? S33,S5
- Was there any post-remediation verification (photos, clearance testing, or wipe sampling)?

Red flag

Odor removal is not the same as contaminant removal. "It smells fine" is not a clearance standard.

How to ask your neighbor without judgment

"I'm glad you were able to get through remediation quickly. We're still working through ours and trying to learn. Did you do any clearance testing or duct cleaning, and who did you use?"

If they did not test, that does not automatically mean their home is unsafe. It means you do not have the same level of documentation. Focus on your own standards: independent verification and clear records.

APPENDIX M

Other essentials to add (one-year edition)

1) Mold and moisture (rain + suppression water + rebuild delays)

If materials stayed wet after suppression efforts or winter rain, mold can become a separate issue. Drying quickly is the key. If you see or smell mold, do not paint over it. Fix the moisture source, dry the area, and clean using EPA guidance. Larger areas may require professional remediation. S5

2) Cars and cabins

Vehicle interiors can accumulate ash and dust. Replace the cabin air filter, HEPA vacuum seats and vents, and wipe hard surfaces with a damp microfiber cloth. Avoid ozone as a primary strategy; it removes odor but does not remove metals or dust. S1,S5

3) Pets and take-home dust

Pets track dust into living spaces. Wipe paws after outdoor time on dusty days, wash bedding regularly, and keep pets away from bare soil and active work zones. A shoes-off entryway helps everyone.

4) Sensitive households (asthma, pregnancy, immune compromise)

If someone in the home is medically sensitive, use a 'clean room' approach: one bedroom with a HEPA purifier running continuously, windows closed on dust days, and a stricter cleaning schedule. Discuss individualized precautions with your clinician. S1,S5

Reminder

You do not need to do everything perfectly. Pick the highest-impact controls: keep dust out, filter air, clean with wet methods, and verify soil if you are rebuilding or landscaping.

NOTES

References & sources are consolidated in Appendix R at the end of this manual.

APPENDIX R — References & Sources (Consolidated)

This appendix consolidates all citation pages into one place. Footnote numbers (1–22) and Source IDs (S1–S38) referenced throughout the manual correspond to entries below. Links and programs can change over time; when in doubt, consult the originating agency or organization directly.

R1. Footnote references (1–22)

1. California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). What are acceptable concentrations of lead in soil in California?. DTSC FAQ page. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://dtsc.ca.gov/faq/what-are-acceptable-concentrations-of-lead-in-soil-in-california/

2. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 40 CFR 745.65: Lead-based paint hazards (soil-lead hazard definition). eCFR. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/chapter-I/subchapter-R/part-745/subpart-D/section-745.65

3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Updates Blood Lead Reference Value (BLRV) to 3.5 µg/dL. CDC Lead Prevention News. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/php/news-features/updates-blood-lead-reference-value.html

4. CDC. Recommended Actions Based on Blood Lead Level. CDC Clinical Guidance. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/hcp/clinical-guidance/index.html

5. U.S. EPA. Particle Pollution Designations for the 2024 Revised Annual PM2.5 NAAQS. EPA webpage. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.epa.gov/particle-pollution-designations/particle-pollution-designations-2024-revised-annual-pm-naaqs-where

6. U.S. EPA. PM NAAQS Overview (2024 rulemaking summary PDF). EPA PDF. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-02/pm-naaqs-overview.pdf

7. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Disaster Distress Helpline. SAMHSA. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/helplines/disaster-distress-helpline

8. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. 988 Lifeline. 988lifeline.org. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://988lifeline.org/

9. FEMA. Individuals and Households Program (IHP) – how to apply. DisasterAssistance.gov. Accessed Feb 12,

2026. URL: https://www.disasterassistance.gov/get-assistance/forms-of-assistance/4471

10. U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Disaster assistance overview. SBA. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance

11. SBA. Home and personal property loans (physical damage loans). SBA. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance/physical-damage-loans

12. U.S. Department of Justice (U.S. Attorney's Office, Central District of California). Federal grand jury indictment – Palisades Fire described as a holdover continuation of Jan. 1 fire. DOJ press release. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.justice.gov/usao-cdca/pr/federal-grand-jury-indicts-former-la-resident-charged-starting-palisades-fire-adding

13. Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD). January 2025 Palisades Fire suspect arrest statement and LAFD after-action review report. LAFD news release. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://lafd.org/news/january-2025-palisades-fire-suspect-arrest-statement-and-lafd-afteraction-review-report

14. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). ATF National Response Team mobilizes to investigate cause of Pacific Palisades Fire. ATF press release. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.atf.gov/news/press-releases/atf-national-response-team-mobilizes-to-investigate-cause-pacific-palisades-fire

15. U.S. EPA. EPA strengthens safeguards for lead-contaminated soil (screening levels discussion). EPA news release. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-strengthens-safeguards-protect-families-and-children-lead-contaminated-soil

16. Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH). ACCESS Center / Help Line (24/7): 1-800-854-7771. LACDMH webpage. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://dmh.lacounty.gov/our-services/disaster-services/access-hotline/

17. SAMHSA. FindTreatment.gov (treatment locator). FindTreatment.gov. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://findtreatment.gov/

18. California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). California Statewide Wildfire Recovery Resources. Cal OES. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.wildfirerecovery.caloes.ca.gov/

19. CAL FIRE / Ready for Wildfire. Post-Wildfire: Who Can Help?. Readyforwildfire.org. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://readyforwildfire.org/post-wildfire/who-can-help/

20. AirNow (EPA/partners). AQI Basics. AirNow.gov. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.airnow.gov/aqi/aqi-basics

21. U.S. EPA Air Quality System (AQS). AQI Breakpoints. EPA AQS. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://aqs.epa.gov/aqsweb/documents/codetables/aqi_breakpoints.html

22. U.S. EPA. Final Updates to the Air Quality Index (AQI) for Particulate Matter (PM). EPA fact sheet PDF. Accessed Feb 12, 2026. URL: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-02/pm-naaqs-air-quality-index-fact-sheet.pdf

R2. Source list for appendices (S1–S38)

S1 AirNow. "How to Create a Clean Room at Home" (fact sheet) - recommends damp cleaning; avoid vacuuming unless HEPA.

S2 CDC. "Evidence on the Use of Indoor Air Filtration as an Intervention for Wildfire Smoke Pollutant Exposure" (review).

S3 Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBL) Q&A; on wildfire smoke - notes indoor levels generally lower than outside, but vary widely; filtration helps.

S4 South Coast AQMD wildfire smoke/ash tips - advises keeping doors/windows closed; avoid whole-house fans if possible.

S5 U.S. EPA. Clean-room + wildfire indoor air guidance; includes mold/moisture home guide.

S6 FEMA press release on disaster assistance application deadlines and covered needs (DR-4856).

S7 Los Angeles County: LA County Relief Fund (direct relief for impacted residents).

S8 Los Angeles County Relief Fund page describing Worker Relief and Small Business Relief grant programs and maximum grant amounts.

S9 California Department of Social Services: Disaster Grant Assistance / Disaster Case Management resources (DR-4856).

S10 HUD archived press release on aid to California disaster victims (declared disaster areas).

S11 United Policyholders: Insurance claim and recovery help library for January 2025 Palisades/Eaton fires.

S12 Pali Strong (Pacific Palisades wildfire recovery hub).

S13 Pali Long-Term Recovery Group (Pali LTRG) - mission and assistance model.

S14 California Community Foundation: Palisades Recovery Coalition (PRC) fund page / PaliRecovery site.

S15 American Red Cross: 2025 California Wildfires long-term recovery grant program.

S16 Charity Navigator / Direct Relief listing for LA fires response.

S17 Catholic Charities of Los Angeles: Disaster Relief - Wildfires.

S18 CORE: Southern California Wildfires recovery program page.

S19 California Community Foundation: Wildfire Recovery Fund.

S20 Charity Navigator: "Los Angeles Fires" (Palisades fire) vetted charities list.

S21 Kehillat Israel (KI): Palisades Fire assistance fund page.

S22 American Legion: Post 283 initiative and resource hub for Palisades fire recovery.

S23 We Are Pali wildfire resource page - includes scam awareness and charity verification guidance.

S24 Malibu Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce: Business directory search.

S25 Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce site (business listings and local resource hub).

S26 Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). "Water Quality Restoration for Pacific Palisades" - status, maps, flushing guidance, and recommendations for rebuilding plumbing.

S27 LADWP Water Quality Restoration Dashboard (ArcGIS StoryMap) - zone-based testing and progress information.

S28 U.S. EPA. "Addressing Contamination of Drinking Water Distribution Systems from VOCs After Wildfires" (fact sheet PDF) - explains VOC contamination, advisories, flushing, and treatment limitations.

S29 California State Water Resources Control Board (Division of Drinking Water). "Benzene Customer Advisory" (Rev. 8/2019) - building plumbing flushing and testing guidance (EPA Method 524.2).

S30 California State Water Resources Control Board. "2025 Los Angeles Wildfire Recovery" hub - statewide wildfire drinking water recovery information.

S31 UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) Fire Network. "After the Fire: Drinking Water Contamination & Safety" (PDF) - notes VOC-related taste/odor issues and the limits of sensory checks.

S32 CalRecycle. "Wildfire Debris Removal and Recovery" - explains Phase 1/Phase 2, and notes toxic materials and asbestos may remain until full assessment/removal.

S33 California Department of Public Health (CDPH). "Safe Cleanup of Ash" - PPE, wet methods, and warnings against dry sweeping and leaf blowers.

S34 Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. "Returning After a Fire - Public Health" - ash cleanup and exposure reduction guidance.

S35 South Coast AQMD. "Asbestos Demolition & Removal" guidance page - Rule 1403 requirements and notifications.

S36 South Coast AQMD. Rule 1403 (PDF) - asbestos emissions from demolition/renovation; work practice and notification requirements.

S37 Cal/OSHA (DIR). "Silica Employer Fact Sheet" - overview of respirable crystalline silica hazards and required controls (Title 8, section 5204).

S38 U.S. OSHA. "Respirable Crystalline Silica Standard for Construction" (fact sheet) - explains health risks and employer controls. These sources support the new extension pages (Appendices K-M). They also reference prior sources already listed in the manual (S1, S4, S5, S33, S37, S38).