



FRANTZ

CONSTRUCTION

Rebuilding Your Home After the 2025 Wildfires

A Guide to the Like-for-Like Pathway in Los Angeles County, City of Los Angeles, and
City of Malibu

1. Navigating Your Rebuilding Journey: An Introduction for 2025 Fire Survivors

The devastation caused by the January 2025 wildfires in Pacific Palisades, Malibu, and surrounding communities has brought unimaginable loss and challenges.¹ As you begin the complex process of recovery and rebuilding, this guide aims to provide clear, actionable information focused specifically on one potential pathway: the "Like-for-Like" (L4L) rebuild option. This guide has been prepared by to assist homeowners like you during this difficult time.

The L4L pathway is often established by local governments after a disaster to help homeowners rebuild their properties more quickly. Generally, it allows for the replacement of a damaged or destroyed structure to its pre-disaster condition, often with some minor allowances for size or height increases, while potentially bypassing some of the standard planning and review processes typically required for new construction.⁶ However, it is absolutely crucial to understand that the specific rules, allowances, benefits, and limitations of the L4L pathway are defined *uniquely* by each governing jurisdiction—the City of Los Angeles, unincorporated Los Angeles County, and the City of Malibu—and have been tailored specifically for the recovery efforts following the 2025 fires.

This guide synthesizes information from official sources available as of May 1st, 2025. However, disaster recovery is a dynamic situation, and regulations, procedures, deadlines, and contact information can change.¹² Therefore, this guide must be used for informational purposes ONLY. Homeowners MUST consult directly with the official recovery resources and designated personnel for their specific jurisdiction (LA City, LA County, or Malibu) and their own licensed professionals (architect, engineer, builder) for advice tailored to their property and circumstances before making any decisions.¹² Relying solely on this guide without verifying information with official sources could lead to costly errors or delays.

2. First Steps: Identifying Your Jurisdiction and Key Contacts

Before taking any significant steps towards rebuilding, the first critical action is to confirm the governing jurisdiction for your property. The rules, processes, and available resources differ significantly depending on whether your home is located within the City of Los Angeles, an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County, or the City of Malibu.

Determine Your Jurisdiction:

Use the following online tools to verify which jurisdiction oversees your property:

- Los Angeles County Service Locator: (For determining if you are in an unincorporated area managed by LA County) ⁷ - **
- City of Los Angeles ZIMAS (Zone Information Map Access System): (For properties within LA City limits) ¹⁴ - **
- City of Malibu GIS Mapping Tool: (For properties within Malibu City limits) ¹⁷ - <https://maps.digitalmapcentral.com/production/VECommunityView/cities/Malibu/index.aspx>

Dedicated 2025 Fire Recovery Resources:

Each jurisdiction has established specific resources, websites, contact points, and potentially physical centers dedicated to assisting residents affected by the 2025 wildfires. Engaging with these official resources early and often is essential.

- For Unincorporated Los Angeles County Areas (e.g., parts of Altadena, Pacific Palisades):
 - Primary Online Hub: LA County Recovers website: recovery.lacounty.gov ⁷
 - In-Person Permit Help: One-Stop Permit Centers (Established for 2025 Fire Recovery in Altadena and Calabasas). Check recovery.lacounty.gov/rebuilding/one-stop-permit-centers for locations, hours, and appointment scheduling.⁷ Agencies present typically include Regional Planning, Public Works (Building & Safety, Geotechnical), Fire Department, and Public Health.⁷
 - Debris Removal Info: LA County Public Works Fire Debris Hotline: 844-347-3332 ⁷ or recovery.lacounty.gov/debris-removal.⁷
 - Planning/Zoning: LA County Department of Regional Planning: planning.lacounty.gov ²⁵, Disaster Recovery Page ²¹, General Contact: (213) 974-6411.²⁷ Specific disaster recovery contacts may be listed on the recovery website.
 - Building Permits/Inspections: LA County Department of Public Works Building and Safety: pw.lacounty.gov/building-and-safety/ ²⁸, EPIC-LA Online Permit Portal.⁷
- For Properties within the City of Los Angeles (e.g., parts of Pacific

Palisades):

- Primary Online Hub: LA Strong: Return and Rebuild website: Recovery.LACity.gov ⁶
- Building Permits/Info: LA Department of Building and Safety (LADBS): ladbs.org ³², 2025 Wildfire Information Page ⁶, Mayor's Emergency Executive Order (EEO) Information. ⁶
- In-Person Permit Help: LADBS Development Services Centers (especially West LA office at 1828 Sawtelle Blvd for Palisades area). ¹³ Check website for hours and services. City's One-Stop Permit Center (Sawtelle). ¹³
- General Recovery Assistance: Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) at UCLA Research Park West (10850 Pico Blvd) - includes FEMA, SBA, and various City/County departments. ⁸ Check Recovery.LACity.gov for current status and hours.
- For Properties within the City of Malibu:
 - Primary Online Hub: MalibuRebuilds.org ¹⁰
 - In-Person Rebuild Help: Malibu Rebuild Center: 23805 Stuart Ranch Road, Suite 240. Check website for hours and appointment scheduling. ¹⁶ Email: MalibuRecovers@MalibuCity.org. ¹⁷ Phone: (310) 456-2489, ext. 400. ¹⁷
 - Planning Department: malibucity.org/Planning. ⁴¹ Contact: 310-456-2489 ext. 485, mplanning@malibucity.org. ⁴¹ Rebuild Specialist Contact: Aakash Shah, Ashah@malibucity.org, ext. 385. ⁴¹
 - Building Safety Division: malibucity.org/BuildingSafety. ⁴³ Contact: 310-456-2489 ext. 390, MBuilding@malibucity.org. ⁴⁰
 - Online Portal: Malibu Development Portal (for submissions, status updates). ¹⁷

Contact the appropriate jurisdictional recovery team as soon as possible. The purpose of this initial contact is to:

1. Confirm your property's jurisdiction definitively.
2. Verify your eligibility for the L4L rebuild pathway under the specific 2025 fire recovery ordinances and rules.

3. Understand the precise L4L definition and allowable deviations for your jurisdiction.
4. Learn about the specific application process, required documentation, anticipated timelines, and any applicable fee waivers or expedited procedures established for the 2025 fire recovery.

The aftermath of a large-scale disaster involves navigating a complex web of agencies, including local planning and building departments, county health and public works, state environmental and emergency services (like CalOES), and federal bodies like FEMA and the Small Business Administration (SBA).⁷ Recognizing this complexity, jurisdictions often establish dedicated Recovery Centers or One-Stop Permit Centers.⁷ These centers are invaluable because they centralize information and provide direct access to personnel from multiple relevant departments, aiming to streamline the process for survivors who are already dealing with significant stress and loss. It's important to distinguish between general Disaster Recovery Centers, which often focus on immediate needs, financial assistance (FEMA/SBA), and broader social services²⁰, and the more specialized Rebuilding or One-Stop Permit Centers, which concentrate on the planning, permitting, and construction aspects of rebuilding.⁷ Utilizing these official centers as primary points of contact is highly recommended, but homeowners should ensure they are directing their specific questions (e.g., FEMA application status vs. building code query) to the appropriate center or agency contact for the most efficient assistance.

3. Understanding the "Like-for-Like" Rebuild Pathway

The "Like-for-Like" (L4L) rebuild pathway is a central component of the disaster recovery framework established for the 2025 fires by Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, and the City of Malibu. While the general intent is similar across jurisdictions – facilitating a faster rebuild by allowing replacement of what was lost – the specific rules and definitions vary significantly and are unique to the 2025 fire recovery context. Understanding these nuances is critical for homeowners considering this option.

Defining "Like-for-Like" (L4L) for the 2025 Fire Recovery:

- **Core Concept:** Generally, L4L refers to the process of repairing or reconstructing a building damaged or destroyed by a disaster to be substantially the same as the original structure that legally existed immediately before the event. This pathway often comes with

allowances for minor modifications and benefits from expedited review processes and waivers of certain standard requirements.⁷

- Jurisdiction-Specific Definitions (Crucial Differences for 2025 Fire):
 - LA County (Unincorporated Areas):
 - Governing Rule: Defined by LA County Code Title 22 (Planning and Zoning), specifically Chapter 22.256 (Disaster Recovery)⁵⁷ and supplemented by recovery guidelines.⁷
 - Definition: Allows replacement structures that are the same size, in the same location, and for the same use as the previous legally established structure.⁷
 - Allowable Modifications: Modifications are permitted if they do not increase the floor area, size, height, or building footprint by more than 10%.⁷ The internal floor plan can differ, and the structure can be smaller, provided the footprint increase limit is met.⁷ Minor relocations may be allowed for safety or topographical reasons, or to improve conformance with current standards.⁵⁷
 - Application: Requires a Ministerial Site Plan Review application.⁵⁷ Must generally be filed within two years of the initial emergency declaration, though extensions may be possible.⁷
 - City of Los Angeles (Specific to 2025 Fire via EEO1):
 - Governing Rule: Mayor Bass's Emergency Executive Order No. 1 (EEO1), issued January 13, 2025, and associated Implementation Guidelines specifically for the 2025 fire recovery.⁶
 - Definition: Allows repair or reconstruction of primary and accessory structures in substantially the same location as, and not exceeding 110% of the footprint and height of, the structures that existed immediately before the wildfires.⁶ Allows maintaining the same nonconforming use, yards, height, number of stories, lot area, floor area, residential floor area, residential density, or parking.⁶
 - Allowable Modifications: Footprint and height can increase up to 10%.⁶ Location can be offset by a maximum of 20% of the lot width and 20% of the lot depth, provided it meets applicable yard setbacks (or doesn't further reduce existing nonconforming

yards).⁶

- Key Restriction: Explicitly states the L4L project *cannot* result in an increase in density or units (including accessory dwelling units).³⁵
- City of Malibu (Specific to 2025 Fire via LCP/MMC Amendments & State Orders):
 - Governing Rule: A combination of Malibu's Local Coastal Program (LCP) and Malibu Municipal Code (MMC) Title 17 (Zoning), as amended specifically for fire recovery (e.g., Ordinance 445 for Woolsey, potentially Ord. 524/524U for 2025 fires ⁹), and influenced by State Executive Orders (like N-4-25).⁹
 - Definition (Evolving): Malibu's LCP historically allowed replacement "in-kind plus a 10 percent increase in height, floor area, or bulk" to be exempt from a Coastal Development Permit (CDP).⁹ However, State Executive Order N-4-25 suspended the Coastal Act for rebuilds not exceeding 110% of the footprint and height.⁹ Malibu City Council initiated amendments (Res. 25-06, Ord. 524/524U) likely aligning the expedited pathway (potentially Planning Verification - PV) with this state footprint/height standard for the 2025 fires.⁹ Verification with the City is essential.
 - Allowable Modifications: Likely allows up to 10% increase in footprint and height for CDP exemption under state order.⁵⁹ May allow 10% increase in floor area, height, or bulk under local PV process if conditions met (e.g., new area below 18ft, flatter slopes, no setback encroachment unless for safety).¹⁰ FEMA flood zone requirements may necessitate raising floor levels, potentially conflicting with height/bulk limits and requiring careful planning.⁹ OWTS replacement may be exempt if within footprint and minimum size needed.⁶³
 - Application: Typically requires a Planning Verification (PV) for L4L+10%.⁹ Specific deadlines apply for submitting applications to retain nonconforming status (e.g., potentially 6 years post-fire, check latest City ordinance).¹⁰
- Critical Distinction: The definition of the "+10%" allowance varies significantly. LA County's standard ordinance refers to floor area, size,

height, or footprint.⁷ LA City's EEO1 specifically limits it to *footprint and height* for the 2025 fire.⁶ Malibu's rules appear to be aligning with the state's footprint/height standard for exemptions but retain local complexities regarding floor area/bulk under their PV process.⁹ This difference directly impacts how much larger a rebuilt home can be under the L4L pathway in each jurisdiction. Homeowners must confirm the precise definition applicable under the 2025 fire recovery rules with their governing jurisdiction. This difference arises because jurisdictions balance the need for rapid recovery with existing zoning codes and specific post-disaster policy goals. LA City's EEO1, for instance, seems focused on replacing the exact number of lost units quickly, hence restricting density increases within that specific L4L pathway. Malibu must navigate its unique LCP and Coastal Act context, leading to amendments influenced by state-level actions. Consequently, homeowners cannot assume L4L rules are uniform and must verify the exact parameters with their local planning/rebuild team.

Benefits of the L4L Pathway (2025 Fire Context):

Choosing the L4L pathway, where eligible and appropriate, offers several potential advantages specifically established under the 2025 fire recovery framework:

- Expedited Agency Review Timelines: Jurisdictions have committed to faster processing for L4L applications:
 - LA County: Regional Planning aims for initial review and rechecks within two weeks for L4L projects. Public Works Building & Safety and the Fire Department target initial reviews within 10 business days and rechecks within 5 business days.⁷
 - LA City (EEO1): Mandates initial building permit reviews by all relevant City departments (including LADBS, DWP) be completed within 30 days of a complete application submission. LADBS has reported capacity for 10-day reviews.⁶ Building inspections are targeted within two business days of request, with clearances and utility releases within five business days.³⁴
 - Malibu City: Aims to expedite L4L+10% rebuilds via the Planning Verification (PV) process, which historically aimed for quicker turnarounds (potentially one week per review cycle, though complexity varies).⁹

- Waiver of Certain Reviews and Requirements: L4L projects under the 2025 recovery rules may bypass certain standard procedures:
 - Statewide (Gov. Order N-4-25): Suspension of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review and California Coastal Act permit requirements for qualifying L4L rebuilds that do not exceed 110% of the pre-fire footprint and height.⁹ This is a significant time-saver, avoiding lengthy environmental studies and potential appeals.
 - LA City (EEO1): Waives local discretionary review processes, such as those mandated by the Pacific Palisades Specific Plan or Design Review Boards.⁸ Haul routes approved ministerially (without hearings/appeals).⁸ Exempts projects from the City's All-Electric Building Code (Ord. 187714).⁸ Crucially, demolition permits are *not* required for fire-damaged structures, streamlining site preparation.⁶
 - LA County: L4L rebuilds, while needing to meet current Building/Fire/Health codes, do *not* have to comply with *current* Zoning Code requirements (e.g., setbacks, lot coverage, parking) if the original structure was legally nonconforming.⁷ The prior nonconforming status can generally be maintained.⁵⁷
 - Malibu City: Allows legally established nonconforming structures to be rebuilt under the PV process, provided application deadlines are met.¹⁰ Offers a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) exemption for qualifying L4L+10% rebuilds.⁹
- Potential Fee Waivers: Financial relief through fee waivers may be available, but policies vary:
 - LA City: Mayor Bass announced an intention to waive plan check and permit fees for Palisades fire victims rebuilding their homes.⁶⁶ Homeowners should verify the status and specifics of this proposed ordinance with LADBS.
 - LA County: Currently, fee waivers are *not* being offered for fire rebuilds unless an alternative funding source is identified to cover departmental costs.⁵⁵ Permit fees (estimated ~\$22,000 for a 3,000 sq ft home, plus Planning/Health/Fire fees) may be eligible for reimbursement through private insurance.⁵⁵
 - Malibu City: Has an established fee waiver program (potentially

extended/adapted from Woolsey Fire rules) for L4L or L4L+10% rebuilds, *but only if the property was the owner's primary residence at the time of the fire.*¹⁰ Strict application and permit issuance deadlines apply to qualify for the waiver.⁴² The waiver is *not* transferable if the property is sold.¹⁰ LA County Waterworks District 29 fees may also be waived for qualifying rebuilds.⁴²

- **Summary of Benefits:** The primary advantages of the L4L pathway lie in potentially faster agency review times and the waiver of certain complex regulatory hurdles like CEQA, Coastal Act review, and local discretionary planning reviews. These benefits are substantial, aiming to reduce bureaucratic delays. However, these advantages are strictly tied to meeting the L4L definition for the specific jurisdiction under the 2025 fire rules. The availability of fee waivers is inconsistent and often conditional, particularly on primary residency status. Governments aim to expedite recovery but must balance this with fiscal responsibility (fees fund services) and ensuring fundamental safety standards (building and fire codes are generally not waived). Homeowners should anticipate paying permit fees unless a specific, applicable waiver is confirmed for their situation.

Know the Boundaries: What Voids L4L Status? (2025 Fire Context)

It is critical to understand the actions or modifications that would disqualify a project from the expedited L4L pathway under the 2025 fire recovery rules, thereby requiring a standard new construction review process:

- **Exceeding the +10% Threshold:** Proposing a rebuild that goes beyond the specific dimensional allowances defined by the jurisdiction for the 2025 fire L4L pathway (e.g., >110% footprint/height in LA City per EEO1; >10% floor area/size/height/footprint in LA County; potentially >110% footprint/height for Malibu exemptions) will trigger a standard new construction review.⁶
- **Significant Location Changes:** Moving the structure substantially from its original location, beyond any minor offsets permitted by the jurisdiction (like LA City's 20% rule ⁶ or LA County/Malibu's allowances for safety/topography ⁵⁷), will likely void L4L status. Any portion of the structure moved outside the original footprint must comply with current zoning setbacks.⁶
- **Increasing Density/Units (Especially LA City):** For LA City projects

proceeding under EEOI's L4L definition, adding any new units, including ADUs or JADUs, is explicitly prohibited within that pathway.³⁵ While LA County and Malibu might allow ADUs via separate or parallel processes, incorporating them could complicate or potentially negate L4L benefits for the primary structure (see ADU section).

- **Major Design Changes Beyond L4L Scope:** While internal floor plan modifications are generally allowed within the L4L footprint ⁷, substantial alterations that fundamentally change the structure beyond the defined L4L parameters will likely require standard review. Examples cited in LA City's EEOI guidelines include adding a new basement level where one didn't exist, or adding a new second story that exceeds the original height or footprint.⁶
- **Missing Jurisdictional Deadlines:** Failing to submit the required applications (e.g., Ministerial Site Plan Review for LA County L4L, Planning Verification for Malibu L4L) within the timeframes established by the disaster recovery ordinances (e.g., typically within 2 years of emergency declaration for LA County L4L/temporary housing ⁷; specific deadlines for retaining nonconforming status in Malibu ¹⁰) can result in the loss of L4L benefits.

Maintaining L4L status requires strict adherence to the specific rules enacted for the 2025 fire recovery by the governing jurisdiction. The L4L pathway represents an exception granted to expedite recovery, predicated on the assumption that the replacement structure has minimal new impacts compared to what was lost. Any deviation beyond the defined allowances negates this assumption, pushing the project into the standard, typically longer, more complex, and potentially more costly new construction review process, which includes full compliance with current zoning, environmental review (if not otherwise exempt), and potentially local discretionary design review. Homeowners must therefore make an early, informed decision about whether the L4L constraints align with their rebuilding goals. If significant changes are desired, they should anticipate the standard pathway. Careful collaboration with architects and builders who are knowledgeable about the *specific 2025 fire recovery rules* for the relevant jurisdiction is paramount to successfully navigating the L4L pathway if chosen.

4. Meeting Current Safety Standards: Building Codes and Fire Resilience

While the Like-for-Like (L4L) pathway offers procedural advantages, it does not exempt homeowners from critical safety requirements. All rebuild projects, including L4L replacements, must generally comply with the *current* building and fire safety codes in effect at the time the building permit application is submitted. This ensures that rebuilt homes are safer and more resilient than the structures they replace, particularly concerning wildfire risk.

California Building Code (Title 24) Essentials:

Your rebuilt home must adhere to the latest edition of the California Building Code (Title 24), which encompasses standards for structural integrity, electrical systems, plumbing, mechanical systems (HVAC), energy efficiency, accessibility, and more.⁷ This means systems and construction methods will likely need to be upgraded compared to your previous home, especially if it was older.

- Exception Note (LA City): Mayor Bass's EEO1 for the 2025 fire recovery includes a provision allowing rebuild projects using plans previously approved under the 2019 Title 24 (or later, per state directive N-20-25) to potentially bypass compliance with the *current* Energy Code requirements.⁶ This specific exception should be verified with LADBS for applicability to your project.

Focus on Fire Safety: WUI Code (Chapter 7A) and CalFire Requirements:

Given that the 2025 fires occurred in areas designated as high or very high fire hazard severity zones (FHSZ) and Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas, compliance with specific wildfire protection standards is mandatory for all rebuilds, including L4L projects.⁷

- Mandatory Compliance: Chapter 7A of the California Building Code ("Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure") sets the minimum standards.⁶⁸ Note: California adopted the 2024 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) as the basis for a new standalone California WUI Code (Title 24, Part 7), potentially effective starting January 1, 2026.⁶⁹ Consult your local building department for the exact code version applicable at the time of your permit application.
- Purpose of Chapter 7A/WUI Code: The primary goal is to increase a building's ability to resist ignition from the main threats during a wildfire:

direct flames and, most commonly, wind-blown embers.⁶⁸ Embers can travel long distances and ignite vulnerable parts of a home or nearby combustible materials.⁶⁸

- Key Areas Covered: The WUI code mandates specific construction materials and methods for the building's exterior envelope, focusing on areas vulnerable to embers and flames ⁶⁸:
 - Roofing: Must be Class A fire-rated (e.g., asphalt composition shingles, concrete or clay tile, metal roofing). Roof edges, valleys, and gutters also have specific requirements.⁶⁸
 - Vents: Attic, soffit, foundation, gable, and other ventilation openings must be covered with vents designed to resist ember and flame intrusion. These vents must be tested to specific standards (e.g., ASTM E2886) and often need to be listed by the California Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM).⁶⁸
 - Exterior Walls/Siding: Must be constructed of ignition-resistant materials (tested to ASTM E84 with specific flame spread limits) or noncombustible materials (e.g., stucco, fiber cement siding, metal siding, brick/stone veneer).⁶⁸
 - Windows, Skylights, and Doors: Must meet specific requirements, often involving multi-pane glass (dual-pane recommended) with at least one pane being tempered glass, and frames made of noncombustible or low-flame-spread materials.⁶⁸
 - Decking: Walking surfaces must be constructed of ignition-resistant, noncombustible, or approved fire-retardant-treated wood materials.⁶⁸ Undersides of decks and overhangs also have specific protection requirements.
 - Eaves and Soffits: Must be protected with ignition-resistant or noncombustible materials.⁷³
 - Accessory Structures: Detached garages, sheds, etc., may also have requirements depending on size and distance from the main house.⁶⁸
- Ignition-Resistant Materials: These are materials specifically tested and rated for their ability to resist ignition and limit flame spread under wildfire conditions.⁷⁰ The OSFM maintains a Building Materials Listing (BML) and a WUI Products Handbook identifying compliant products,

though materials not listed may still qualify if they meet the code's performance standards.⁷⁰ Always consult your local building official regarding acceptable materials.⁶⁸

- **Defensible Space:** While primarily a property maintenance requirement, achieving compliance with defensible space regulations (clearing flammable vegetation within 100 feet of structures, per Public Resources Code 4291) is often necessary before final building permit approval.⁶⁸



Meeting current building and fire codes represents a fundamental baseline for all rebuilding efforts, irrespective of the chosen pathway (L4L or new construction). This is driven by the paramount need for public safety and the mandate to ensure that structures rebuilt in high-risk areas are significantly more resilient to future wildfire events than those they replace. While L4L pathways provide relief from certain zoning and procedural requirements, they do not compromise these essential life-safety standards embedded in the current codes. Homeowners must therefore recognize that rebuilding "like-for-like" in terms of size and location does not mean rebuilding with the same, potentially outdated and less fire-resistant, materials and systems. Significant upgrades to meet current WUI/Chapter 7A standards are mandatory. This necessitates careful budgeting for these required upgrades,

which can represent a substantial portion of the overall rebuilding cost. Understanding the "code upgrade" coverage provided by homeowners' insurance policies is therefore critically important in financing the rebuild.

5. Building Smarter and Stronger: Fire-Resistant Upgrades with L4L Framework

Beyond meeting the minimum requirements of the current California Building Code and Chapter 7A/WUI regulations, many homeowners rebuilding after the 2025 fires may wish to incorporate additional measures to further enhance their home's resilience against future wildfires. This practice, often referred to as "home hardening," involves selecting materials and employing design strategies that exceed code mandates.⁸²

Beyond the Code: Modern Materials and Techniques:

Examples of advanced fire-resistant materials and techniques that offer protection beyond the baseline code include:

- **Exterior Siding:** Using highly durable, non-combustible options like thick-gauge metal siding, enhanced stucco systems, or specific types of fiber cement known for superior fire performance.⁷⁶
- **Venting:** Installing vents with advanced ember-blocking technology that exceeds the basic requirements of ASTM E2886.⁶⁸
- **Windows:** Opting for multi-pane windows with enhanced thermal breaks and potentially fire-rated glass assemblies, especially in high-exposure areas.⁶⁸
- **Roofing:** Choosing inherently non-combustible materials like standing seam metal roofs or clay tiles over Class A asphalt shingles.⁶⁸
- **Decking:** Utilizing non-combustible decking materials such as concrete pavers, stone, or specialized metal decking systems instead of ignition-resistant wood or composites.⁶⁸
- **Landscaping:** Implementing advanced defensible space strategies, including careful plant selection (fire-resistant vegetation), hardscaping (patios, walkways), and strategic placement of features like pools or water elements to create fire breaks.⁷⁶
- **Design Strategies:** Incorporating design features that minimize ember traps, such as simplifying rooflines, enclosing eaves and foundations, and avoiding complex architectural details where embers can accumulate.⁸²

The LA County "Resilient Rebuild Resource Guide" offers further ideas and context for these types of strategies.¹³

Integrating Upgrades into L4L Rebuilds (The Key Question):

A critical question for homeowners pursuing the L4L pathway is whether incorporating these beyond-code upgrades is permissible without jeopardizing the expedited review and waivers associated with L4L status under the specific 2025 fire recovery rules.

- **Official Guidance:** Currently, explicit guidance on this specific point within the 2025 fire recovery frameworks for LA City, LA County, and Malibu appears limited. The LA County Resilient Rebuild Resource Guide, for example, promotes resilient building but does not definitively state how such upgrades interact with the L4L pathway's procedural benefits.⁸²
- **Likely Interpretation:** It is highly probable that substituting one compliant material for another (e.g., choosing a specific brand of OSFM-listed WUI vent or Class A roofing material) is acceptable within the L4L framework. These are considered means of meeting the mandatory code requirements. However, incorporating significant *beyond-code* enhancements that fundamentally alter the building's systems, structure, or potentially its appearance beyond the L4L parameters *might* be viewed by the jurisdiction as exceeding the scope of a "like-for-like" replacement. The L4L pathway's advantages are predicated on replacing what was lost with minimal *new* impacts, beyond those mandated by current codes. Adding substantial, optional resilience features could be interpreted as pushing the project towards new construction territory.
- **Verification is Crucial:** Homeowners must proactively discuss any desired beyond-code resilience upgrades with their jurisdiction's designated 2025 fire recovery planning staff early in the design process. It is essential to get explicit confirmation on whether specific upgrades (e.g., switching from compliant siding to a premium non-combustible system, adding exterior sprinklers not required by code) can be included while retaining L4L status and its associated benefits (expedited review, waivers). Assumptions should not be made.

Leveraging Pre-Approved Plans:

Another avenue to explore for efficient and resilient rebuilding is the use of

pre-approved or standard building plans.

- **Availability:** LA County is actively exploring providing pre-approved plans for single-family homes of various sizes, designed to meet current codes, including WUI standards.⁷ LA City may also be developing similar initiatives, potentially leveraging AI tools to speed approvals.⁴⁹
- **Benefits:** Using pre-approved plans can significantly expedite the plan review portion of the permitting process, as the core design has already been vetted by the building department.⁷ These plans are typically designed for compliance and resilience.
- **Interaction with L4L:** If a homeowner finds a pre-approved plan that closely matches the size, footprint, and height parameters allowed under their jurisdiction's L4L (+10%) definition for the 2025 fire, it could offer a streamlined path to rebuilding a code-compliant, resilient home while potentially retaining some L4L benefits. This should be confirmed with the jurisdiction.

While jurisdictions strongly encourage homeowners to rebuild in a more fire-resilient manner¹³, the primary purpose of the L4L pathway is to accelerate the replacement of lost housing stock by simplifying the regulatory process for structures deemed to have minimal new impacts. There exists a potential tension between allowing extensive, *optional* beyond-code upgrades and maintaining the streamlined nature of the L4L pathway. Significant deviations, even for enhanced safety, might necessitate the more thorough review processes associated with standard new construction. Therefore, homeowners desiring resilience features beyond the mandatory code requirements must engage in early and clear communication with their local planning and building officials to understand how these upgrades affect their eligibility for the L4L pathway under the specific 2025 fire recovery rules. Pre-approved plans, if available and suitable, could present a valuable compromise, offering code-compliant, resilient designs with potentially faster review times.

6. Adding Space: Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Junior ADUs (JADUs) in Your Rebuild (2025 Fire Context)

The statewide housing shortage has led California to enact laws encouraging the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs).⁸⁴ Homeowners rebuilding after the 2025 fires may see an opportunity to include an ADU or JADU in their plans,

either to house family members, generate rental income, or provide temporary accommodation during the rebuild. However, integrating ADU/JADU construction into the post-fire rebuild process, particularly when utilizing the Like-for-Like (L4L) pathway for the primary residence, requires careful navigation of specific rules established for the 2025 recovery.

ADU Basics:

- ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit): An attached or detached residential unit providing complete independent living facilities (living, sleeping, eating, cooking, sanitation) on the same lot as a proposed or existing primary residence.⁸⁶ State law generally allows detached ADUs up to 1,200 sq ft, though local ordinances may have specific standards.⁸⁵
- JADU (Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit): A unit no more than 500 sq ft in size, contained entirely within the walls of a proposed or existing single-family residence.⁸⁵ It may share sanitation facilities with the primary residence.⁸⁶
- General Allowances: ADUs/JADUs are generally allowed in residential zones.⁸⁶ Parking requirements are often waived if near transit, and replacement parking for converted garages is typically not required.⁸⁵ Fire sprinklers are usually only required if the primary residence requires them.⁸⁶ Newly constructed, detached ADUs typically require solar panels per state energy code.⁸⁶

Feasibility within 2025 Fire Rebuild Pathways:

Adding a new ADU or JADU concurrently with rebuilding the primary residence destroyed in the 2025 fire presents unique challenges and varies by jurisdiction:

- City of Los Angeles:
 - EEO1 L4L Pathway Conflict: Mayor Bass's EEO1, defining the expedited L4L pathway for the 2025 fire, explicitly states that an "Eligible Project" under this order *cannot* result in an increase in density or units, including ADUs.³⁵ This strongly suggests that adding a new ADU would disqualify the *entire* project from the specific benefits (waivers, timelines) of the EEO1 L4L pathway for the primary home rebuild.
 - Potential Alternative Pathways: Homeowners might still pursue an ADU through the City's standard ADU ordinance⁸⁶ or potentially expedited processes established by subsequent state-level

emergency orders. Governor Newsom issued orders specifically aimed at streamlining ADU construction on fire-damaged properties⁸⁷, suspending certain permits and allowing ADU occupancy before the primary home is finished.⁸⁸ This might create a parallel track. Additionally, a Planning Department Fact Sheet suggested that ADUs in the Coastal Zone might receive administrative approval (Coastal Exemption) under specific fire rebuild circumstances, citing the Governor's and Mayor's orders.⁸⁹ This requires careful verification with LADBS Planning for the specific property.

- LA County (Unincorporated Areas):
 - Replacing Existing ADUs: The County's Disaster Recovery Ordinance (Chapter 22.256) explicitly allows for the L4L replacement of legally established ADUs destroyed by disaster.²¹
 - Adding New ADUs: The ordinance does not specifically address adding a *new* ADU during an L4L rebuild of the primary home within that chapter. Standard County ADU regulations would likely apply. However, the process might be integrated. Some resources suggest homeowners could rebuild *and* add an ADU, implying potential for concurrent processing.⁸⁴ LA County recovery resources mention ADU opportunities.⁷ The exact interaction with the primary home's L4L status needs confirmation with Regional Planning.
- City of Malibu:
 - State Order Exemptions: Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-4-25 suspended Coastal Act requirements for *new* ADUs built on fire-damaged residential properties, provided they meet certain location criteria (e.g., setbacks from bluffs).⁵⁹ This offers significant potential streamlining for ADUs in Malibu's Coastal Zone.
 - Local Implementation: Malibu's LCP/MMC amendments (potentially Ord. 524/524U) aimed to facilitate rebuilding⁹, likely incorporating these state-level ADU provisions. Administrative approval might be possible for qualifying ADUs.⁸⁹ Previously unpermitted ADUs might be legalized through a standard CDP during the rebuild.⁴⁴ The City's standard ADU size limit is 1,000 sq ft.⁵⁹

The Official Process (Jurisdiction Specific):

Given the complexities, homeowners intending to add a new ADU or JADU during

their 2025 fire rebuild must:

1. Declare Intent Early: Inform their jurisdiction's 2025 fire recovery planning team of their desire to add an ADU/JADU at the very beginning of the process.
2. Clarify the Pathway: Determine the exact permitting procedure. Will it be a single, combined application where the primary home is reviewed under L4L rules (if eligible) and the ADU under separate (potentially expedited or state-mandated) ADU rules? Or will two separate permit applications be required?
3. Confirm L4L Impact: Specifically ask how pursuing an ADU affects the L4L status and benefits (expedited review, waivers) for the primary residence rebuild, especially in LA City due to EEO1 restrictions.
4. Identify Applicable Rules: Understand which set of regulations governs the ADU portion – standard state ADU law, local ADU ordinances, specific 2025 fire recovery orders/amendments, or a combination.
5. Consult Experts: Work with architects and builders experienced not only in fire rebuilds but also specifically in ADU regulations within that jurisdiction and the context of the 2025 recovery framework.

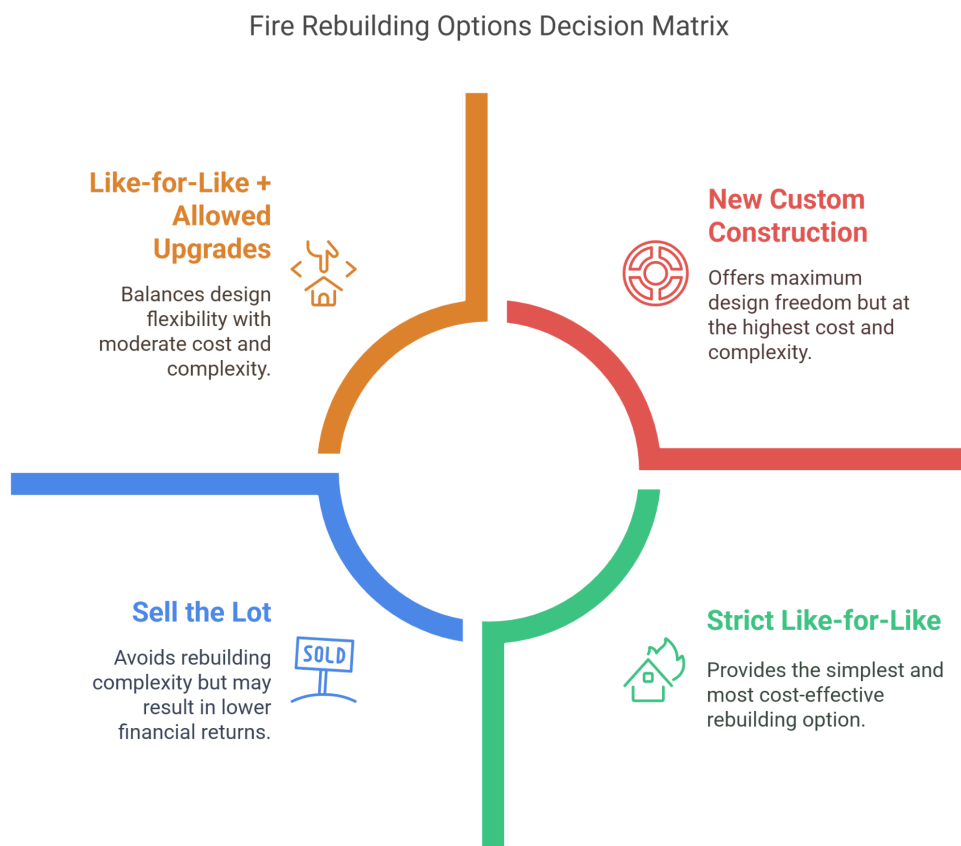
While state policies generally encourage ADU construction to address the housing crisis ⁸⁴, and specific state orders aim to facilitate ADUs post-disaster ⁸⁷, the local L4L pathways established for the 2025 fire recovery prioritize the rapid replacement of *lost* housing units. This creates potential conflicts, particularly where L4L rules restrict density increases, as seen in LA City's EEO1.³⁵ Jurisdictions must balance these competing priorities. The Governor's specific post-fire ADU orders suggest a recognition of this need, potentially creating modified or parallel pathways. Therefore, homeowners cannot assume adding an ADU is a simple add-on to an L4L rebuild. Proactive, clear communication with the governing jurisdiction's recovery team is essential to understand the correct procedure and its implications for the overall project timeline, cost, and regulatory benefits.

7. Comparing Your Options: A Homeowner's Decision Matrix (2025 Fire Context)

Choosing how to move forward after losing your home is a deeply personal and complex decision, involving financial, emotional, and practical considerations. The specific recovery framework established for the 2025

Pacific Palisades/Malibu fire offers several distinct pathways, each with its own set of characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages. This matrix compares the primary options available within the 2025 fire recovery context for properties in the City of Los Angeles, unincorporated Los Angeles County, and the City of Malibu. Remember to verify all details with your specific jurisdiction's 2025 fire recovery team and your professional advisors.

Table: 2025 Fire Rebuilding Options: Decision Matrix (LA City / LA County / Malibu)



This matrix provides a structured comparison to aid homeowners in discussions with their families, builders, and jurisdictional contacts. It highlights that the L4L pathway, while offering significant procedural benefits tailored to the 2025 fire recovery, comes with constraints on design flexibility. Opting for substantial changes necessitates navigating the standard, more complex, and time-consuming new construction process.

The decision involves balancing the desire for speed and simplicity (L4L) against the desire for a significantly different or larger home (New Construction).

8. Your Path Forward: A Practical Checklist and Discussion Guide (2025 Fire Context)

The journey to rebuild your home after the 2025 wildfires is complex, involving many steps beyond just construction. This checklist is designed to guide you through the process, prompting essential discussions and decisions along the way. It is tailored to the specific context of the 2025 fire recovery in LA County, LA City, and Malibu City. Always verify specific requirements and deadlines with your governing jurisdiction's official recovery resources and your professional team.

Phase 1: Immediate Actions & Initial Steps

- [] **File Insurance Claim:** Contact your insurance provider immediately. Understand your policy limits for dwelling coverage (Structure/Coverage A), other structures (Coverage B), personal property (Coverage C), loss of use/Additional Living Expenses (ALE - Coverage D), debris removal, and code upgrade coverage. Document everything.⁷ United Policyholders (uphelp.org) is a helpful resource.¹⁸
- [] **Register with FEMA & SBA:** Apply for federal disaster assistance online at DisasterAssistance.gov or call 1-800-621-3362.⁷ Apply for low-interest disaster loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA) at sba.gov/disaster or call 1-800-659-2955.⁷ Be aware of application deadlines.⁵³
- [] **Visit Recovery Centers:** Go to the designated Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) for your area (e.g., UCLA Research Park West ²⁰) for help with FEMA/SBA applications and access to various support agencies. Also, visit your jurisdiction's specific Rebuilding/One-Stop Permit Center (LA County: Altadena/Calabasas ⁷; LA City: Sawtelle ¹³; Malibu: Stuart Ranch Rd ¹⁷) for rebuild-specific guidance.
- [] **Debris Removal - Right of Entry (ROE):** Decide whether to participate in the government-run debris removal program (Phase 1 HazMat by EPA, Phase 2 Debris by US Army Corps of Engineers - free to homeowner) or opt-out and hire your own approved contractor. Submit the official ROE form by the deadline (e.g., April 15, 2025 for LA County L4L path ⁵⁴, March

31, 2025 cited elsewhere ⁵²) indicating your choice.⁶ Track ROE status if available.¹⁹ Understand the two phases.¹⁶

- [] Debris Removal Permit (If Opting Out): If you opt out of the government program, you must obtain a Fire Debris Removal (FDR) permit from your jurisdiction (e.g., LA County Public Works ⁷) and hire a licensed, approved contractor.¹³ Site clearance certification is required before building permits can be issued.⁷
- [] Secure Property: If hazardous conditions remain (e.g., unstable structures, open pools), ensure the property is adequately fenced or secured.²⁷
- [] Arrange Temporary Housing: Explore options. Check jurisdictional rules regarding temporary use of RVs, trailers, mobile homes, tiny homes, or existing accessory structures on your property during the rebuild.⁶ LA City EEO1 allows temporary units for up to 3 years.⁸ Ensure proper permits and utility connections (water, sewer/septic approval needed ²⁷). Utilize insurance ALE coverage.
- [] Obtain Records: Request free copies of vital records (birth, death, marriage) or property records if needed for insurance or aid applications (LA County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk offers this for fire victims ²²).

Phase 2: Project Scope & Planning

- [] Define Rebuild Goals: Decide on your preferred path: Strict L4L, L4L+10% with upgrades, or New Custom Construction. Use the Decision Matrix in Section 7 to compare.
- [] Confirm Jurisdiction: Double-check your property's governing jurisdiction (LA City, LA County Unincorporated, or Malibu City) using the tools in Section 2.⁷
- [] Schedule Jurisdictional Consultation: Book an appointment with your jurisdiction's designated 2025 Fire Rebuild Team or One-Stop Center.⁷
- [] Verify L4L Eligibility & Rules: During your consultation, confirm if your property qualifies for the L4L pathway under the 2025 fire rules. Get the exact definition of L4L, the specific allowable deviations (+10% rule), any waivers, fee structures, and application deadlines applicable to your property.⁶
- [] Gather Pre-Fire Documentation: Obtain copies of previous building

permits, plans, Certificates of Occupancy, or other records (e.g., Assessor records, photos) that document the legally established size, height, footprint, and use of the destroyed structure(s).⁷ LADBS offers waivers for plan copy fees for fire victims.²⁴ LADBS also offers a "Rebuild Letter" service to confirm rebuild rights.¹⁴

- [] Foundation Assessment: Decide if you want to explore reusing the existing foundation. If so, discuss the process with your jurisdiction. Hire a licensed California engineer (Civil or Structural) or architect to perform the required evaluation, testing, and documentation per jurisdictional guidelines (e.g., LA County DPW form ⁷).⁷ Understand requirements for under-slab utilities and potential soil reports if the foundation is removed.⁷

Phase 3: Design & Layout

- [] Engage Design Professionals: Select an architect and/or designer. Prioritize those with experience in your specific jurisdiction (LA City/County/Malibu), post-fire rebuilding, and current California Building/WUI codes.
- [] Design within L4L Parameters (If Applicable): If pursuing L4L, ensure plans strictly adhere to the verified size, height, footprint, location, and use limitations for your jurisdiction's 2025 fire recovery L4L definition.
- [] Incorporate Mandatory WUI/Chapter 7A: Ensure plans detail compliance with all current WUI code requirements for roofing, vents, siding, windows, decks, etc..⁶⁸
- [] Select Allowed Resilience Upgrades: If desired, incorporate beyond-code fire resilience measures, but *only after confirming with your jurisdiction* that they are permissible within the L4L pathway.¹³
- [] Consider Pre-Approved Plans: Evaluate if any jurisdiction-provided pre-approved plans meet your needs and L4L criteria.⁷ Discuss using these with your jurisdiction.
- [] Address System Upgrades: Plan for necessary upgrades to electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems to meet current Title 24 standards.⁶
- [] Plan for ADU/JADU (If Applicable): If adding an ADU/JADU, finalize design and confirm the specific permitting process (combined/separate, impact on L4L) with your jurisdiction based on 2025 recovery rules and

state orders.³⁵

- [] Address Local Site Specifics: Ensure compliance with any unique local requirements (e.g., Malibu OWTS inspection/permits¹⁰, LA County Public Health reviews for septic/wells⁷, geological hazard reviews⁶).

Phase 4: Permitting

- [] Submit Application Package: Submit the complete application package (application form, architectural/engineering plans, property ownership info, potentially soils/geology reports, OWTS info, etc.) via the required method (LA County: EPIC-LA online preferred⁷; LA City: ePlanLA online preferred³³; Malibu: Development Portal¹⁷; or in-person at designated offices⁶). Minimum initial submittal may only require basic plans and ownership info to start the review.⁷
- [] Track Plan Check & Respond: Monitor the review status through the online portals or by contacting the case planner/reviewer. Respond promptly and completely to any requested corrections or additional information. Utilize the expedited review timelines promised for L4L projects.⁶
- [] Obtain Clearances: Ensure approvals are secured from all required departments/agencies (e.g., Planning, Building & Safety, Fire, Public Health, Public Works, Coastal Commission if applicable).⁷
- [] Pay Permit Fees: Pay all required fees upon notification. Confirm eligibility for any fee waivers (check LA City⁶⁶, LA County⁵⁵, Malibu¹⁰ specific 2025 fire policies).
- [] Receive Permit: Obtain the official building permit and stamped, approved plans.

Phase 5: Construction & Inspection

- [] Hire Licensed Contractor: Select and contract with a California licensed contractor (verify license at [cslb.ca.gov](https://www.cslb.ca.gov)⁵⁰). Prioritize builders with experience in your jurisdiction, post-fire rebuilding, WUI codes, and ideally, luxury residential construction.⁸³ Ensure they carry required insurance (Workers' Comp mandatory⁹⁹).
- [] Begin Construction: Start work *only after* receiving the issued building permit and official confirmation that site debris clearance (Phase 1 & 2) is complete and certified.⁷

- [] Schedule Required Inspections: Request inspections from the Building & Safety department at specific construction milestones (e.g., foundation, framing, insulation, rough electrical/plumbing/mechanical, drywall, final) *before* covering up the work.¹⁴ Use online scheduling tools where available (LA County EPIC-LA²⁸, Malibu Portal¹⁷).
- [] Facilitate Inspections: Ensure the job site is accessible, and the permit, approved plans, and inspection record card (Building Card) are available for the inspector.¹⁴
- [] Address Corrections: Promptly address any items identified by inspectors needing correction.
- [] Final Inspections: Complete all required final inspections from Building & Safety and any other relevant agencies (e.g., Fire, Public Health).

Phase 6: Final Steps

- [] Obtain Certificate of Occupancy (CofO): Once all final inspections are passed and signed off, the jurisdiction will issue the Certificate of Occupancy, legally allowing you to live in the rebuilt home.¹⁴
- [] Remove Temporary Housing: If temporary housing (trailer, RV, etc.) was used on-site, remove it within the timeframe specified by your jurisdiction's permit (e.g., within 30 days of CofO in LA County⁵⁷).⁹³
- [] Finalize Insurance Claim: Submit the CofO and final documentation to your insurance company to receive any remaining held-back depreciation or final payments.
- [] Move In: Welcome home!

Ongoing Considerations:

- Budget & Financing:
 - Compile all funding sources: Insurance (understand Replacement Cost Value vs. Actual Cash Value, depreciation holdbacks, code upgrade coverage, ALE limits), FEMA grants, SBA disaster loans, personal savings, potential construction loans or lines of credit.¹⁰¹
 - Track all expenses meticulously against your budget: Factor in design, engineering (structural, geotechnical), permits (unless waived), materials (potential post-disaster price increases³), labor

(potential shortages ³), mandatory code upgrades (WUI), desired upgrades, ADU costs, landscaping, furnishings, and ongoing temporary living costs.

- Maintain excellent financial records for insurance, lenders, and tax purposes.
- Professional Team:
 - Assemble a qualified team: Architect/Designer, Engineer(s) (Structural required; Geotechnical may be needed ⁶; OWTS Practitioner in Malibu ¹⁰), Licensed General Contractor, potentially other consultants.
 - Verify licenses and insurance for all professionals.⁵⁰ Prioritize experience with 2025 fire rebuilds, WUI construction, and your specific jurisdiction.⁸³ Check references.

This checklist underscores that rebuilding involves much more than just the physical construction. It's a complex process requiring simultaneous management of insurance claims, potential federal aid applications, debris removal logistics, temporary housing needs, intricate permitting across multiple agencies, and careful financial planning, all while navigating the emotional and personal challenges of recovery. A structured approach, early engagement with official resources, and reliance on experienced, licensed professionals familiar with the specific 2025 recovery landscape are essential for a successful outcome. Even with expedited processes, rebuilding is a significant undertaking requiring patience and persistence.

9. Essential Information and Where to Find It

As you navigate the rebuilding process, staying informed and connected with the correct resources is vital. Please keep the following points in mind and refer to the official sources listed below.

Important Caveats:

- Information is Dynamic: Disaster recovery information, including regulations, deadlines, fee structures, contact personnel, and available programs, can change frequently. Information in this guide reflects the best available data as of [Date], but homeowners MUST continuously check the official 2025 fire recovery websites and contact the designated resources for their specific jurisdiction (LA City, LA County, Malibu) to get

the absolute latest updates.¹² Do not rely solely on this document.

- **Guide is Informational Only:** This guide is provided for informational purposes ONLY. It is intended to help homeowners understand the general landscape of the L4L rebuilding pathway in the context of the 2025 fires. It does not constitute legal, financial, engineering, architectural, or insurance advice, nor does it replace official guidance from governing agencies.¹²
- **Consult Officials and Professionals:** Before making any decisions regarding rebuilding, homeowners MUST consult directly with the official representatives at the relevant LA County, LA City, or Malibu City departments (Planning, Building & Safety, Fire, Public Health, etc.) and their designated 2025 recovery personnel. Furthermore, consultation with your own qualified, licensed professionals (architect, engineer, builder, insurance agent, financial advisor) is essential for advice specific to your property, financial situation, and rebuilding goals.¹²

Key Official Resources (Contacts & Websites for 2025 Fire Recovery):

- **Los Angeles County (Unincorporated Areas):**
 - **Primary Hub:** LA County Recovers: recovery.lacounty.gov ⁷
 - **Building & Safety:** pw.lacounty.gov/building-and-safety/ ²⁸
 - **EPIC-LA Permit Portal:** *[Link via recovery.lacounty.gov or pw.lacounty.gov]* ⁷
 - **Rebuild Info/FAQ:** recovery.lacounty.gov/rebuilding/ ⁷
 - **Regional Planning:** planning.lacounty.gov ²⁵
 - **Disaster Recovery Page:** planning.lacounty.gov/disaster-recovery/ ²¹
 - **Contact:** (213) 974-6411 ²⁷ (Check recovery website for specific contacts)
 - **One-Stop Permit Centers (Altadena/Calabasas):** recovery.lacounty.gov/rebuilding/one-stop-permit-centers ⁷
 - **Debris Removal Hotline (DPW):** 844-347-3332 ⁷
 - **Assessor (Tax Relief):** assessor.lacounty.gov/tax-relief/disaster-relief ⁷,
Contact: (213) 974-8658 ¹⁸

- Public Health (Cleanup/Wells/Septic):
publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Wildfire/¹⁸
- City of Los Angeles:
 - Primary Hub: LA Strong: Return and Rebuild: Recovery.LACity.gov⁶
 - Building & Safety (LADBS): ladbs.org³²
 - 2025 Wildfire Info:
ladbs.org/2025-los-angeles-wildfires-information (or similar URL)⁶
 - EEO1/EEO4 Info: *[Link via Wildfire Info page]*⁶
 - Online Building Records: *[Link via ladbs.org]*³²
 - Rebuild Letter Generator:
ladbsservices2.lacity.org/OnlineServices/?service=rbl¹⁴
 - ADU Information: ladbs.org/adu⁸⁶
 - Development Services Center (West LA): 1828 Sawtelle Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90025. Check ladbs.org/locations for hours/services.³⁶
 - One-Stop Permit Center (Sawtelle): 1828 Sawtelle Blvd.¹³ Check Recovery.LACity.gov for specific 2025 fire services/hours.
 - LAFD Brush Clearance: lafd.org/fire-prevention/brush/clearance¹⁰⁹
- City of Malibu:
 - Primary Hub: MalibuRebuilds.org¹⁰
 - Rebuild Center: 23805 Stuart Ranch Road, Suite 240, Malibu, CA 90265.¹⁶ Email: MalibuRecovers@MalibuCity.org.¹⁷ Phone: (310) 456-2489, ext. 400.¹⁷
 - Planning Department: malibucity.org/Planning.⁴¹ Contact: 310-456-2489 ext. 485, mplanning@malibucity.org.⁴¹
 - Building Safety Division: malibucity.org/BuildingSafety.⁴³ Contact: 310-456-2489 ext. 390, MBuilding@malibucity.org.⁴⁰
 - Online Portal: Malibu Development Portal *[Link via malibucity.org]*¹⁷
 - Fee Waiver Info: malibucity.org/FeeWaiver (or link via Rebuild page)⁴²
- State & Federal Resources:
 - CalOES Wildfire Recovery: wildfirerecovery.caloes.ca.gov¹² (Check for

specific LA Fire resources: CA.gov/LAfires ⁴⁵⁾

- CAL FIRE (WUI/Defensible Space): fire.ca.gov, readyforwildfire.org ⁶⁸
- CA Building Standards (Title 24/Chapter 7A): California Building Standards Commission: dgs.ca.gov/BSC ⁷⁴; ICC Public Access: codes.iccsafe.org ⁷⁷
- FEMA Disaster Assistance: DisasterAssistance.gov, 1-800-621-3362 ⁷
- SBA Disaster Loans: sba.gov/disaster, 1-800-659-2955 ⁷
- Insurance Claim Help: United Policyholders: uphelp.org ¹⁸
- Contractor Licensing: Contractors State License Board (CSLB): cslb.ca.gov (Verify license, file complaint) ⁵⁰

The multitude of agencies and resources involved highlights the inherent complexity of post-disaster recovery. Providing homeowners with a clear, curated list of the primary official points of contact—organized by jurisdiction and level of government—is essential. This directory aims to reduce confusion and save valuable time during an incredibly stressful period, guiding homeowners directly to the authoritative sources for the specific information and assistance they need for the 2025 fire recovery.

Conclusion

Rebuilding your home after the 2025 Pacific Palisades/Malibu wildfires is undoubtedly a daunting task, layered with emotional, financial, and logistical challenges. This guide has focused on illuminating the "Like-for-Like" (L4L) rebuild pathway, a specific option made available under the emergency recovery frameworks established by the City of Los Angeles, unincorporated Los Angeles County, and the City of Malibu.

The key takeaway is that while the L4L pathway offers significant potential benefits—namely expedited permitting timelines and waivers of certain complex regulatory reviews like CEQA and the Coastal Act—it comes with strict limitations. The definition of "Like-for-Like," particularly the "+10%" allowance, varies critically between jurisdictions and must be precisely adhered to under the specific 2025 fire recovery rules. Furthermore, all rebuilds, including L4L projects, must comply with current building and fire safety codes, especially the stringent requirements of the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) code (Chapter 7A), representing a mandatory and often costly upgrade. Integrating desired beyond-code resilience features or

adding an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) while retaining L4L status requires careful verification with your specific jurisdiction.

Navigating this process successfully demands proactive engagement with official recovery resources, meticulous planning, and collaboration with experienced, licensed professionals familiar with your jurisdiction's unique 2025 fire recovery procedures. Use the checklists and resources provided here as a starting point, but always verify information directly with the relevant City or County departments. While the path forward is challenging, understanding your options, leveraging available resources, and working with a trusted team can help you restore your home and rebuild your life in the community you cherish.

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