

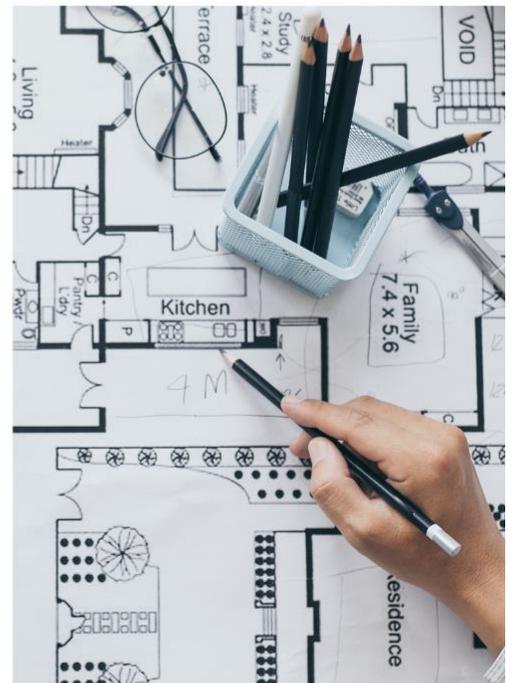


Mountain Fire

REBUILDING TOGETHER FAQS



Ventura County
Assessor



Mountain Fire

REBUILDING TOGETHER FAQS

This informational FAQ guide is designed to assist property owners with the rebuilding process and their professional design team on the steps of rebuilding residences and structures.

This guide contains helpful information from the following County of Ventura agencies and divisions:

Planning Division

Public Works Agency

Building & Safety Division

Ventura County Fire Department

Environmental Health Division

Assessor's Office

FAQs Quick Guide

Property Owners

- Need guidance on rebuilding your home differently or more resilient?
— see **Planning and Fire Department sections**
- Need various records?— see **Planning, Building & Safety and Assessor's sections**
- Need to learn which property tax implications may apply to you? – see **Assessor's section**

Design Professionals

- Need to confirm zoning and property regulations? – see **Planning section**
- Need to confirm the utilities and services for the property? – see **Environmental Health section**
- Does the property have soils, site topography, or a floodplain? – see **Public Works section**
- Are you ready to complete the Building Permit application? – see **Building & Safety section**



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Planning Division

Phone: (805) 654 - 2488

Email: mountainfirerebuild@ventura.org

Mountain Fire Planning Rebuild Team

Our Planning Division has established a Mountain Fire Planning Rebuild Team, consisting of four dedicated planners focused solely on assisting Mountain Fire victims who wish to rebuild. This team is committed to providing personalized one-on-one support to answer your rebuilding questions and guide you through the entire process. Please feel free to call, email, or visit a team member in person at the Hall of Administration for assistance.

Mountain Fire Planning Rebuild Team Contact Information

Rebuild Team Phone Line:

805-654-2888

Rebuild Team Email:

mountainfirerebuild@ventura.org

Rebuild Team Hours:

Monday through Friday - 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Rebuilding Application Process

Consultation

The first step in your recovery project is to consult with the Planning Rebuild Team. This is not required but encouraged to assist the property owner and their professional design consultants in the rebuild process. A member from the Planning Rebuild Team can guide you at any phase of your rebuild development, including connecting you with representatives from [Building and Safety](#), [Environmental Health](#), or other County agencies.

Appointments can be arranged with Planning staff to discuss your rebuilding efforts through an [online appointment](#) or you can call 805-654-2488 or 805-654-2478 to make arrangements. You can set up a remote meeting (through Team or Zoom) or in person.



Planning Division

Phone: (805) 654 - 2488

Email: mountainfirerebuild@ventura.org

Preparing for the Meeting

It is important to establish the amount of development that was lost in the fire to set a baseline for your project. Permitted structures destroyed by the Mountain Fire will be expedited through the [Building Permit](#) process. In addition, certain standards can be waived if the structure is rebuilt to a similar size and function. The Resource Management Agency has a wide variety of records.

Submitting a [Public Records Act Request](#) enables us to efficiently compile these documents and release them for your use. The Resource Management Agency records may not accurately depict all the development on a property. The [Ventura County Assessor's](#) records and information from your insurance should be gathered to help determine the amount and type of legally established development on a property. A [Taxpayer's Authorization for Release of Assessor's Information](#) form can assist you in accessing this information. Once you have this information, please call or email our Planning Rebuild Team to assist you in your project plans.

Courtesy Record of Meeting

The Planning Division can set up a record in our database where we can save the records you have compiled in one place, so they are readily available. Staff can also discuss the development potential of your property and assist you in developing a scope of work for your project.

At the meeting, you can discuss your project with staff to assist you to define your objectives. The development standards that pertain to your property are based on the zoning. You can find your zoning at the Planning Division's [What's My Zoning](#) page. Tables that identify the setback, height, building coverage and related provisions are located in Article 6 of the [Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance](#).

Formal Application

All Mountain Fire projects will be processed through a [Building Permit](#) application to Building & Safety. Your permit will be reviewed by Planning, Environmental Health, and Fire for code compliance. While all permitted structures destroyed by the wildfires will be expedited through the Building Permit process, certain standards will be waived only if the structure is rebuilt to a similar size and function. Learn more about the expedited permit process and approved fee waivers [here](#).



Planning Division

Phone: (805) 654 - 2488

Email: mountainfirerebuild@ventura.org

Temporary Housing After a Disaster

A recreational vehicle (RV) may be used for temporary housing on the same lot by the residents that were displaced by the natural disaster. For residences displaced by the Mountain Fire, the RV may be located on a different lot in the unincorporated area of Ventura County if authorized in writing by the property owner of the lot where the RV is located. The [application for Temporary Housing After a Disaster](#) is available online and the fees for this permit were waived by the Board of Supervisors. More information is available in the [Temporary Housing After a Disaster FAQ](#).

Questions? Please contact the Mountain Fire Planning Rebuild Team!

Rebuild Team Phone Line:

805-654-2888

Rebuild Team Email:

mountainfirerebuild@ventura.org

Rebuild Team Hours:

Monday through Friday - 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM



Building & Safety

Fire Rebuild Permit Information

Phone: (805) 654 - 2771

Email: Building@ventura.org

Debris Removal

Q: Do I need a permit from the County to remove my fire debris?

A: If you “opted-out” of the County’s debris removal program and have instead decided to hire a contractor yourself to remove the debris from your property, then yes, you need to obtain a demolition permit from the County’s Building and Safety office. If you “opted-in” to have the County remove the fire-damage debris from your property, then no, you need not obtain a permit from the County.

Q: What type of contractor can help me with my debris removal?

A: Before the debris can be removed, it must be tested for hazardous substances, including asbestos. If asbestos is present, then the contractor must also hold a C-22 contractor license for the removal of the asbestos. If other hazardous materials are present, then the contractor must have a Hazardous Substance Removal Certification issued by the State, for the removal of these substances. For more information about the required testing for hazardous substances on a site, please visit the [Ventura County Recovers Debris Removal webpage](#).

Q: Can my contractor also demolish any standing remains of the fire-damaged structure?

A: If the debris removal includes the demolition of the foundation and/or the removal of any standing remains of the building, then the contractor must hold a C-21 contractor license for Building Demolition issued by the Contractors State Licensing Board.

Design

Q: Am I going to be able to rebuild my home that was destroyed?

A: Yes, there is a process for acquiring a building permit that will need to be followed. Please visit our [Building & Safety page](#) for more information.

Q: Where can I find the original plans that were used to build my original house?

A: The County of Ventura Building and Safety office may have the original plans archived and available for use and reference for houses and other buildings. These plans are available for viewing by the public. However, State law prohibits the release of copies of these plans without the expressed authorization of the original designer.

If you would like to inquire if these plans have been archived by the County, please submit a Records Search Request to the Building and Safety by clicking [here](#) and filling out our online web form.



Building & Safety

Fire Rebuild Permit Information

Phone: (805) 654 - 2771

Email: Building@ventura.org

Q: Can I use the original plans to rebuild my new house?

A: Yes, however these plans may be out of date with conformance with current Building Codes. Depending on the date when the plans were originally prepared and the Codes that were in effect at the time, it is likely that there will be a need for substantial updates and re-design to reflect current code requirements for a new house built today.

Q: If my plans were originally approved by the County, do I still need to have the plans updated to meet current Building Code standards?

A: Yes, new construction needs to comply with current Code requirements. The State of California updates the State Codes every three years to ensure these codes reflect the latest safety standards and energy conservations standards. New construction projects must meet these latest provisions, even if the construction project is a result of a fire or other natural disaster.

Q: Will any repairs for fire damage need code updates?

A: Yes, all repairs are required to comply with current Code requirements. The State of California updates the State Codes every three years to ensure these codes reflect the latest safety standards and energy conservations standards. Repair work must meet these latest provisions, even if the construction project is a result of a fire or other natural disaster.

Q: Will my new home need to have fire-sprinklers?

A: Yes, the current codes require all new structures to have fire-sprinklers.

Q: Do I need an architect or engineer to design the repairs for my damaged building?

A: That depends. If the structure is simple, you can use the prescriptive construction standards in the most current CA Residential Code. If the structure is more complicated, a licensed design professional will need to design the structural repair.



Building & Safety

Fire Rebuild Permit Information

Phone: (805) 654 - 2771

Email: Building@ventura.org

Q: Can I use the original slab and foundation for the newly constructed house?

A: Usually, the intense heat of a fire will negatively affect the strength of the concrete and the reinforcing steel bars. Any utilities under the slab and the moisture barrier under the slab will also likely be damaged. In most cases a new foundation will be required. However, in some cases, portions of the foundation may be salvaged. This is especially true with deep foundation systems, such as caissons or pile foundations.

Homeowners interested in keeping all or a portion of their foundation system are advised to discuss this issue in detail with the professional civil or structural engineer who will be designing the replacement or repair of their structure. A structural analysis report will need to be submitted together with the structural calculations and structural plans for the rebuild.

For more information about re-using fire damaged foundation systems please see the following handouts:

[Concrete Slabs and Foundations Damaged by Fire Building and Safety Guidelines for Existing Foundations in Fire Damaged Buildings for Engineers and Architects](#)

Q: Can I keep my existing indoor or outdoor in-ground swimming pool?

A: Pools with visible structural cracks follow the same guidelines as outlined in the [Building and Safety Guidelines for Existing Foundations in Fire Damaged Buildings for Engineers and Architects](#) link above to establish whether or not the pool should be repaired or replaced. This may require a building permit and, in most cases, a review of the plans by Building and Safety. You should discuss this issue in detail with a licensed pool contractor who in most cases will be able to complete most minor repairs. Major structural pool damage will require the oversight of a licensed engineer.

For additional guidelines on swimming pools affected by fire, ash, or debris click [here](#).



Building & Safety

Fire Rebuild Permit Information

Phone: (805) 654 - 2771

Email: Building@ventura.org

Q: Who can design my new house? Can I do it myself, or can my contractor do it?

A: Finding the right designer for your new house is an important decision that should be considered carefully. It is recommended that your home be designed by a professional architect who is experienced with designing houses. They can assist and guide you with coordination with others involved in the design of your house such as the engineer, the contractor, and County officials. There are many complexities with today's construction materials, methods, and building code requirements. Unless the property owner is an experienced designer, it is not recommended that the design be prepared by the property owner. Similarly, most contractors are not qualified or authorized to do engineering or architectural design for a project without the proper State license to practice architecture or engineering.

Q: Will I need a soils report for construction of the new house?

A: Yes. Typically, the soil is disturbed during the debris removal and demolition process and is not suitable for sustaining a new foundation system without proper compaction. A soils compaction report is always required where the soil at the proposed building pad was disturbed.

For new homes and ADUs exceeding 1,000 sq. ft. a full soils report is also required. The soils report must address compaction of the soil to ensure it has been properly compacted and suitable for the new foundation. The full soils report must also include foundation design recommendations which will be used by the structural engineer to design the new foundation. For new homes and ADUs less than 1,000 sq. ft. a soils compaction report will be required, and a full soils report may be waived, if appropriate, in accordance with the County's soils waiver requirements (refer to handout [B-49 : Requirements for foundation and soil investigation report](#)).



Building & Safety

Fire Rebuild Permit Information

Phone: (805) 654 - 2771

Email: Building@ventura.org

Permitting

Q: Does the County waive any fees for permits associated with reconstruction of fire-damaged/destroyed buildings?

A: Yes. The County is waiving several of the fees normally collected as part of the Building Permit process in order to assist Mountain Fire victims. Please see the listing of fees that have been exempted from fire reconstruction projects by the Board of Supervisors below. The County follows a fiscally responsible cost recovery policy and therefore cannot waive all of its permitting fees because these fees pay for the permitting and inspection services, which are not funded by tax revenue or other funding source.

[Mountain Fire Approved Fee Waivers](#)

Q: How do I obtain a demolition permit for removing debris and demolishing any standing remains of my fire-damaged building?

A: A demolition permit is required if you “opted-out” of the County’s debris removal program and have instead decided to hire a contractor yourself to remove the debris from your property. See the **Debris Removal section above** for more information. A demo permit application can be submitted online or at the B&S public counter. Online applications are submitted through the Ventura County Citizen Access [portal](#). Permits will be issued only to properly licensed contractors. The demo permit application must include a site map showing the location of the building(s) to be removed. Prior to obtaining the demo permit, the applicant must obtain clearance from the Environmental Health Division (EHD), the Integrated Waste Management Division, and the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (APCD). This permit is issued over the counter, but may take approximately one hour, including the time needed for obtaining the required clearances from EHD, IWMD and APCD.

Q: How do I obtain an electrical permit for a temporary power pole for my property?

A: You need to submit an electrical permit application for a temporary power pole, with a site plan showing the approximate location where the utility company will place it. Permits for temporary power poles are usually issued over the counter and can take about an hour. You may need a clearance from the Environmental Health Division (EHD) depending on the use of the temporary power pole, so it is important to check with EHD prior to submitting an application for a temporary power pole.



Building & Safety

Fire Rebuild Permit Information

Phone: (805) 654 - 2771

Email: Building@ventura.org

Q: Will I need a building permit to repair my damaged building or structure?

A: A building permit is required for all structural, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical repair work.

Q: How do I obtain a building permit for temporary housing on my property?

A: Step 1: Submit a building permit application. A permit can be obtained at the public counter or online through [Citizen's Access](#).

Step 2: Obtain agency clearances from the following:

- a. **Environmental Health Division (EHD)**, to ensure that the debris has been properly removed.
- b. **Planning Division**, to ensure the proposed location is in compliance applicable ordinances. The application and associated FAQ sheet for “Temporary Housing Prior to Reconstruction” can be found [here](#).
- c. **Public Works Agency (PWA)**, to ensure the proposed temporary housing is not in a flood zone.
- d. **Fire Prevention**, to ensure proper fire protection measures are followed.

Step 3: Go through the Building Plan Check Process (if applicable). If you are proposing a manufactured home, or a conventionally framed home as a temporary unit, building plan check will be required. You will need to submit complete set of drawings, structural calculations, and other relevant construction documents. For a full listing of the individual drawings and pertinent documents that constitute a “complete set” of drawings, refer to our [B01: Construction Plan Requirements Residential](#).

OR

If you are proposing an RV as a temporary housing unit, no building plan check will be required and you'll simply need to submit obtain permits for the connection of any utilities to the RV.



Building & Safety

Fire Rebuild Permit Information

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Email: Building@ventura.org

In all cases a site plan is required as part of a complete application.

The site plan should include the following:

- a. Location of the proposed temporary housing unit
- b. Location of the destroyed or damaged buildings in relation to the proposed temporary housing.
- c. Point of connection to public utilities including water, electricity, and sewer/or septic system.
- d. Any other pertinent information if applicable

Note: If no building plan review is required, the permit can be issued over the counter, but may take approximately an hour, including the time needed for B&S review and for obtaining the required clearances from Planning and EHD. If building plan review is required, we will expedite the plan review process and review the project within 2-3 weeks.

Q: Will I need a building permit to re-build my destroyed building or structure?

A: Yes, a building permit is required to re-build a structure.

Q: What is needed for obtaining a building permit to rebuild my house?

A: The Building Permit application must be accompanied by a complete set of construction drawings that have been prepared by a design professional (architect or qualified building designer) and engineer. For a full listing of the individual drawings and pertinent documents that constitute a “complete set” of drawings, refer to our [B01 : Construction Plan Requirements Residential](#) and [B02 : Construction Plan Requirements Non-Residential](#) handouts. The project must be approved by the Planning Division, EHD, IWMD, and the County Fire Department prior to receiving a building permit from B&S.

Depending on the location of your parcel, other departments may also need to review your project and “clear it” for a building permit. A customized list of agency clearances will be provided following the receipt of your building permit application. Customers can use this list to contact agencies directly to solicit their review and approval of their projects. The County is currently developing an electronic process to expedite these reviews by other agencies and expects to have this process implemented in 2025. Your assigned Building and Safety Permit Technician will be your guide throughout the building permit process.

Q: What are the permit fees to re-build my home or other structure?

A: The permit fees are dependent on the size of the structure, the scope of work and the valuation of the construction. You can view our current fee schedule [here](#).



Building & Safety

Fire Rebuild Permit Information

Phone: (805) 654 - 2771

Email: Building@ventura.org

Q: Will I need to pay new development fees to rebuild my structure?

A: Development fees will be assessed by several different Divisions and Agencies at the County. Whether development fees are waived will be determined by those individual Divisions and Agencies.

Q: How long does it take to receive a building permit to commence construction?

A: There are many different division clearances that are required for a building permit, and you should check with those divisions for their turnaround times. At Building and Safety, the plan review time will be 2-3 weeks for Mountain Fire rebuilds. Corrections will likely be issued and then once the plans are resubmitted, the recheck should be finished in 2-3 weeks.

Q: Can I re-build an ADU and new home under the same building permit?

A: No, each freestanding structure will be required to have its own permit. However, multiple structures on the same parcel may share a set of plans.

Construction and Inspection

Q: Besides B&S, does any other agency need to inspect my project during construction?

A: During the construction phase, Building and Safety inspectors will perform periodic inspections of the project to ensure that the work is being done in accordance with accepted standards and regulations. But not all inspections of the project are inspected by the Building Inspector. Some aspects of the project are inspected by inspectors from other departments or agencies.

For example, the installation of fire sprinklers in a house (which are now required by State law) are verified by a Fire Department inspector; the installation and location of on-site sewer treatment systems (septic systems) are verified by an inspector from the Environmental Health Division; and verification of any grading-related work, such as sub-drains and required landscaping on slopes is inspected by a grading inspector from the Public Works Agency. The Building and Safety inspector will work together with the contractor to ensure that the proper inspections are being coordinated and approved through the construction phase.

Q: Are there additional inspection fees during construction?

A: No. All applicable fees for all inspections, documentation, and related services rendered by the County during the construction phase are covered by the permit fees paid prior to the issuance of the building permit.



Building & Safety

Fire Rebuild Permit Information

Phone: (805) 654 - 2771

Email: Building@ventura.org

Q: If a change is made to the project during construction, what do I do?

A: It is common to see projects change slightly during the construction phase, for several reasons. If your project is modified after construction has commenced, the building inspector may ask the contractor to document the changes by providing a revised detail or plan sheet that reflects changed condition in the field. Depending on the extent of change, these details or revised sheets may need to be reviewed and approved by the architect, the engineer and/or the County's Building and Safety office for review and approval of the changes.

An application for a revision to the approved set of plans should be submitted to Building and Safety as soon as possible following a decision to vary from the approved construction plans so that any delays in the construction and inspection process are minimized. Depending on the nature and scope of the modification, this process can take up to several days for minor changes, or several weeks for more complex, and extensive changes.

Q: When can I move into my new house?

A: When the project is completed with all code-required construction components and all final clearances have been obtained, the Building Inspector will approve the new house for occupancy. This approval is granted when the final inspection has been completed and approved, and a Certificate of Occupancy is granted to document that the building is ready for occupation.

Generally, this means the building is complete and all plumbing, mechanical, and electrical systems and fixtures have been installed, inspected, and approved, and the house has been deemed safe to occupy. Many interior cosmetic finishes, such as paint, flooring, crown molding, and similar finish materials are not required by code and need not be completed or installed prior to final approval for occupancy of the residence.

Questions? Please contact the Building & Safety Division!

Phone:

805-654-2771

Email:

building@ventura.org

Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday - 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM | Thursdays - 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM



Environmental Health Division

Phone: (805) 654 - 2813

Email: EHDMountainFire@ventura.org

Septic Systems

Q: My house was destroyed in a fire, and I plan to rebuild a home that has additional bedrooms or plumbing fixture units. Can I still use my existing septic system?

A: If the existing septic system is functioning and the owner wants to build a structure with an increased number of plumbing fixture units or bedroom equivalents, a full certification by the Ventura County Environmental Health Division (Division) will be required.

A Full Certification consists of:

- Soils Report (you may use an existing soils report for property if available)
- Pumpers Report
 - Condition of existing septic system
 - Location and type of dispersal system

Q: My house was destroyed in a fire, and I plan to rebuild the *same house*. Can I still use my existing septic system?

A: In general, there are two categories you may fit into:

Scenario 1: No changes to original dwelling (“like-for-like” no additional bedrooms, or plumbing fixtures), AND there are records and/or permits available for the existing septic system. Existing septic system will be evaluated by Division staff for conformance to code (at time septic system was installed) and operation. Provide Septic Pumper’s Report to verify septic system condition/functionality.

Scenario 2: No changes to original dwelling (“like-for-like” no additional bedrooms, or plumbing fixtures), AND there are no records and/or permits available for the existing septic system. If there are no records or permits for your existing septic system, Division staff will need more information to properly evaluate and approve the existing system.



Environmental Health Division

Phone: (805) 654 - 2813

Email: EHDMountainFire@ventura.org

Applicant will need to provide:

1. Soils Report (you may use an existing soils report for property if available)
2. Septic Pumper's Report
 - a. Condition of Existing septic system
 - b. Location and type of Dispersal System
3. Record of buildings being replaced and connecting to existing septic system (Building and Safety, Assessors, etc.).

If the existing septic system does not meet minimum code standards, a new or upgraded septic system may be required. Requests for variances will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Q: What is a “request for variance”?

A: If your existing septic system does not meet minimum standards, but is in good repair, functioning properly, and not creating or at risk to create a nuisance or threat to public health or the environment, the Division may be able to authorize your existing system as an existing, legal, non-conforming septic system. Please note: Cesspools are strictly prohibited. If you have a cesspool, you will be required to install a new code-conforming septic system.

Q: What are some of the reasons why the Division will not be able to certify my existing septic system?

- A:** Some examples of non-conforming septic system include:
- a. Multiple dwelling units connected to a single septic tank.
 - b. Cesspools (no variances will be given to cesspools).
 - c. The existing septic system does not meet setback requirements to water wells, waterbodies (streams, lakes), groundwater, etc.
 - d. Existing septic system is undersized for the proposed structures.



Environmental Health Division

Phone: (805) 654 - 2813

Email: EHDMountainFire@ventura.org

Q: Why should I have to upgrade or replace my existing septic system?

A: Domestic wastewater may contain harmful bacteria and viruses, nitrates, and household chemicals. Older septic systems may pose a potential threat to public health or the environment. Septic systems can deteriorate over time and typically last 20-30 years before requiring repair. Septic systems treat wastewater by removing contaminants through physical, biological, and in some cases chemical means. A septic system that does not meet setback to waterbodies, is undersized, improperly installed, failing, or poorly maintained has the potential to create a public nuisance and/or contaminate groundwater. When certifying or approving your septic system, the Division needs to make sure it is not creating or at risk to create a nuisance or threat to public health, safety, or the environment. Division staff will evaluate each system on a case-by-case basis, and work with property owners to find a “best-fit” solution for the disposal of domestic wastewater which is reasonable as well as protective of human health and the environment.

Q: My septic system was damaged in the fire or removed during the debris removal process. What are my options?

A: If your existing septic system, or any components, are damaged, a septic system repair permit is required before abandoning the old system and installing a replacement system. The new septic system will need to conform to current building code standards.

Questions? Please contact the Environmental Health Division!

Phone: (805) 654-2813

Email: EHDMountainFire@ventura.org

Hours: Monday through Friday – 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems website:

<https://rma.venturacounty.gov/divisions/environmental-health/onsite-wastewater-treatment-system-construction-and-repair/>

Information on Septic Pumper Truck Companies:

<https://rma.venturacounty.gov/septic-tank-pumper-trucks/>

Historical records of your septic system may be available at:

<https://rma.venturacounty.gov/divisions/environmental-health/individual-sewage-disposal-systems-record-search/>



Environmental Health Division

Phone: (805) 654 - 2813

Email: EHDMountainFire@ventura.org

Onsite Domestic Water Wells

Q: My house was destroyed in the wildfire, and I plan to rebuild. Can I use an existing onsite water well for domestic water service?

A: Yes. Property owners proposing to utilize an onsite water well as their source of domestic water will need to obtain approval from the Ventura County Environmental Health Division (Division).

Q: What do you mean by “domestic water”?

A: Domestic water refers to water used for drinking, sanitation, and/or culinary purposes. The water you drink, wash your hands with, shower with, and cook with is domestic water.

Q: I already certified my water many years ago. Will I need to certify my water well again to rebuild?

A: Yes. The Division only certifies water quality for a private domestic water well for a period of two years. After that time an updated Certification of Water Quality approval for the well is required to obtain a building permit from County Building and Safety. These requirements include: the application, water quality analytical results listed on page 2 of the application, a site plan, and a pump and recovery test to verify water yield. If the well is shared, a copy of the recorded shared water well agreement must be submitted as well.

Q: Are there any special provisions or variances for the Certification of Water Quality for wildfire-affected properties?

A: Yes. There are two special considerations for wildfire-affected properties: If there are existing water quality analytical results on file with the Division, you do not need to submit new analytical results for all contaminants; only current, post-wildfire nitrate and bacteriological results are required since water wells are subject to bacterial and nitrate contamination from septic systems, animal waste, and storm run-off. Please contact the Groundwater Resources Section of the Public Works Agency for more information regarding the 24-hour pump and recovery test. Groundwater Resources can be reached at 805-654-2907.

Q: My water well was damaged during the fire or the debris removal process. What do I do?

A: Depending on the type of damage, you may need to obtain a repair permit from County Building and Safety and/or Watershed Protection District, Groundwater Resources. The well will need to be repaired and functioning properly prior to Division approval as the domestic water supply for your rebuild.

A banner image showing a landscape with green hills and a field of crops. The text "Environmental Health Division" is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters.

Environmental Health Division

Phone: (805) 654 - 2813

Email: EHDMountainFire@ventura.org

Questions? Please contact the Environmental Health Division!

Phone: (805) 654-2813

Drinking Water Program website: <https://vcrma.org/drinking-water>

A banner image showing a scenic view of a valley with hills and a winding road. The text "Public Works Agency" and "Land Development Services Division" is overlaid in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.

Public Works Agency

Land Development Services Division

Phone: (805) 654 - 3027

Email: PWA_LDServices@ventura.org

Soils Reports

Unless the structure rebuild project qualifies for a Building and Safety Division soils report waiver, every rebuild will require a soils report prepared by a licensed soils engineer. The purpose of the soils report is to provide geotechnical recommendations for replacement of the structure, foundation repair work, and to address potential geological hazards (if applicable). Reports are submitted to Land Development Services for review and approval.

Grading Permits

The earthwork requirements necessary for rebuild projects are determined by the recommendations presented in the project soils report. Excavation and/or fill volumes exceeding 50 cubic yards of soil and used to support a structure requires a grading permit from Land Development Services in accordance with the Ventura County Grading Ordinance. The most common type of grading permit associated with fire rebuilds is a Remove and Recompact grading permit.

Floodplain Development Permits

Any grading, construction activities, and/or storage of materials within a mapped FEMA 100-year floodplain requires a Floodplain Development Permit in accordance with the Ventura County Floodplain Management Ordinance. Floodplain Development Permit applications are submitted to Land Development Services for review and approval.

Water Will-Serve Letters

New residential developments require a water will-serve letter from water purveyors that have an accepted Water Availability Letter on file with Public Works Agency. Residential fire rebuilds may not require a water will-serve letter for building permit issuance. The determination of water will-serve letter applicability for rebuilds will be made on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with Ventura County Fire Prevention District review. Water will-serve letters are submitted to Land Development Services for approval.

A banner image showing a scenic view of a valley with green hills and a winding road. The text "Public Works Agency" and "Land Development Services Division" is overlaid in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.

Public Works Agency

Land Development Services Division

Phone: (805) 654 - 3027

Email: PWA_LDServices@ventura.org

Questions? Please contact the Public Works Agency!

Phone: (805) 654 – 3027

Email: PWA_LDServices@ventura.org

Hours: Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Land Development Services website: <https://www.vcpublicworks.org/es/lds/>

Ventura County Public Works Agency hosts an online geographic information system (GIS) website that can be helpful in planning your rebuild project.

The application includes dozens of pertinent layers such as:

- Accessor parcel boundaries and numbers
- Aerial imagery overlays
- Mapped potential geological hazard areas
- Recent fire perimeters
- Lidar topography
- County maintained facilities
- Floodplain hazard areas and boundaries

Access the Online GIS website here: <https://maps.ventura.org/pwagisviewer/>



Ventura County Fire Department

Primary: Nick Resendes, Fire Inspector

Phone: (805) 914 - 4229

Email: Nick.Resendes@ventura.org

Secondary: Alan Dearden, Senior Fire Inspector

Phone: (805) 914 - 4360

Email: Alan.Dearden@ventura.org

Corina Cagley, Fire Prevention Officer (Fire Engineering & Development Division Manager)

Phone: (805) 947- 8518

Email: Corina.Cagley@ventura.org

Mountain Fire Recovery - Rebuilding Assistance Information

The Fire Department is available with over-the-counter service to provide consultation on processes and rebuild policies. Contacts for Mountain Fire rebuilds are provided above. Rebuild submittals will be expedited (with applicable fee waived). Also, fuel modification plan review fees will be waived.

Policy #204 Emergency Event/Act-of Nature Rebuild Policy

Ventura County Fire Department [Policy #204](#) Emergency Event/Act-of Nature Rebuild Policy, includes code leniencies applicable to rebuilds.

This includes topics such as:

- Required fire apparatus access and water supplies
- Allowable rebuild sizes and/or limitations
- Occupancy classifications (use) for structures
- Policy timing and property ownership

Learn more about Policy #204 here:

<https://s45897.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/204-Rebuild-Policy.pdf>

Dead and burnt vegetation removal

Contact your insurance carrier prior to removal to verify approval. All dead vegetation within 100-feet of a building must be removed when located in a fire hazard severity zone; this may be included in insurance coverage for debris removal (check with your insurance carrier).

Replacement Landscape

Newer regulations apply to replacement landscape. Plans are required to be submitted to the fire department for review and approval prior to installation. [Guideline 416](#) and [Standard 515](#) plans may also be required to be reviewed by the City or County Planning / Building & Safety departments.



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Mulch and wood chips

Combustible mulch and wood chips are prohibited within 5 feet of a building when located in a fire zone. See [Standard 517](#) for more information.

Replacement Fences

Newer regulations apply to replacement fencing within 5 feet of a home. See [Guideline 421](#) for more information.

Submission of Rebuild Plans

Some initial information related to submitting plans for new construction is provided below for Single Family Dwelling and Accessory Structures. Please provide the following documents within a single email:

1. [Form 610 – Fire Permit Application](#) is required for any new structure or addition to existing structures.
2. [Form 625 – Fire Flow Verification Application](#) is required for verifying adequate fire flow to the property.
3. A copy of a site plan reflecting all fire hydrants within 500 feet of the parcel and floor plans of the structure(s). (Max file size not to exceed 250 MB)

Additional site plan elements:

- All fire apparatus access driveway/roads (existing/proposed)
- Indicate width of the driveway/roads
- Indicate the slope/cross-slope of all portions of the driveway/roads
- Contour lines
- Existing and proposed structures

Email the required documents to: fireprevention@ventura.org



Ventura County Fire Department

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Email: Alan.Dearden@ventura.org

Corina Cagley, Fire Prevention Officer (Fire Engineering & Development Division Manager)

Phone: (805) 947- 8518

Email: Corina.Cagley@ventura.org

Questions? Contact the Ventura County Fire Department!

Hours: Monday through Friday - 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Office Location: Ventura County Fire Department Headquarters

2400 Conejo Spectrum St., Thousand Oaks, 91320

Website: vcfd.org

Primary Fire Rebuild Contact

Nick Resendes, Fire Inspector

Phone: (805) 914 – 4229 | **Email:** Nick.Resendes@ventura.org

Secondary Fire Rebuild Contacts

Alan Dearden, Senior Fire Inspector

Phone: (805) 914 - 4360 | **Email:** Alan.Dearden@ventura.org

Corina Cagley, Fire Prevention Officer (Fire Engineering & Development Division Manager)

Phone: (805) 947- 8518 | **Email:** Corina.Cagley@ventura.org

Community Wildfire Preparedness Division

Phone: (805) 389-9759 | Email: fhrp@ventura.org



Assessor's Office

Phone: (805) 654 - 2181

Email: Assessor.Info@ventura.org

Disaster Relief

If your property has been damaged or destroyed because of a calamity or disaster, such as a fire, earthquake, or flood, you may qualify for property tax relief under California law (R&TC section 170). To qualify, damage to the taxable property must be at least \$10,000 of current market value of assessed property. Taxable property includes real property, business equipment and fixtures, orchards or other agricultural groves, aircraft, boats, and manufactured homes that are subject to local property taxation by the County Assessor. Upon a timely filed Application for Reassessment Property Damaged by Misfortune or Calamity (AO-V 365), the Assessor can provide relief by reassessing the property downward to reflect its damaged condition as of the date of the disaster. The Assessor will notify you of the proposed reassessed taxable value. The property taxes due will be adjusted on a prorated basis by the Auditor-Controller, considering the amount of time in the fiscal year that your property was undamaged, and if applicable, amount of taxes paid will be refunded. The property's assessment will be temporarily reduced from the month the disaster occurred until the property is rebuilt or repaired and will be reviewed annually for progress.

Example 1: A home is destroyed in a wildfire on November 6, 2024. Its adjusted base year value at the time of the disaster is \$553,456 (land: \$102,734, improvements: \$450,722). The new assessment after the disaster is \$77,050 (land: \$77,050, improvements: \$0) for the 2024 Assessment Roll. This new assessment is effective as of November 6, 2024, and applies for the remainder of the fiscal tax year which is until June 30, 2025. Subsequently, the property is reviewed annually on the subsequent lien dates (January 1) until fully rebuilt or sold.

Assessor's Office

Phone: (805) 654 - 2181

Email: Assessor.Info@ventura.org

Options: Rebuilding or Base Year Transfer Quick Reference Chart

The chart below provides a summary of all available Disaster Relief options for either rebuilding your property or transferring your base year value to a replacement property.

	Type of Relief	Type of Disaster	Timing	Revenue and Taxation Code	Market Value Test	Page
REBUILDING	Rebuilding – New Construction Exclusion – Like/Similar Based	Any disaster or calamity	None Specified	70 , 170	None	2
	Rebuilding – New Construction Exclusion – Value Based	Governor-Proclaimed	5 Years from the disaster date	70.5 , 170	120%*	2
BASE YEAR TRANSFER	Base Year Transfer – Same County Transfer	Governor-Proclaimed	5 Years from the disaster date	69 (Proposition 50)	120%*	4
	Base Year Transfer – Different County Transfer	Governor-Proclaimed	3 Years from the disaster date	69.3 (Proposition 171)	Equal or Lesser	5
	Base Year Transfer – All County Transfer	Governor-Proclaimed	2 Years from the sale date of the original (damaged) property	69.6 (Proposition 19)	Equal or Lesser*	6

*Partial relief is available if the market value of the rebuilt property or the property acquired exceeds the value test.



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Rebuilding Your Damaged or Destroyed Property

After your property is rebuilt, you will retain your previous factored base year value on the property if it is rebuilt in a like or similar matter (substantially equivalent) as determined by the Assessor, regardless of the cost of construction. The County Assessor will reinstate a portion of the factored base year value if construction is in progress as of each January 1 lien date until the construction is complete. Once complete the Assessor will issue a Supplemental Assessment to fully restore the factored base year value.

The chart below summarizes the two (2) available Disaster Relief provisions for rebuilding your property.

Property Type	Type of Disaster	Time to Rebuild	Market Value Test	Revenue & Taxation Code Section
Real Property	Any disaster or calamity	None specified	None, must be substantially equivalent.	70 , 170
Real Property	Governor-Proclaimed	5 Years from the disaster date	120%*	70.5, 170

*Partial relief is available if the market value of the rebuilt property exceeds the value test.

****Learn more about the relief options described above on the next three pages.****



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Rebuild from any Disaster or Calamity (including Governor-proclaimed disaster)

Form: No Form Required

Once you have received property tax relief under California law (R&TC section 170) as described above, if you timely rebuild your damaged or destroyed real property on the same site such that it is in a like or similar matter (substantially equivalent) to the property prior to the damage or destruction, its factored base year value will be reinstated, as provided for in California law [R&TC section 170(h)]. You will not have to pay an increase of property taxes based on the market value or cost of your rebuilt property. However, any rebuilt property that exceeds the definition of substantially equivalent, as determined by the Assessor is considered new construction where that portion will be assessed at market value and added to the existing factored base year value pursuant to California law [R&TC section 70(c)].

Example 2: A 2,200-square-foot home with a factored base year value of \$300,000 was completely destroyed by a fire. The owner rebuilds the home to the same size and function (2,200 square feet) without making any significant changes, such as adding a bathroom or fireplace. Since the rebuilt home is substantially equivalent to the destroyed home, the factored base year value of \$300,000 is fully reinstated, regardless of the cost of construction.

Example 3: A 2,200-square-foot home with a factored base year value of \$300,000 was completely destroyed by a fire. The owner rebuilds the home but increases the size to 3,000 square feet. The additional 800 square feet will be assessed as new construction because it exceeds the destroyed home substantially. The new construction has a market value of \$200,000.

The rebuilt home will have two separate base year value components:

- **\$300,000 for the original 2,200 square feet, and**
- **\$200,000 for the additional 800 square feet.**



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Rebuild from Governor-proclaimed disaster (Applicable when the Rebuild is not Substantially Equivalent as Determined by the Assessor)

Form: No form required

Pursuant to California law (R&TC section 70.5), real property that is rebuilt on the same site after being substantially damaged or destroyed by a Governor-proclaimed disaster may have its factored base year value reinstated if the reconstructed property's market value is comparable to the damaged property in size, utility, and function.

“Substantially damaged or destroyed” means that the improvement must sustain physical damage amounting to more than 50 percent of the improvement's (structure) full cash value immediately prior to the disaster as determined by the Assessor. “Comparable in size and utility” means that the reconstructed property may not exceed 120 percent of the market value of the property prior to its damage or destruction. If it exceeds 120 percent of the market value, the excess market value is added to the adjusted base year value, resulting in a new base year value. The property must be rebuilt within five years of the disaster.

Example 4: A fire destroyed a 2,200-square-foot single-family residence in November 2024. The home was the principal residence of the owners. The property had a base year value of \$300,000 and the structure had a fair market value of \$450,000 prior to the damage.

The residence was rebuilt within five years, but the new home is 3,000 square feet and the structure has a fair market value of \$500,000. There is no excess value to be added. Since the new home's value does not exceed 120% of the pre-damage fair market value of the structure, the property retains the original \$300,000 factored base year value.

- $\$450,000 \times 1.20 = \$540,000$
- $\$500,000 - \$540,000 = \$0$



Assessor's Office

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Example 5: A fire destroyed a 2,200-square-foot single-family residence in November 2024. The home was the principal residence of the owners. The property had a base year value of \$300,000 and the structure had a fair market value of \$350,000 prior to the damage.

The residence was rebuilt within five years, but the new home is 3,000 square feet and the structure has a fair market value of \$500,000. Since the new fair market value exceeds 120% of the pre-damage value, excess value must be added. The \$80,000 in excess value will be added to the factored base year value of \$300,000, adjusted to the year in which the home was rebuilt.

- $\$350,000 \times 1.20 = \$420,000$
- $\$500,000 - \$420,000 = \$80,000$

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Base Year Transfer to Replacement Property

If your property was damaged or destroyed by a Governor proclaimed disaster, you can transfer your property's tax base (its assessed value immediately prior to the damage) to another property within the same county or another county in California. This prevents the replacement property from being reassessed at market value due to a change in ownership (the reassessment due to a change in ownership can significantly increase the property taxes of those paid on the damaged or destroyed property).

The chart below provides a summary about the disaster relief available if you decided to transfer your base year to a replacement property.

Property Type	Type of Disaster	Time Period	Must Sell Damage Property	Market Value Test	Transfer Base Year Value to Same or Different County	Revenue & Taxation Code Section (Proposition)
All Real Property Types and Manufactured Homes	Governor-Proclaimed	5 Years from the disaster date	No	120%*	Same County	69 (Proposition 50)
Principal Place of Residence	Governor-Proclaimed	3 Years from the disaster date	No	Equal or Lesser	Different County	69.3 (Proposition 171)
Principal Place of Residence	Governor-Proclaimed	2 Years from the sale date of the original (damaged) property	Yes	100%*	Any County	69.6 (Proposition 19)

****Learn more about the three transfer types described above in the next five pages.****



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Same County Base Year Transfer [Revenue & Taxation Code 69(Proposition 50)]

Form: BOE-65-P

Operative as of July 1, 1985, Section 2(e) and (f) of Article XIII A of the California Constitution (Proposition 50), implemented by R&TC section 69, allows an owner whose real property or manufactured home subject to local property taxation by the County Assessor has been substantially damaged or destroyed in a Governor-proclaimed disaster to transfer the base year value of the damaged property to a comparable replacement property acquired or newly constructed in the same county within five years of the disaster.

Physical damage must amount to more than 50 percent of the property's market value immediately before the disaster. This base year value transfer is available for any type of real property, not just your home, and the damaged and replacement property must be the same property type and of comparable size, utility, and function. The damaged property does not need to be sold for this base year value transfer. While the damaged property does not need to be sold to transfer its base year value under California law (R&TC section 69), you are not allowed to also receive the new construction exclusion under California law (R&TC section 70(c), 70.5, or 170) if you rebuild the damaged or destroyed property.

Example 6: A home is destroyed in a wildfire. Its adjusted base year value at the time of the disaster is \$553,456 (land: \$102,734, improvements: \$450,722). The full cash value of the home just prior to the disaster was \$800,000. The full cash value of the land after the disaster is \$250,000.

The owner purchased a replacement home for \$820,000 within six months after the disaster. A claim was filed, and the adjusted base year value of \$553,456 was transferred to the replacement property because the replacement property falls within 120% of the pre-damage value ($\$800,000 \times 1.20 = \$960,000$).

Even though the base year value was transferred, the assessed value of the destroyed property (land) will reflect the lower of the retained adjusted base year value (\$102,734) or current market value (\$250,000).

If the destroyed property is rebuilt, a new base year value will be established for any new construction completed.



Assessor's Office

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Different County Base Year Transfer [Revenue & Taxation Code

69.3(Proposition 171)]

Form: BOE-65-PT

Operative as of October 20, 1991, Section 2 of Article XIII A of the California Constitution (Proposition 171), implemented by R&TC section 69.3, allows a homeowner whose principal place of residence is substantially damaged or destroyed in a Governor-proclaimed disaster to transfer the property's factored base year value to a replacement principal residence acquired or newly constructed in another county if that county has adopted an ordinance accepting such base year value transfers (County of Ventura has such ordinance).

Substantially damaged or destroyed means that physical damage to the land or the improvements must amount to more than 50 percent of their full cash value immediately prior to the disaster.

The replacement property must be acquired or newly constructed within three years of the date of damage or destruction. The damaged property does not need to be sold, but will be reassessed at its market value upon transferring its base year value to another county. The damaged property's land value will retain its base year value notwithstanding that transfer; however, if you rebuild the damaged or destroyed property improvement, you cannot also receive the new construction exclusion reassessment under California law (R&TC section 70(c), 70.5, or 170).

The market value of the replacement property must be of "equal or lesser value" than the market value of the damaged property just prior to its damage. This means the replacement property's fair market value may not exceed a specified percentage of the original property's fair market value, depending upon when the replacement property is acquired or newly constructed—105 percent if within the first year, 110 percent if within the second year, and 115 percent if within the third year.



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Example 7: A home is destroyed in a wildfire. Its adjusted base year value at the time of the disaster is \$553,456 (land: \$102,734, improvements: \$450,722). The full cash value of the home just prior to the disaster was \$800,000. The full cash value of the land after the disaster is \$250,000. The owner purchased a replacement home for \$820,000 within six months after the disaster. A claim was filed, and the adjusted base year value of \$553,456 was transferred to the replacement property because the replacement property falls within 105% of the pre-damage value ($\$800,000 \times 1.05 = \$840,000$).

Even though the base year value was transferred, the assessed value of the destroyed property (land) will reflect the lower of the retained adjusted base year value (\$102,734) or current market value (\$250,000). If the destroyed property is rebuilt, a new base year value will be established for any new construction completed.



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Any County Base Year Transfer [Revenue & Taxation Code 69.6 (Proposition 19)]

Form: BOE-19-V

Operative as of April 1, 2021, Section 2.1(b) of Article XIII A of the California Constitution (Proposition 19), implemented by R&TC section 69.6, allows a homeowner whose primary residence was substantially damaged or destroyed by wildfire or Governor-proclaimed natural disaster to transfer the base year value to a replacement principal residence located in any California county. Physical damage must amount to more than 50 percent of the land's or improvement's market value immediately before the disaster. The original property must be sold in its damaged state, and replacement property must be purchased or newly constructed within two years of the sale of the original property.

You can purchase or newly construct a replacement property of any value. However, any value in excess of the equal or lesser value test of the original property's market value is added to the transferred factored base year value. If the replacement property is purchased or newly constructed before selling the original property, then any market value of the replacement property over 100 percent of the original property's market value will be added to the transferred factored base year value.

If the original property is sold within the first year of purchasing or newly constructing the replacement, any market value of the replacement over 105 percent of the original is added, and if sold within the second year, any market value over 110 percent of the original is added to the transferred factored base year value.

If a replacement property's market value was less than the original property's market value when the base year value transfer was originally granted, any new construction to the replacement property within two years of selling the original property may be excluded from new construction assessment up to the threshold of the equal or lesser value test for the original property. Any additional new construction amount in excess of the threshold will be assessed at market value and added to the taxable value.



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Example 8: A home is destroyed in a wildfire. Its adjusted base year value at the time of the disaster is \$553,456 (land: \$102,734, improvements: \$450,722). The full cash value of the home just prior to the disaster was \$800,000. The destroyed property was sold three months after the disaster, and a replacement property was purchased for \$820,000. A claim was filed, and the adjusted base year value of \$553,456 was transferred to the replacement property because the replacement property falls within 105% of the pre-damage value ($\$800,000 \times 1.05 = \$840,000$). The destroyed property will be reassessed due to a change in ownership to the new owner.

List of Governor-Proclaimed Disasters for Property Tax Purposes (Last Years) for Ventura County

- January 7, 2025 - Fire and windstorm conditions
 - (Palisades, Eaton, Hurst, Lidia, Sunset, Woodley)
- November 6, 2024 - Fire (Mountain)
- February 2024 – Severe winter storms
- December 2023/January 2024 – Severe winter storms

Questions? Please contact the Assessor's Office!

Primary Contact: Christina Watkins, Supervising Appraiser – Residential

Phone: 805-477-1541

Secondary Contact: Benjamin Phelps, Supervising Appraiser – Rural

Phone: 805-477-1521

General Phone Line: 805-654-2181

Email: assessor.info@ventura.org

Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00AM to 5:00PM

Mountain Fire

REBUILDING TOGETHER



Ventura County
Assessor

