



AFTER ACTION REVIEW OF RECENT FIRES – PALISADES & SEPULVEDA



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The Palisades Fire and the Response from the Bel-Air Association for the Safety of the Bel-Air Community

The Palisades Fire began on the morning of January 7th, 2025. The Bel-Air Association was under typical Red Flag Day protocol, but with extra vigilance as it had been reported for days that the region would be experiencing extreme Santa Ana conditions coupled with the fact that we had not received any significant rain into the New Year.

As the fire began to rage unabated with reports of significant structure fires and that the bulk of emergency resources began to attend to the situation in the Palisades, it became evident that typical Red Flag Day protocol would not be enough and that the Bel-Air Association would have jump right into emergency protocol in an effort to best help our community.

This “After Action Review” is intended to serve as a guide to what the Association did to help our community in the most emergent catastrophic fire scenario, what was done successfully, what could be improved upon, and suggestions for what not only what we can do as an Association but what our local government can do help improve for a future emergent event. We hope that this report is successful in making this a reality.

Bel-Air Association Ongoing Fire Safety Work Prior to the Historic Fires

Fire Safe Council and Fire Wise Community: The Bel-Air Association has been working with MySafeLA, a non-profit organization that partners with LAFD that focuses on fire safety, wildfire prevention and community resilience. Through the help and guidance of MySafeLA we have been able to achieve Fire Safe Council status for the Bel-Air Association requiring us to create a three-year action plan, a five year threat assessment, the ability to have MySafeLA do private home assessments at a nominal fee to help homeowners better protect their properties from both home fire dangers and wildfires.

This status has set us up for pending Fire Wise Community status through the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA). This status will further help neighbors get organized and take action to increase their home’s and their community’s fire resistance. Very importantly this status can help with the ability to maintain fire insurance and potentially positively impact insurance premiums.

Fire Insurance Webinar: The Bel-Air Association hosted a member only Fire Insurance Webinar with a panel including two leading hillside home insurance experts as well as a representative from the California State Department of Insurance with the goal of helping homeowners navigate the challenge of renewing and maintaining adequate fire insurance.



Typical Red Flag Day Protocol

Jonathan Brand and Christina Casey, the Bel-Air Association's professional staff are registered with the LAFD Red Flag Day notification system where we get either an email, phone call, or text and sometimes all three. When we know that a Red Flag Day will be in effect, we send notification to all our monitored WhatsApp chat groups and depending upon the time of the week and lead time notification from LAFD, post on our weekly update or an email blast. We also attach links to the website to help residents sign up to receive notifications on their own.

In addition, we drive the streets of Bel-Air first going to red flag no parking restricted streets letting folks know that this is a Red Flag Day and that there is no parking where posted. There are always violations so we call Parking Enforcement to dispatch officers with specific locations. After calling parking enforcement we put a phone call into our local fires stations, Station 71 and Station 37 and tell the captain on duty that we went out to actively monitor and already called in any violations. We also check other streets for any irregular parking or traffic congestion that would impede two way traffic in case of an emergency.

It is important to note that prior to the Palisades fire we made suggestions to both Parking Enforcement and to the Council Office to develop protocol on Red Flag Days to automatically dispatch officers to hillside communities from the general duty of enforcing meters, street cleaning, and permit zones in flat areas.

The Red-Flag Day no parking streets in Bel-Air are posted with special signage. Those streets in part or in whole are Glenroy Place, Ashdale Ave, Ashdale Place, Somma Way, Casiano Road, Bel-Air Road, and Stradella Road. During the fires and under our emergency protocol it became evident that Bel-Air needs to have more streets posted as Red-Flag Day no parking streets. Our suggestions will be later in this report.

Emergency Protocol

By the evening of January 7th, it became evident that this fire had become an unprecedented emergent fire disaster for the Palisades. The brave men and women of the LAFD and LAPD were engaged in an all-out effort to help the communities on fire and that other vulnerable hillside communities had to be extra vigilant and organized with up to the minute community notification to help ourselves remain safe.



A combination of deployed field staff outfitted in yellow Bel-Air Association vests in constant communication with Christina and Board President Jamie Meyer manning the phones, emails and WhatsApp chats enabled for the Bel-Air Association in real time to be dispatched to potentially problematic locations. The field staff consisted of BAA Executive Director, Jonathan Brand, Special Assistant Matthew Martinez, and Bel-Air homeowners Gerard Cantor and Jonathan Silver who volunteered their time to step up and contribute.

Reports came into the chats, the dispatch team called to alert field staff, field staff addressed the situation on site and then the dispatch team updated the community on the chats and/or reached out to other appropriate contacts for further results.

The BAA Executive Director did rounds throughout Bel-Air on the weekends to check on the community

The BAA was in constant contact with ACS Security Staff who increased patrol and we also had an open line directly to Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky and her staff.

During the second week we were able to get the City to print out temporary Local Traffic Only signs on roads on ridgeline streets that offered sensational westerly facing views that attracted crowds. We were also able to obtain official signage temporarily closing the Getty Scenic Trail Park at the end of Casiano.

Lastly we religiously monitored the Watch Duty App, with notifications and pings on full blast to be up to the minute on evacuation level designation.

The Bel-Air Association's Areas of Concern

1. **Illegal Parking:** Parking in posted No Parking Anytime area, No Parking on Red-Flag Day areas or red zones impedes the ability or emergency vehicle ingress and evacuation vehicle egress for which there is zero tolerance. BAA's field staff printed bilingual emergency no parking fliers and went street to street not only flagging vehicles, but knocking on doors, alerting people on the street and going to construction sites not adhering to parking regulations and even loading and unloading situations. We did achieve good compliance and the amount of vehicles illegally parked decreased day by day. After multiple days of posting vehicles some of those who did not comply were towed in coordination after numerous calls to Parking Enforcement.



2. **Construction:** During the week much of the traffic and congestion in the hillsides is from construction. We learned that there is no protocol for extra construction restrictions beyond what is regulated in Hillside Construction Restriction ordinance for Red-Flag Days or during a Level One “Ready” or Level Two “Set” fire emergency designation. In the initial days of the fire with the Santa Ana winds raging, BAA field staff outfitted in our yellow vest uniform had to do enforcement ourselves getting delivery trucks off of the road, telling construction sites to stop doing work that had the potential to be dangerous like welding torches, cutting of steel, and anything that required an internal combustion engine. We found that superintendents were generally receptive to the unprecedented emergency and complied. During the second week of the fires we began to get much needed coverage from LAPD as well as from fire department engines from throughout California.
3. **Trash Collection, Deliveries and Food Trucks:** There was no prohibition for big trucks doing otherwise benign deliveries, trash collection, or food trucks providing meals to construction workers.
4. **Fallen Trees and Branches:** There were numerous fallen trees from the high winds blocking roads. There was even the barely believable site of a full sized trampoline that went airborne and got stuck in a tree. BAA field staff with the help of ACS staff moved numerous fallen limbs so as not to block the street. There was also a tremendous community effort among Bel-Air residents to do fallen tree and debris clearance privately. The Bel-Air community really stepped up and banded together during this unprecedented emergency.
5. **Criminal Activity:** As the days went on with the fire creeping closer to Bel-Air, power was cut to the western portion of our community and a Level Two “Get Set” evacuation notification was given. Many residents decided to evacuate leaving the neighborhood dark and sparsely populated resulting in an elevated concern of criminal activity. The BAA asked for more enforcement from LAPD & ACS. The National Guard was only deployed to Level Three mandatory evacuation areas so we did not have benefit of their presence. We had very little law enforcement presence. ACS stepped up patrol and Bel-Air residents also banded together to chip in and hire extra private security on a night-by-night basis. In the latter day more National Guard was deployed to the burn zone areas it opened up the ability for more LAPD coverage.
6. **Disaster Tourism / “Looky Loos”:** With the Getty Center in the background Linda Flora and Casiano quickly went viral as the place to get that incredible selfie with the fire in the background for social media likes. This became a big problem as the congestion inhibits emergency vehicular access as well as elevating the risks of



arson or accidental wildfire starting. LAPD and ACS helped but this is a major potential problem and needs to be addressed with policy moving forward.

7. **The Getty Center Trail:** The trail was officially closed but without enforcement. We worked with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Council Office to get enforcement and signage that the park was closed. We got the signs in the second week of the fire, but protocol to ensure that passive recreation parks covered in unmitigated brush are absolutely closed on Red-Flag Days.

Sepulveda Fire

The Sepulveda Fire started late in the evening of January 23rd and was promptly put out in a few hours. The fire was approximately 40 acres and burned part of the Getty Center Scenic Trail Park. No structures were damaged. LAFD and LAPD were very much prepared at this time two weeks after the start of the Palisades fire. There were immediate in person evacuation notifications to residents on Casiano and Moraga as well as a massive response with aerial drops. The Bel-Air Association received a call from Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky in the middle of the night providing support and letting us know that she and her office were in coordination with all the applicable government entities.

After the Fires: Recommendation and Actions on How to Make our Community Safer

1. An automatic protocol for Parking Enforcement to be deployed to hillside areas on Red-Flag Days with the authority to ticket and to tow.
2. Regular testing of fire hydrants. Since the fire LAFD has confirmed that every fire hydrant in Bel-Air is working properly. The recommendation is to have fire hydrants tested regularly to ensure that they are all operational with adequate pressure.
3. Reduced or no hillside construction on Red-Flag Days.
4. No construction, deliveries, or food trucks in areas that are Level One or Level Two evacuation zones per Cal-Fire.
5. Enhanced funding for brush clearance enforcement. We make numerous reports every summer to the Brush Clearance Unit but have not seen action on many properties reported. We need to have aggressive enforcement of brush clearance regulations.
6. Review of existing Red-Flag Day No Parking Signage. The signs went up in 2006. Many are missing over the course of almost 20 years. Replace signs where needed.



7. Coordinate with LADWP for secondary emergency egress opening the Stone Canyon Reservoir at Stone Canyon Road with access to Mulholland through the property.
8. Recommendation to make more streets in Bel-Air Red Flag Day no parking streets.
 - a. Somera Road from Roberta to the cul-de-sac
 - b. Stone Canyon Road roughly from the end of the hotel to the reservoir
 - c. Glenroy Ave
 - d. Bel-Air Road 1800 block and above
 - e. Linda Flora Drive, especially north of Chalon
9. The Mountains Recreation Conservancy Authority (MRCA) needs to create a procedure of automatically closing the Getty Scenic Trail Park and really all of their parkland during Red Flag Days with enforcement mobilized.
10. Continue to lobby and work with the major cellular communication companies to enhance and expand the infrastructure in Bel-Air.
11. Continue to maintain and to advertise the Fire Wise Community status for Bel-Air that will help promote fire hardening of all the homes in our community. This status could have a positive impact on obtaining fire insurance.
12. Expand our Fire Committee to include more members of the community and host more webinars on a variety of fire/life safety issues including CPR training and evacuation preparedness.
13. Always to explore, research, and entertain new and innovative technologies designed to harden hillside communities to fire.
14. Continue to work with, engage, and maintain a good relationship with MySafeLA.
15. Lobby for our local fire station to get one of the five new engines ordered by LAFD that are specially designed to service narrow hillside streets for both fire and heavy rain scenarios.
16. Facilitate emergency preparedness and first-aid training like CPR certification courses.







ATTENTION

BLOWERS OF ANY KIND, EVEN
BATTERY-POWERED ARE
PROHIBITED BY THE FIRE
DECLARATION

ATENCION

SOPLADORAS DE NINGUN TIPO,
NI DE BATERIA PROHIBIDO POR LA
DECLARACION DE L.A. POR LOS
INCENDIOS



Warning!! Emergency Fire Situation

This vehicle is parked in a no parking zone. Please move this vehicle immediately off the street for the safety of you and the entire Bel-Air Community in the event of an evacuation. Parking Enforcement is coming around writing tickets and towing vehicles. Thank you for your cooperation!!

Scan here for a link to our website!



¡¡Advertencia!!

Situación de Incendio de Emergencia

Este vehículo está estacionado en una zona de no estacionamiento. Por favor, retire este vehículo inmediatamente de la calle por su seguridad y la de toda la comunidad de Bel-Air en caso de evacuación. La aplicación de la ley de estacionamiento está llegando a emitir multas y remolcar vehículos. ¡¡Gracias por su ayuda!!

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