CITY OF MALIBU
Official Press Release

August 13, 2026

City of Malibu Declares Local Emergency as Wildfire Season Conditions Worsen, Allowing for a More Expeditious Encampment Removal

(Malibu, CA) August 13, 2026 – The Malibu City Council unanimously approved a declaration of local emergency on August 10 after Live Fuel Moisture (LFM) levels in the Santa Monica Mountains fell below 65%, the threshold the Council has set for hazardous fire conditions. The declaration allows the City, all of which is within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, to act more quickly to remove homeless encampments to reduce the risk of fires associated with unpermitted camping.

“Declaring a local emergency provides an important proactive measure to reduce wildfire risk and protects lives and homes in Malibu as fire conditions worsen as we move towards the peak fire season,” said Mayor Bruce Silverstein. “This emergency declaration enables the City to act swiftly in reducing wildfire risks while continuing our balanced approach that protects both public safety and vulnerable community members.”

LFM is the percentage of water in living plants and is one of the key wildfire threat indicators. The Los Angeles County Fire Department takes fuel samples every two weeks. When the percentage of moisture reaches 60 percent, the fuels will burn as if they are dead, meaning fires will grow rapidly and pose a greater risk to lives, property and the environment. The City declares its local emergency when the Live Fuel Moisture reaches 65%. This most recent fuel sample came in at 63% from the previous reading of 67%.

The declaration allows the City to expedite the removal of homeless encampments in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. During normal conditions, state law requires a more extensive noticing process, while under the emergency declaration, removals can be completed within a day. These measures are part of the City’s comprehensive, balanced approach that combines compassionate outreach and housing placement with enforcement to protect public safety, public health, and the environment.

Malibu’s approach has yielded measurable results. The 2026 Homeless Count shows Malibu’s unhoused population has declined to 27 individuals and 16 total dwellings (tents, cars, RVs, vans, makeshift shelters), the lowest number since the City started tracking in 2016, down from 46 in 2025, 69 in 2024, 71 in 2023, 81 in 2022, and 157 in 2021. The City’s Homeless Outreach Team, operated by The People Concern, continues to successfully connect individuals with permanent housing, interim placements, and family reunification services.

The City also proactively removes encampments year-round to address wildfire, public safety, public health, and environmental concerns. Working alongside the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, Malibu cleared 44 encampments in 2025, 44 in 2024, and 29 in 2023.

The declaration will remain in effect for the duration of the hazardous fire season until: the City has received at least two inches of rain; LFM is at least 80%; and there have been no Fire Weather Watches or Red Flag Warnings in the previous two weeks and there are none in the extended forecast for Malibu. For more information, see the staff report: **https://www.malibucity.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/8256?fileID=91260**

Residents and businesses are urged to be prepared for wildfires:

- Monitor fire weather and conditions, and emergency information on local news and Watch Duty - **https://app.watchduty.org**.
- Make and review emergency plans, including evacuation routes and reunification locations.
- Gather emergency supplies, including essential documents, as well as supplies and medications for pets.
- Sign up for emergency alerts from the City at **www.MalibuCity.org/news** and from the County at **https://alertlacounty.genasys.com/portal/en/register**.
- Be prepared for Southern California Edison (SCE) Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) and unplanned power outages. In case of a power outage, monitor weather and emergency information on local AM/FM radio and 99.1 FM KBUU using handheld or car radios, which will function when power is out. Learn more: **https://ready.lacounty.gov/power-outage/**

For more information, visit: **www.MalibuCity.org/FireSafety**.

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