



2016 ERSKINE FIRE GUIDANCE INFORMATION

The Kern County Planning & Natural Resources Department, Kern County Environmental Health Services Department and the Building Inspection Division of the Public Works Department are working together to streamline the process to allow the residents whose homes were destroyed to be able to quickly rebuild and move back onto their properties.

The County understands that the devastating fire has created confusion and frustration and we will do everything possible to help facilitate the rebuild process. In an effort to clarify the process, the County has developed this guide to help victims of the Erskine Fire through the building permit process. This guidance document will provide you with a series of steps to obtain important documents that will help you decide how and what you can rebuild.

In order to expedite the review of your building application, the Building Inspection Division recommends that some initial research and data collection be conducted prior to preparing your building plans. Issues such as legality of prior use, legal lot status and damage assessment information can impact the design and location of your new home. In order to help you identify this needed information, the Building Inspection Division has identified some basic fact finding steps, which are outlined below.

Check your Personal Records

If you have any records related to building permits, septic systems, or other documentation to demonstrate when the structures were placed on the property, please bring those with you. This information will further assist staff in identifying what structures existed prior to the fire.

County Assessor's Office Records

To make your rebuilding process easier, we have already obtained, or are attempting to obtain, copies of the Building History Record from the County Assessor's Office for all the parcels that have been identified with destroyed homes. If there were improvements on your parcel that were being taxed, they should be reflected on this document (e.g. building footprint, square footage, number of buildings, etc). This information will assist county staff and you to determine prior building permit history, and confirm the legal status of structures that existed on your parcel prior to the fire.

This information can also be used to help identify structures which may have been constructed prior to the requirement of building permits.

Property Records

Bring the personal information that you have been able to gather to the Kern County Building Inspection Bakersfield Office or to a satellite office near you. Identify yourself as a Victim or as assisting a Victim of the Erskine Fire. Staff will review with you the records in our possession for your property and any information that you may have. This information will then be used by staff to provide you direction as to what information may be needed to rebuild your dwelling and other structures on the property.

Bakersfield Office:

**Public Works Department
Building Inspection Division
2700 M Street, 1st Floor
Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 862-8650
Fax: (661) 862- 8678
Office Hours 7:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. M - F**

Satellite Offices:

**Lake Isabella Office: 7050 Lake Isabella Boulevard
Lake Isabella, CA 93240
(760) 549-2064 or (661) 868-6357
Fax: (760) 379-1849
Office Hours 7:00 A.M. – 12:00 / 1:00 – 4:00 P.M. M - F**

**Ridgecrest Office: 100 West California
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
(760) 499-5071
Fax: (760) 499-1580
Office Hours 7:30 A.M. – 5:30 P.M. M – Th**

General Information

Existing Water Wells

The Building Inspection Division will issue building permits until December 1, 2016, without review from the Environmental Health Services Department, for the re-energizing of the wells destroyed in the fire. The permit can be issued for replacement or repair of the electric panel, motors and piping system, as appropriate. Permits for new wells, will be required to follow the normal permitting and inspection processes, including review by the Environmental Health Services Department.

Emergency temporary installation of mobile homes or travel trailers where previously permitted homes were destroyed or made uninhabitable by the fire

Kern County Ordinance Code section 19.08.280 authorizes the Planning & Natural Resources Department's Director to approve the temporary use of travel trailers and mobile homes for a period not to exceed 180 days. The property owner must submit a written request to the Planning & Natural Resources Department before this will be considered. The permit request shall be submitted, as follows:

1. Property owner shall submit the written request to **Scott Denney or Chris Mynk** of the Planning & Natural Resources Department, located at same address as the Bakersfield office shown above, or email to ScottD@co.kern.ca.us or MynkC@co.kern.ca.us. It can also be delivered to any satellite office and staff will ensure it is received.
 - a. The letter shall state the date the home was rendered uninhabitable, what is proposed to be installed (i.e., size or length and date of manufacture) and what the property owner's long-term objectives are to secure permanent housing. The temporary housing shall not extend beyond 180 days, unless a building permit is obtained for the permanent replacement of the residence, or an extension is granted by the Director of the Planning & Natural Resources Department for good cause.
 - b. The property owner shall include in the request a plot plan and the fire report from either the Building Inspection Division or Fire Department along with the written request.
 - c. The Planning & Natural Resources Department will consider all requests received for a reasonable time based upon justification.
 - d. The Planning & Natural Resources Department's approval shall be valid for these temporary building permits for a maximum of 180 days, unless an extension is granted. The Planning & Natural Resources Department's approval may contain additional conditions and/or requirements, as they deem appropriate.
2. If the request is approved by the Planning & Natural Resources Department, the property owner shall submit and obtain a building permit before the placement of any recreation vehicles, trailers, mobilehomes or other temporary housing on the site. The permit application must show how the temporary installation is proposed to be connected to any septic system, electrical, propane or other utility connections.

Replacement of Structures

1. County Ordinance 19.108.020 provides that owners may reconstruct legal and legal nonconforming structures. This section applies to the replacement of a residence which is determined to have been legally installed either with an approved building permit or residential structures (legal non-conforming) which are determined to have been constructed prior to 1967 or 1970 (the date which building permits were first required for residential structures in this rural area depending on the location.)

Permits for legal or legal non-conforming structures can be issued for structures sized similar to those which were destroyed under the following conditions:

- a. All construction shall comply with current building codes and other appropriate regulations.
- b. The Planning & Natural Resources Department may approve an expansion of up to 50 percent of the size of the existing residence.
- c. Before a permit can be issued, a site plan and appropriate building plans for the structure(s) must be submitted for review and approval.
 - i. Staff, when they meet with you to discuss the available records, can provide specific detail to you on what is required for your building permit based upon the type of construction being proposed and the property history.
- d. Replacement structures of the same size as the destroyed legal structure shall not be subject to additional school fees, park fees or other impact fees.
 - i. If the structure is expanded, the property owner may be subject to additional fees and will be directed to see the appropriate agencies to determine the cost of their fees, if any.

2. If the destroyed structure is determined NOT to be a legal or legal non-conforming structure, prior to issuance of any building permits, the owner must demonstrate the proposed construction will fully conform to all regulations for new structures, including legal access, any school or other impact fees and any other relevant regulations.

3. After a building permit is issued for the construction of a residence, the County can authorize the temporary occupancy, or continued occupancy, of a recreational vehicle or mobilehome on the property while reconstruction efforts are actively pursued.

Ash Cleanup

Many building materials may contain asbestos and older buildings often contain lead. Household hazardous waste such as gasoline, cleaning products, pesticides, and other chemicals may have been stored in homes, garages, or sheds that may have burned in the fire. These materials can become concentrated in ash and soil following a fire. It is important not to expose yourself, your family or others to any of these materials.

Exposures can occur by sifting through ash and debris, causing ash to become airborne and inhaled or ingested. Kern County Public Health is working to secure assistance

from State agencies that will ensure proper handling and disposal of debris and ash from the fire. In the meantime, in order to protect their health and the health of their neighbors, property owners are strongly recommended to not begin cleanup activities. Because ash and debris generated in the fire may be considered hazardous waste, do not transport ash or debris to landfills and transfer stations at this time. It is recommended that debris and ash from burned structures remain undisturbed until further instructions are issued. This recommendation is in place to protect the health of anyone who may come into contact with the waste, including solid waste facility employees, solid waste haulers, and the public. As more information on the ash and debris becomes known, additional guidance information will be disseminated.