



City of Malibu News

23825 Stuart Ranch Road • Malibu, California • 90265-4861
Phone (310) 456-2489 • Fax (310) 456-3356 • www.malibucity.org

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Contact: Matt Myerhoff, Media Information Officer

MMyerhoff@malibucity.org

Cell: 424.395.6450

Malibu City Council Declares Local Emergency to Facilitate Removal of Homeless Encampments During Peak Wildfire Season

(Malibu, CA) – The Malibu City Council approved declaring a local state of emergency on September 27, 2022, initiating a program for reducing the risk of wildfires associated with unpermitted and unregulated camping in City limits.

“Wildfire is Malibu’s number one public safety threat, and homeless encampments in the brush-covered canyons and hillsides of Malibu are a recipe for disaster,” said Mayor Paul Grisanti. “The City must address the very real threat to lives and homes posed by homeless encampments during peak wildfire season, while continuing our approach to finding shelter options and homeless services for those who are moved out of encampments.”

The resolution enables the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD), LASD-Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST) and the City to more quickly remove homeless encampments on public property that are identified as fire threats during wildfire season. As part of wildfire safety efforts, LASD and the City are prioritizing removing homeless encampments and unhoused people from the brush-covered hills and canyons of Malibu and placing them into emergency shelters.

These efforts ensure that the people being removed are connected to a network of healthcare, mental healthcare and housing services, not just pushed out into another community.

In 2021, the City adopted a similar resolution, based on the critically low Live Fuel Moisture content, which indicates the potential for dangerous wildfires, and to the more than 20 brush fires attributed to homeless encampments in the canyons of the City that year.

The resolution directs City staff to work with the Malibu Homeless Outreach Team, LASD and HOST to identify homeless encampments, to conduct outreach to people living in encampments about the dangers of living unhoused in wildfire zones and about the camping prohibition; to offer available housing, shelter and services; and to ensure that Malibu remains free of homeless encampments while not criminalizing people experiencing homelessness.

City Staff was also directed to collaborate with LASD Arson Watch during Red Flag fire conditions to watch for signs of smoke and fire and alert the Fire and Sheriff’s Departments.

Malibu is a compassionate community that has been dedicating significant resources toward services and outreach for people experiencing homelessness. The situation has become extremely dangerous, both for Malibu residents and for people living in homeless encampments who may become trapped during a fire.

The Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority's (LAHSA) annual homeless count in February showed 81 people experiencing homelessness in Malibu, a decline of 66% from 239 in 2020 and 157 in 2021. In Los Angeles County, 69,144 people were found to be experiencing homelessness, a 4.1% increase from 2020.

If you observe encampments in Malibu, contact the Public Safety Team at PublicSafety@MalibuCity.org or call 310-456-2489, ext. 236.

For more information about the City's efforts to address homelessness in Malibu, visit www.MalibuCity.org/Homelessness.

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