

Are California nursing homes adequately prepared for wildfire-related emergencies?

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Emergency preparedness in nursing homes should be commensurate with local environmental risks to ensure residents' safety, but new research in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* found that nursing homes

in California that face a greater risk of wildfire exposure have poorer compliance with Medicare's emergency preparedness standards.

For the study, investigators categorized nursing home facilities as "exposed" if they were located within 5 kilometers of a wildfire risk area. When assessing 1,182 nursing homes' [emergency preparedness](#) from January 2017–December 2019, the scientists found that a greater percentage of the 495 exposed facilities had at least one emergency preparedness deficiency than the 687 unexposed facilities (83.9% versus 76.9%). The total number of emergency preparedness deficiencies also tended to be greater for exposed facilities compared with unexposed facilities.

"Our study suggests that there may be opportunities to better align nursing home emergency preparedness with local wildfire risk," said corresponding author Natalia Festa, MD, of Yale University. "Additional research is needed to understand the mechanisms underlying the relationships that we observed."

More information: Evaluating California Nursing Homes' Emergency Preparedness for Wildfire Exposure, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.18142](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.18142)

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