

# Hurried evacuations as wildfires rage in California

October 25 2019, by Jocelyne Zablit

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Firefighters hose down a burning house near Santa Clarita, California

Californian firefighters on Friday battled a fast-moving wildfire north of Los Angeles as further evacuation orders were issued after 40,000 residents were already told to flee their homes.

With [high winds](#) and dry conditions forecast, officials went door-to-door through neighborhoods in Santa Clarita, 30 miles (50 kilometers) from Los Angeles, telling people to leave as flames raged nearby, local media said.

The [fire](#) jumped the Antelope Valley freeway on Friday morning, forcing it to close and for the evacuation zone to be extended.

The blaze—known as the Tick fire after the road near where it started on Thursday—has spread to 4,000 acres (1,600 hectares) and is only five percent contained, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said Friday.

It threatens 10,000 homes and has forced [local schools](#) and colleges to close.

About 500 firefighters backed by air tankers and helicopters battled the flames, though there were no immediate reports of injury.

The Los Angeles Times said air support had struggled to protect neighborhoods in [rugged terrain](#) as the blaze raced through narrow gullies up to properties.

Homeowners tried to beat back flames with garden hoses, but several houses were burnt down.



Over 50,000 people were told to flee the Tick Fire, which was raging just north of Los Angeles

### **'Leave now'**

About 400 miles to the north, in California's Sonoma County, a fire burnt through 16,000 acres including oak woodland and renowned vineyards and is also only five percent contained, according to official data.

Mandatory evacuation orders were issued for the community of Geyserville in Sonoma.

"We looked up the hill and couldn't believe what we saw," ranch owner



Dwight Monson, 68, told the Times, saying the fire moved 14 miles in five hours before destroying four homes and a barn on his property.

"If you're in Geyserville, leave now," the sheriff's office advised, citing an extraordinary threat to life and property.

Several fires across the state erupted as much of California was under a red-flag warning because of gusty winds, high temperatures and low humidity.

A brush fire in San Bernardino County, about 60 miles east of Los Angeles, also prompted evacuation orders as it quickly burned 75 acres.



Embers blow in the wind near Geyserville, California on October 24, 2019



LA County firefighters battled against fast-moving fires



Map of California showing active wildfires as of Oct 24.

The Pacific Gas & Electric Co. said it was inspecting lines and restoring service after shutting off power to 180,000 customers in northern California to reduce the risk of accidental fires.

Similar preemptive shutoffs affected thousands of customers further south due to conditions ripe for wildfires.

The strong winds in the north were expected to subside Friday but forecast to pick up again on Sunday, the National Weather Service warned.

PG&E, the state's biggest utility, has been held responsible for numerous wildfires in the state.

This week's fires have erupted as California is still recovering from deadly wildfires in 2017 and 2018 that killed more than 100 people.

The fires have been fueled by years of drought and dry vegetation.

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