

California wildfires: statewide death toll rises to 50 as search for remains continues

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The statewide death toll in California's wildfires reached 50 late on Tuesday, as authorities reported six more deaths in the Camp fire in the north of the state.

The deaths from the Camp fire, the deadliest wildfire in the state's history, have increased to 48, the Butte county sheriff, Kory Hone, said. Two people have also died in the Woolsey fire, a major blaze around Los Angeles.

Authorities in northern [California](#) have ramped up the search for more victims buried in rubble left by the blaze that incinerated the town of Paradise. Authorities have brought in cadaver dogs, mobile morgue units, rapid DNA identification units and 100 national guard troops.

More than 200 people remain missing, and local law enforcement plan to release a list of those individuals in the coming days.

### **Camp fire**

Officials said earlier Tuesday that the fire had grown to 195 sq miles.

Firefighters report that the fire is 35% contained and National Weather Service

meteorologist Aviva Braun said early Tuesday that the high winds that helped spread the blaze have begun to diminish.

Air quality in the area, which has been hazardous in recent days, is expected to worsen as light winds cause smoke to settle, Braun said.

The fire is still actively burning, and more than 5,000 fire personnel are on the scene from across the country. They continue to battle flames including in the area north of Magalia near Stirling City. With increased visibility, planes were able to deliver retardant as crews on the ground worked in steep inaccessible terrain, Cal Fire authorities said.

More than 7,600 structures have been destroyed, the vast majority of those are homes in Paradise, a Sierra foothill town of 27,000 about 180 miles north of San Francisco.

Many of the dead have been found badly burned in cars and homes.

Areas are being searched closely but there is an “unfortunate possibility” that once residents are allowed to return, they may encounter remains authorities missed, Sheriff Honea said.

Authorities have arrested six people, all of whom were suspected of looting.

Honea said: “I have warned people time and time again that if you’re in these evacuation areas and you shouldn’t be, and you’re violating the law or taking advantage of these poor people who are displaced, we are going to stop you. We are going to investigate and we’re going to take you to jail.”

The sheriff also announced that the Butte county district attorney is asking evacuees to report any price-gouging they encounter. “I think price gougers are probably in the same category as looters,” Honea said.

About 52,000 people remain displaced by the fire.

To date, three of the dead have been identified: Ernest Foss of Paradise, 65, Jesus Fernandez of Concow, 48, and Carl Wiley of Magalia, 77.

More details emerged on Tuesday about the victims.

Foss was a musician who gave lessons out of his home when he lived in San Francisco, where an amplifier that ran the length of a wall served as the family’s living room couch, the Associated Press reported.

Wiley refurbished tires for Michelin. Jesus Fernandez was known as “Zeus”.

Foss, 63, moved to Paradise eight years ago because the high cost of living

pushed him out of the Bay Area, according to his daughter, Angela Loo. He had swollen limbs and couldn't walk. He had also been on oxygen.

Loo told KTVU-TV in Oakland that her father taught music from their home in San Francisco and turned the living room into a studio. "I love that he shared his gift of music with me and so many others during his lifetime," she said. "He would want to be remembered for being a San Franciscan through and through."

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