

From the Assessor's office

Tax Relief is Available for Winter Storms

By Jeff Prang

Los Angeles County Assessor

This has been a challenging year when it comes to our weather because until recently the region has had no noticeable rain whatsoever. In its place there has been extreme heat warnings with 3-digit temperatures the common denominator. Since we've been experiencing extremely dry conditions this fall, there's always the concern now with flooding, especially since we've experienced torrential winter rain storms.

Along those lines, I want to remind property owners that tax relief is available in the event of damage to property not only by fires and other natural disasters but rain damage and/or flooding. By filing a claim for Misfortune & Calamity relief within one year of the incident, properties that have sustained a minimum of \$10,000 in damage or destroyed may be eligible for a refund of taxes already paid and lower annual tax bills until the property is repaired or rebuilt.

You must file the Application for Reassessment – Misfortune and Calamity claim, which is available online at <https://assessor.lacounty.gov/tax-relief/disaster-relief> or by phone: 213-974-8658; by social media at @lacassessor.

Again, the claim has to be filed with my office within 12 months of the rain damage or flooding or any other natural disaster. The savings can be for a total loss of the property or a percentage of the damage as long as it's \$10,000 or more. Sometimes, the tax relief may not be a significant amount but it most assuredly helps in a time of need and can come in handy when you are planning on rebuilding or replacing. The percentage is calculated by the appraiser using a standard formula, oftentimes in conjunction with other factors such as existing insurance.

As just one example, our reassessments led to more than \$3 million in tax relief a few years back during the Woolsey Fire. This relief was by way of refunds and adjustments to the 2018/2019 tax bills. The Woolsey Fire had 1,328 homes and businesses affected. Of those, 797 were entirely destroyed.

We believe that every property was identified. Dozens of appraisers were at work around the clock to ensure people received the required reassessment of the property that led to the tax relief. I estimate for that fire alone my staff logged more than 2,500 hours on the job. We are on the job again this winter.

I'm going to be sharing with you several other savings programs that we offer. Those programs include the Homeowners' Exemption and Senior Replacement to name just a few of those we offer.

The recent rains were a welcomed relief from the extreme heat and dry weather conditions but they proved to be too much for a parched land as there has been significant damage and even loss of life.

Again, the M&C claim forms can be obtained online at <https://assessor.lacounty.gov/tax-relief/disaster-relief> or by phone at (213) 974-8658. If ever needed, please avail yourself of this tax relief program.

implemented sweeping reforms to ensure that the strictest ethical guidelines rooted in fairness, accuracy and integrity would be adhered to in his office, which is the largest office of its kind in the nation with about 1,400 employees and provides the foundation for a property tax system that can generate \$19 billion annually.