

ForensisGroup Outlines Expert Disciplines Involved in Wildfire Litigation

Technical specialties may address causation, property and economic damages, personal injury and rebuilding

PASADENA, CA, UNITED STATES, September 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A wildfire may begin with a single ignition point. Still, the litigation that follows can involve dozens of technical questions spanning causation, liability, property damage, environmental conditions, economic loss, personal injury and rebuilding.



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[ForensisGroup](#), known in the legal and insurance communities as The Expert of Experts®, a provider of expert witness services supporting attorneys, law firms, insurers, corporations and other organizations, is highlighting the range of expert disciplines that may be needed as attorneys, insurers, businesses and property owners work through the long-term consequences of catastrophic fires.

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The issue has taken on renewed significance following the August 4, 2026 release of investigative reports by the Los Angeles County Fire Department. The investigation, conducted jointly with CAL FIRE, examined the origin and cause of the January 2025 Eaton Fire. The investigation identified electrical arcing involving an out-of-service Southern California Edison transmission tower as the fire’s origin and cause. The ongoing proceedings underscore an important distinction: determining how a fire started is

only one part of the technical and legal analysis that may follow.

"After a major fire, everyone understandably wants an answer to the question, 'What happened?'" said Mercy Tolentino Steenwyk, Founder and CEO of ForensisGroup. "But that question quickly becomes many questions. How did the fire start? Why did it spread? Were applicable standards followed? What was damaged? Can a property safely be rebuilt? What are the economic and human consequences? Each question may require a different area of expertise before the facts can be fully understood."

From Causation to Damages

On the causation and liability side, a [wildfire case may require](#) electrical engineers, fire origin-and-cause investigators, metallurgy and materials experts, meteorologists, wildfire behavior experts, utility vegetation management specialists and regulatory compliance experts. Depending on the issues, specialists in utility management and risk assessment may also be involved.

Determining origin and cause, however, is only the beginning. Real estate appraisers, forensic accountants, economists, environmental and toxicology experts and construction and rebuilding cost specialists may be needed to evaluate property damage, contamination, business interruption, lost income, remediation and rebuilding costs.

Where serious injuries or deaths occurred, medical specialists, pulmonologists, life care planners, mental health professionals and evacuation or human-factors experts may be called upon to evaluate injuries, smoke exposure, ongoing care needs, trauma, warnings and evacuation issues.

These experts do not perform interchangeable roles. Each examines a different part of the factual record through the standards, methodologies and experience of a particular discipline. Their findings may also intersect: weather and fire behavior can inform causation analysis; environmental findings can affect remediation and property valuation; and rebuilding requirements can influence economic damages.

"One of the challenges in wildfire litigation is recognizing how quickly the issues branch out," said Emily Lou Steenwyk, Managing Director of ForensisGroup. "An attorney may initially call looking for one type of expert and, as the facts develop, realize the matter requires several specialties. Understanding those intersections early can help counsel assemble the right expertise around the actual issues in the case."

Five Questions When Evaluating Expert Needs

ForensisGroup suggests attorneys consider five questions when determining the expertise a wildfire matter may require:

1. What questions need to be answered?

Separate origin and cause from liability, property and economic damages, rebuilding and personal injury. Different questions may require different specialties.

2. What evidence exists and what needs to be preserved?

Physical components, fire debris, photographs, utility and inspection records, weather data, environmental samples and damaged structures may all become relevant. Early expert involvement can help identify evidence that should be preserved or examined.

3. Where do the disciplines intersect?

Electrical evidence may need to be considered alongside fire behavior and weather conditions.

Environmental findings may affect remediation and property value. Rebuilding requirements may influence economic damages.

4. What has already been resolved, and what remains in dispute?

Some individuals and businesses have resolved insurance claims while others have not. Identifying the specific issues that remain unresolved can help determine which experts and analyses are relevant.

5. When should experts become involved?

Earlier involvement can give experts an opportunity to evaluate physical evidence, identify missing information and suggest additional areas of investigation before litigation positions and deadlines narrow the options available.

The Eaton Fire also illustrates how long the process can extend beyond the fire itself. The fire occurred in January 2025, and the official findings followed an 18-month investigation. For families and businesses rebuilding their lives, legal, financial and technical questions can continue long after the immediate disaster has passed. Litigation involving liability and damages continues in Los Angeles County Superior Court, where Eaton Fire cases have been consolidated under the lead case *Gursey v. Southern California Edison*, Case No. 25STCV00731.

ForensisGroup offers complimentary one-hour consultations with qualified experts across its specialties to help attorneys identify the technical disciplines relevant to a matter. Following the Los Angeles County fires, the firm also extended these consultations to individuals affected by the fires, an exception to its traditional focus on serving attorneys, insurers and organizations.

"Moving forward begins with understanding what the facts can tell us," added Steenwyk. "Experts don't all answer the same question, and they shouldn't. Their different disciplines allow the evidence to be examined from the perspectives necessary to build a fuller picture. That is fundamental to our commitment to Nothing But the Truth®."

About ForensisGroup

ForensisGroup, The Expert of Experts®, is a premier provider of expert witnesses, consultants and litigation support professionals with 3,000+ areas of expertise across business, engineering and construction, environmental and science, including technical, medical and financial disciplines. Since 1991, the firm has supported over 20,000 clients in more than 30,000 cases. Recognized as a Top 100 Women-Owned and Minority-Owned business in Los Angeles, ForensisGroup is guided by its commitment to Nothing But the Truth®. ForensisGroup combines technical expertise with High Touch High Tech™ service and Excellence in Human Connection™ to help clients navigate complex legal matters. To learn more, visit ForensisGroup.com or call 800-555-5422.

Kathleen McEntee

Kathleen McEntee and Associates, Ltd.

+1 312-501-1950

[email us here](#)

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