



**Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation**  
550 17th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20429-9990

**Financial Institution Letter**  
**FIL-93-2007**  
**October 26, 2007**

## **REGULATORY RELIEF**

### **Guidance to Help Financial Institutions and to Facilitate Recovery in Areas of California Affected by Major Fires**

**Summary:** The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) has announced a series of steps intended to provide regulatory relief to financial institutions and to facilitate recovery in areas of California damaged by recent fires.

#### **Distribution:**

FDIC-Supervised Banks (Commercial and Savings)  
in California

#### **Suggested Routing:**

Chief Executive Officer  
Compliance Officer  
Chief Lending Officer

#### **Related Topics:**

Lending  
Investments  
Publishing Requirements  
Consumer Laws

#### **Attachment:**

Supervisory Practices Regarding Depository  
Institutions and Borrowers Affected by Fire  
Damage in California

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#### **Note:**

FDIC financial institution letters (FILs) may be  
accessed from the FDIC's Web site at  
[www.fdic.gov/news/news/financial/2007/index.html](http://www.fdic.gov/news/news/financial/2007/index.html).

To receive FILs electronically, please visit  
<http://www.fdic.gov/about/subscriptions/fil.html>.

Paper copies of FDIC financial institution letters  
may be obtained through the FDIC's Public  
Information Center, 3501 Fairfax Drive, E-1002,  
Arlington, VA 22226 (1-877-275-3342 or 703-562-  
2200).

#### **Highlights:**

- Major wild fires have caused significant property damage to areas of California.
- The counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Ventura have been declared federal disaster areas.
- The FDIC is encouraging financial institutions to work constructively with borrowers who are experiencing difficulties beyond their control because of damage caused by fires.
- Extending repayment terms, restructuring existing loans or easing terms for new loans, if done in a manner consistent with sound banking practices, can contribute to the health of the community and serve the long-term interests of the lending institution.
- The FDIC will also consider regulatory relief from certain filing and publishing requirements for banks in the affected areas.

## **SUPERVISORY PRACTICES REGARDING DEPOSITORY INSTITUTIONS AND BORROWERS AFFECTED BY FIRE DAMAGE IN CALIFORNIA**

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) recognizes the serious impact of the recent fires in California on the operations of financial institutions and will provide regulatory assistance to institutions subject to its supervision. These initiatives are being taken to provide regulatory relief and facilitate recovery. The FDIC encourages depository institutions in the affected disaster areas to meet the financial service needs of their communities.

**Lending.** Bankers should work constructively with borrowers in communities affected by the major fires. The FDIC realizes that the effects of such disasters on local businesses and individuals are often transitory, and that prudent efforts to adjust or alter terms on existing loans in areas affected by the wildfires should not be subject to examiner criticism. In supervising institutions impacted by the fires, the FDIC will take into consideration the unusual circumstances they face. The agency recognizes that efforts to work with borrowers in communities under stress can be consistent with safe and sound banking practices as well as in the public interest.

**Reporting Requirements.** FDIC-supervised institutions affected by the wildfires should notify the San Francisco Regional Office if they expect a delay in filing their Reports of Income and Condition (Call Reports) or other reports. The FDIC will take into consideration any causes beyond the control of a reporting institution in considering how long of a filing delay will be acceptable.

**Publishing Requirements.** The FDIC understands that the damage caused by the major fires may affect compliance with publishing and other requirements for branch closings, relocations and temporary facilities under various laws and regulations. Banks that have disaster-related difficulties in complying with any publishing or other requirements should contact the San Francisco Regional Office.

**Consumer Laws.** Regarding consumer loans, Regulation Z provides consumers an option to waive or modify the three-day rescission period when a "bona fide personal financial emergency" exists. To exercise this option, the consumer must provide the lender with a statement describing the emergency in accordance with the regulation.

**Temporary Banking Facilities.** The San Francisco Regional Office will expedite any request to operate temporary bank facilities by an institution whose offices have been damaged or that desires to provide more convenient availability of services to those affected by the fires. In most cases, a telephone notice to the regional office will suffice initially, and necessary written notification can be submitted later.