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At least 31 workers were able to escape after tunnel collapse in Wilmington. A tunnel under construction in Wilmington on Wednesday night temporarily trapped 31 workers who were successfully rescued, fire officials said.



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WILMINGTON, LOS ANGELES (KABC) -- Over two dozen workers were able to safely escape following a tunnel collapse in the Wilmington area of Los Angeles Wednesday night. The incident was reported around 8 p.m. in the 1700 block of N. Figueroa Street and involved at least 31 industrial tunnel workers, according to the Los Angeles Fire Department. More than 100 LAFD personnel, including Urban Search and Rescue teams and Mayor Karen Bass, responded to the scene. The workers were able to emerge from the collapsed tunnel on their own, according to fire officials. It was a huge LAFD response because it had the potential of being a major multi-day tunnel rescue incident. AIR7 footage showed workers being brought out of the tunnel in a cage

hoisted up by a crane. LAFD said that trapped workers were able to scramble over a 12-15-foot tall pile of loose soil to meet several coworkers on the other side of the collapse and be shuttled, several at a time, by a tunnel vehicle to the tunnel's entry. No injuries were reported. However, 27 of the workers were medically evaluated by LAFD paramedics at the scene. "Tonight, we were lucky," said LAFD Interim Chief Ronnie Villanueva. "It was determined that a structure failure of the tunnel lining failed approximately five to six miles in." "We had an opportunity to speak with them. We had an opportunity to make sure that they were able to reach their family members. Their family members knew they were safe," said Bass. The collapse of the 18-foot diameter tunnel, being constructed for municipal wastewater management by L.A. County Sanitation, occurred at an underground horizontal excavation site about five to six miles south of the sole entry to the tunnel, according to LAFD. Villanueva said a "structure failure of the tunnel lining" was to blame. "The men came up. They came out. They're alive," said L.A. County Supervisor Janice Hahn, who also sits on the board of the L.A. County Sanitation District. "What happened tonight highlights, anytime you tunnel, whether it's a Metro project or a Sanitation project, the risks are there." The tunnel is being built from the A.K. Warren Water Resource Facility to San Pedro. It's expected to be completed and active by 2028. The L.A. Fire Department said the tunnel workers had been isolated by a "collapse" in an industrial tunnel for a wastewater treatment facility. The workers, fire officials said, were trapped as many as 6 miles south of the only access point located the 1700 block of North Figueroa Street in the Harbor-area L.A. neighborhood. LAist media partner KCAL News reported that construction workers were being hoisted from a crane to the surface at roughly 8:55 p.m. before the collapse occurred. Shortly before 10 p.m., the LAFD said all the workers had been safely removed from the tunnel "alive without visible injury." Fire officials said the workers in the 18-foot diameter tunnel were able to scramble onto a pile of loose soil on the other side of the collapse to be shuttled "several at a time by tunnel vehicle to the entry/access point." Crews successfully rescued 31 people who were trapped after a tunnel collapsed in L.A.'s Wilmington neighborhood Wednesday night. The Los Angeles Fire Department responded to the industrial tunnel on the 1700 block of South Figueroa Street shortly before 8 p.m. The tunnel was filled with workers at the time, who were located 300-400 feet beneath the surface and around six miles away from the tunnel's only access point. Crews successfully rescued 31 workers who were trapped after a tunnel collapsed in L.A.'s Wilmington neighborhood on July 9, 2025. (KTLA) Crews successfully rescued 31 workers who were trapped after a tunnel collapsed in L.A.'s Wilmington neighborhood on July 9, 2025. (KTLA) Crews successfully rescued 31 workers who were trapped after a tunnel collapsed in L.A.'s Wilmington neighborhood on July 9, 2025. (KTLA) Crews successfully rescued 31 workers who were trapped after a tunnel collapsed in L.A.'s Wilmington neighborhood on July 9, 2025. (Citizen) Crews successfully rescued 31 workers who were trapped after a tunnel collapsed in L.A.'s Wilmington neighborhood on July 9, 2025. (KTLA) Crews successfully rescued 31 workers who were trapped after a tunnel collapsed in L.A.'s Wilmington neighborhood on July 9, 2025. (KTLA) More than 100 LAFD responders arrived at the scene, including Urban Search and Rescue team members who were specially trained and equipped to handle confined space tunnel rescues. Some workers who were

separated inside the tunnel had to climb over a 12-to 15-foot pile of loose soil to escape and join their colleagues on the other side. Sky5 footage captured the rescue efforts as they were hoisted to the surface from the tunnel, which had an 18-foot diameter. The workers stepped inside a metal compartment that was lifted by a crane to the surface. Around 9:20 p.m., all 31 workers were safely extricated and accounted for. Many were seen hugging each other. No injuries were reported as paramedics evaluated each person at the scene. The wastewater tunnel site is part of the L.A. County Sanitation District's Clearwater Project, which spans seven miles and is being "constructed to protect local waterways by addressing aging infrastructure," according to the project's website. L.A. Mayor Karen Bass also arrived at the scene and released a statement on X, saying, "I just spoke with many of the workers who were trapped. Thank you to all of our brave first responders who acted immediately. You are L.A.'s true heroes." Details are limited. The circumstances that caused the tunnel to collapse remain under investigation.