

EVACUATION PREPAREDNESS

Evacuation notifications can only be made when time allows. For example, let's say a fire is burning in the Carpinteria foothills adjacent to Montecito, there may be time to make evacuation notifications to Montecito residents early enough for you to gather a few items and do some preparations in and around your property.

However, if we get a sundowner wind driven fire like the Paint Fire, you'll be lucky to smell the smoke or hear a siren before you have to get out of Dodge. There may not be time to even question where your keys are in such an event, and you will be lucky to escape (LITERALLY!) with the clothes on your back.

This is why – ***PARTICULARLY HERE IN THE MONTECITO AREA*** – that you must be **DILIGENT** about your surroundings and weather condition during fire season. If we have warm weather and winds are predicted, or you hear on the news that we are in "Red Flag Alert" you should take every precaution to prepare for an evacuation **AHEAD** of time. It is important to be cognoscente of the humidity levels and weather conditions in the Santa Barbara front country.

For those of you who have lived here long enough, we all know that it isn't IF we have another fire, but **WHEN** we have another fire here.

METHODS THAT YOU MAY BE NOTIFIED OF AN EVACUATION (IF THERE IS TIME!)

- Reverse 911.
- Sheriff or CHP Patrol Cars.
- Helicopters.
- Door to door.

GET READY

The first thing you must do is make a list of important items (things that cannot be left behind)

- Medications, Prescriptions, eyeglasses
- Important documents, (birth certificates, tax records)
- Photos, art, jewelry and other important mementos
- Pets, pet food, leash and pet carrier(s)
- Computers or back up disks (*external USB hard drives large enough to copy or back up most people's entire computer - 160gigs - are available for as little as \$80. This is an easy way to keep a portable back up of your data - particularly if you do your banking on your computer.*)

Next, assemble your "Go Kit" containing the above. For items that are of utmost importance, I suggest that you keep originals in a safe deposit box/fire proof safe. It is also a good idea to have digital photos of your assets and home contents off site or in a safe deposit box/ fire proof safe as well. This will be ***extremely*** helpful to you in the event that that claims are made with an insurance company. Additionally you can scan your family photos onto a disk and keep that in a safe deposit box/fire proof safe. A days worth of scanning, can save a lifetime of memories.

Design a neighborhood network or phone tree. Emergency resources will be limited! Utilizing a neighborhood network will expedite evacuation orders, however, phone systems may go down. Be aware of where the nearest MERRAG radio is to your neighborhood.

Make evacuation preplans with those who have special needs in your neighborhood.

Those with livestock should have an evacuation/transportation plan for your animals. Make sure they are trained to be tailored and familiarize yourself with EQUINE EVAC.

WAYS TO PREPARE AHEAD IF FIRE CONDITIONS ARE HIGH TO EXTREME

- Move combustibles and firewood AWAY from your home's exterior. (Do this anyways as good practice!!)
- Close fireplace doors and damper.
- Back your car into the garage (facing out) and leave the keys in the ignition.
- Keep the garage door closed until you are ready to leave.
- Disconnect the electric garage door(s) from the motor.
- Keep your "To Go" kit by the door, or in the car.

BEFORE YOU GO (ONLY IF TIME PERMITS)

- Close all windows and doors (inside and out)
- Shut off air conditioners and heating units
- Move furniture, curtains and draperies away from windows
- Shut off gas meter or propane tanks
- Disconnect motors on automatic gates and leave open and unlocked
- Fill trash cans and buckets with water, leave around exterior of house
- Soak rags, towels and small rugs in water to help extinguish small embers
- Attach garden hoses to spigots outside

- Place a ladder against the house on the opposite side from where the fire is approaching.
- Apply plywood over eave vents, subfloor vents, roof vents and windows.
- Turn all the lights on in your home (this will make your house more visible to firefighters in dense smoke.)
- Remove combustible fencing that leads to structures. (This can act as a wick if your home has good clearance otherwise.)

GET GOING

- Review your special needs plan – does a neighbor need assistance? Are your pets ready to go?
- Close your garage door behind you.
- Leave all access gates open.
- Can you carpool with a neighbor to reduce cars on the road?
- Drive safely and cautiously.
- Keep headlights on and windows rolled up.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Heavy smoke.
- Flying embers and fire brands.
- Extremely heavy traffic.
- Panicked drivers.
- Abandoned vehicles.

TRAPPED! WHAT TO DO

If you absolutely cannot evacuate here are some things to do to optimize your survival.

AT HOME

- Stay inside your home, it's safer than being outside or in a vehicle. As hot as it gets inside your home, it is MANY times hotter outside!
- Close all interior and exterior doors, leaving them unlocked (including garage door *after* putting the car inside!)
- Stay CALM, and initiate contact with your out-of state relative.
- Call your local emergency number (i.e. 911) and inform the dispatcher that you cannot evacuate.
- Fill sinks and bathtubs with water.
- Shelter in rooms opposite the approaching fire.
- Stay away from perimeter walls.
- Stay as calm as you can and keep your family together.
- Fire fronts can take 5-15 minutes *or longer* to pass.

IN YOUR CAR

- Try to drive to an area clear of vegetation, away from wires and trees.
- Close all windows and keep doors unlocked.
- Turn on the A/C in "recirculation" or "max" mode.
- Lie on or as low to the floor as possible.
- Cover yourself with a wool or cotton blanket or jacket.
- Attempt to call your local emergency number (i.e. 911) and inform the dispatcher that you are trapped and where you are.
- Wait for the front to pass.

Keep in mind that there WILL be smoke in your vehicle. After the fire passes, if you see flames in your vehicle, wrap yourself in clothing/blackest and exit the vehicle.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO OUT RUN A WILD FIRE.

AFTER THE FIRE PASSES AND YOU ARE ALLOWED BACK INTO THE EVACUATED AREA

- Keep the doors and windows closed.
- Continue rechecking your home and yard for at least 12 hours. There will still be blowing embers that can start or reignite a fire.
- Update your out of state family member of your status.

SHOULD YOU STAY AND DEFEND YOUR PROPERTY?

Montecito Fire Protection District DOES NOT recommend this. Each year, ***professionally trained firefighters*** are killed while fighting wildfires. Citizens also perish during these events. Your life is worth far more than any of your possessions.