

# BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY IN NEVADA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

(Post on refrigerator for future use. Smokey Bear magnets are available at the Tahoe National Forest Headquarters, 631 Coyote St, Nevada City.)

## EVACUATION PLANNING

Nevada County has the potential for a number of natural disasters that you should be aware of and prepared for. Wildland fire is clearly the number one potential problem. However, a variety of emergencies including wind storms, snow storms, flooding, earthquakes, pandemic flu or act of terrorism might necessitate an emergency response. This emergency preparedness guide is being provided to you so that you are informed and can prepare to care for yourself and your family. Emergency services will be overtaxed in all of these scenarios and may take days to mitigate every situation. In other words, you will need to be prepared to stand alone – potentially for days. Successful evacuations require good planning and coordination – amongst families, neighborhoods, communities and agencies. Start your planning now for possible emergencies in the future.

## SAFE PROGRAM for the Elderly, Frail, or Disabled

Nevada County provides Special Assistance for Emergencies (S.A.F.E.). The S.A.F.E. program collects information about the location of elderly, frail, and physically and/or developmentally disabled people in the community. Emergency response personnel use this information to quickly identify and reach those individuals who need special assistance in the event of an evacuation. Enrollment is voluntary. Applications and a brochure on the S.A.F.E. program are available at: Nevada County Public Health Department, 500 Crown Point Circle, Suite 100, Grass Valley, CA or call (530) 265-7016.

## ANNUAL PRE-EMERGENCY PLANNING

- ☞ Keep gutters and roofs clean of leaves and pine needles.
- ☞ Create and maintain 100 feet (or more on steep slopes) of defensible space around your home.
- ☞ Stack firewood at least 10 feet from house.
- ☞ Service (top off gas) and test emergency back up generator and water pump regularly.
- ☞ Check garden hoses and store near water faucets.
- ☞ Check address, water supply and generator signage.
- ☞ Check and restock emergency supplies (see storm survival kit for 4-day event below.)
- ☞ Identify important files and personal documents for evacuation such as wills, insurance policies, stocks and bonds, passports, social security cards, immunization records, family photos, bank account numbers, or irreplaceable heirlooms.
- ☞ Update household inventory with a video/photograph of house/personal effects for insurance annually.
- ☞ Copy important computer files to CD and store a copy in a safety deposit box or with a friend.
- ☞ Check flashlights and replace batteries regularly.
- ☞ Check portable water and chemical fire extinguishers.
- ☞ Affix wrench to propane tank for quick access to shut off gas in the event of an emergency
- ☞ During fire season, maintain vehicles with more than a half a tank of gasoline.
- ☞ Agree in advance what family members should do if they are away from home when the emergency strikes. Establish a meeting place away from your neighborhood to reconnect. **Our meeting place is:** \_\_\_\_\_

☞ Ask an out-of-state friend or relative to be your family contact. During a disaster, it is often easier to call long distance. Family members should be instructed to call this person with their location. **In the event of a disaster we will call:** \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☞ Plan how you will care for your pets and livestock.
- ☞ Check to ensure you have adequate insurance coverage. (Contact your insurance agent with any questions.)
- ☞ **Two escape routes from our home are:** \_\_\_\_\_

☞ The following are questions to consider should evacuation become necessary: Do the roads on which you would evacuate have adequate clearance for two vehicles to pass? Are streets clearly marked in order to provide easy access for fire crews? Do you have a reflective number sign posted at the road, to direct emergency crews to your home? If not, work to rectify any deficiencies.

- ☞ Replace stored water and food at least every six months.

- ☞ Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.
- ☞ Hold a family meeting to review your emergency plan on an annual basis.

## CREATING A 4-DAY STORM EMERGENCY SURVIVAL KIT

In a large plastic container with a lid store the following items:

- ☞ A good first aid kit
- ☞ Large box of wooden matches
- ☞ One gallon supply of drinking water per person, per day (4 days)
- ☞ Camping stove with fuel (cook only in well ventilated areas!)
- ☞ Freeze-dried and/or canned food – make it a variety, with a hand can opener
- ☞ Flashlights, candles, oil lamps with lamp oil or lanterns
- ☞ Battery operated radio with extra batteries
- ☞ Items required for infants or small children such as diapers, bottles, etc.
- ☞ Cards, games, books and other things to keep your mind busy – it can get very boring!

Remember, you will still have all the amenities of your home such as warm clothes and blankets. Just think of it as “Camping at Home.”

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION ITEMS TO TAKE

Each person must decide for himself or herself what items to gather according to any list depending upon the time given to evacuate.

### Family

- \_\_\_ Photographs of all family members
- \_\_\_ Pets (if advance warning, take to shelter)
- \_\_\_ Pet ID tags, medications, leashes, food

### Documents

- \_\_\_ House deed
- \_\_\_ Marriage license
- \_\_\_ Insurance papers-home, health
- \_\_\_ Tax papers and legal documents
- \_\_\_ Birth certificates and passports
- \_\_\_ Drivers' licenses
- \_\_\_ Personal Digital Assistant (PDA)
- \_\_\_ Computer backup disks
- \_\_\_ Computers (time permitting)

### Money

- \_\_\_ Checking and Savings books
- \_\_\_ Credit cards and cash
- \_\_\_ Purse or Wallet

### Medications

- \_\_\_ Prescriptions, Analgesics
- \_\_\_ First-aid kit
- \_\_\_ Prescription glasses, dentures, hearing aids

### Jewelry

- \_\_\_ Gold, silver, and other valuable jewelry
- \_\_\_ Family heirlooms
- \_\_\_ Military decorations, pins, awards

### Sentimental

- \_\_\_ Photos and albums, slides, movies, home videos
- \_\_\_ Family Bible
- \_\_\_ Irreplaceable keepsakes

### Food and Water (for 3-7 days - if time permits)

- \_\_\_ Water (1 gallon per person and pet per day)
- \_\_\_ Non-perishable, ready-to-eat food
- \_\_\_ Pet food
- \_\_\_ Manual can opener

### Toiletries (if time permits)

- \_\_\_ Soap and towels
- \_\_\_ Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- \_\_\_ Shaving articles
- \_\_\_ Sanitary devices

### Clothing (appropriate for the season)

- \_\_\_ Change of clothes for each person (for 1-7 days)
- \_\_\_ Coats or Jacket
- \_\_\_ Gloves, scarves and hat
- \_\_\_ Shoes and boots
- \_\_\_ Change of underwear and sleepwear
- \_\_\_ Infant supplies and toys

### Additional Items to Take (if time permits)

- \_\_\_ Cell phones and chargers
- \_\_\_ Reading material
- \_\_\_ Recreational items
- \_\_\_ Flashlights and extra batteries
- \_\_\_ Portable radio and extra batteries
- \_\_\_ Cameras and extra batteries
- \_\_\_ Covered container to use as an emergency toilet

## **IF AN EVACUATION IS ANNOUNCED**

### **HOW TO STAY INFORMED:**

- ? Tune into local radio stations KNCO at 830 AM or STAR 94.1 FM, or KVMR 89.5 or 105.1 FM. Also check the internet at [www.yubanet.com](http://www.yubanet.com) or [www.theunion.com](http://www.theunion.com).
- ? Listen for fire and law enforcement announcements in your neighborhood.
- ? Keep your home phone available for emergency evacuation information.
- ? Call CAL FIRE, Fire Information at (530) 823-4083 or other emergency response numbers.

### **STAY CALM. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS. STAY BEHIND ROADBLOCKS.**

This Evacuation Plan cannot predict all possible scenarios. Each incident is unique, presents different problems and requires different evacuation routes. You may be directed into green zones, such as irrigated pastures, golf courses, or orchards as a temporary measure for your protection. This makes it imperative that you listen to and follow directions. If you think it is time to go, you are probably correct.

### **HOW YOU MAY BE NOTIFIED**

Fire and law enforcement will do what they can to notify you of when to leave and where to go, but there is no possible way they can reach everyone. That is why it is imperative that you tune into local media for up to the minute information.

Nevada County has established a "City Watch" system. City Watch can quickly target a precise geographic area and saturate it with thousands of calls per hour. This system will call a series of affected residents to alert them of the emergency and the possible need to evacuate. The system's technology provides recipients critical information and aids in rapid response to emergencies in specific geographic areas.

As a large incident gets more organized, you will find some intersections staffed with barricades and officials providing traffic control. These personnel may be Red Cross (CERT members), sheriff volunteers or deputies, CHP, city police, county department of transportation personnel, or any number of other allied agencies. Please cooperate with these personnel.

### **REMEMBER**

**Once out, you will not be allowed back into your home until the evacuation order is lifted.** This is for your safety and the safety of firefighters, as well as reducing the chance of looting.

There are countless hazards during a fire or other emergency and afterwards. A few for you to be aware of are:

- Downed power lines
- Falling trees and limbs
- Rolling rocks on steep slopes
- Fire equipment and firefighters in the mop- up stages
- Reduced visibility from smoke

## ANIMAL EVACUATIONS

Again, listen to local media for the location to which animals are being evacuated. Pets/animals are not allowed at shelters except for official disabled persons' assistance animals. Owners are responsible for locating placement for pets/animals during an evacuation. If time allows for an orderly evacuation, assistance for animal evacuation can be arranged from the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) rescue volunteers. Cal CVMA Representative, Pat Ehlers at (530) 477-6506 or (530) 913-6506 (cell) or [rn4animals@aol.com](mailto:rn4animals@aol.com).

### Evacuation Order Checklist

Don't Become a Statistic!! Numerous civilians have died trying to evacuate too late and as we are all aware, Nevada County has the potential for numerous natural disasters that you should be prepared for. Wildland fires, significant winter storms, hazardous material releases or terrorism could affect us. This checklist is provided so you may prepare to evacuate, or in the event you become cut off from evacuation by fire or other circumstances, to shelter in place (see reverse.) Since emergency conditions can change rapidly, it is important that you **remain informed** as information may be your best tool to react to the situation present. Listen to local radio stations **KNCO 830 AM, STAR 94.1 FM, KVMR 89.5 or 105.1 FM** or access the internet at either [www.yubanet.com](http://www.yubanet.com) or [www.theunion.com](http://www.theunion.com).

**Secure Structure, People & Pets** (as time allows - refer to local emergency plans for additional information.)

| Time Available              | Priority  | Task   |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--|
| <b>0-10 Minutes</b>         | <b>1</b>  | Load your Disaster Supplies Kit (medications, important documents, supplies and pets) into vehicle.  |
|                             | <b>2</b>  | Park car in driveway facing out with keys in ignition for a quick exit. Disconnect automatic garage door opener for emergency personnel access.  |
| <b>10 Minutes to 1 Hour</b> | <b>3</b>  | Close windows, vents, doors, venetian blinds or non-combustible window coverings and drapes.   |
|                             | <b>4</b>  | Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off propane tanks. (After fire threat passes call gas company to re-establish service if assistance is needed. Affix wrench to propane tank for quick access to shut off gas during an emergency.) |
|                             | <b>5</b>  | Close fireplace screens and/or doors.  |
|                             | <b>6</b>  | Move flammable furniture, doormats, brooms and other flammable items into the center of the home away from windows and sliding glass doors.  |
|                             | <b>7</b>  | Turn on a light in each room to increase the visibility of your home in heavy smoke.   |
|                             | <b>8</b>  | Erect ladders against house and place fire-fighting tools (rake, shovel, chainsaw) in front of house.  |
|                             | <b>9</b>  | Place combustible patio furniture inside or at least 30 feet away from structure.  |
|                             | <b>10</b> | Connect garden hoses to outside taps and sprinklers.   |

|                          |           |  |
|--------------------------|-----------|--|
| <b>1 Hour to 4 Hours</b> | <b>11</b> | Set up portable gasoline powered pump (if available.)  |
|                          | <b>12</b> | If combustible materials are present, place lawn sprinklers on the roof and near above-ground fuel tanks and wet down. |
|                          | <b>13</b> | Wet or remove shrubs within 30 feet of home.   |
|                          | <b>14</b> | Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or heavy aluminum foil.   |
|                          | <b>15</b> | Fill garbage cans and buckets with water and place in front of house.  |
|                          | <b>16</b> | Protect water sources – wet down pump house, clear flammable vegetation away from supply infrastructure.               |
|                          | <b>17</b> | Implement evacuation of livestock.   |

### Evacuation Destination

- ☞ Follow instructions and cooperate with emergency personnel. There are multiple community evacuation destinations to which you may be directed and the location may not be the closest to your home.
- ☞ Notify an out of area contact person to inform them of your location and status.
- ☞ Leave a note with emergency contact information on your refrigerator or kitchen table in the event emergency crews need to contact you.
- ☞ Take only essential vehicles – the more vehicles, the more congestion on the road. Larger vehicles such as horse trailers and RV's clog evacuation routes and endanger everyone's life.
- ☞ Put on long trousers, heavy shoes, cotton long sleeve shirts, gloves and scarf (no polyester – it melts.)
- ☞ Stay clear of any downed power lines and poles. Always assume they are live!

History has shown that individuals who chose to stay and fight decided way too late that they were not prepared to be a firefighter. If you are: of the hardy and determined nature; have implemented good defensible space around your home; do not have children or elderly with you – you may choose to stay. If you chose to stay and fight **or if you are trapped by fire**, please refer to the Shelter in Place or Fire Entrapment checklist.

### Possible Evacuation Centers:

Listen to local media for evacuation center destinations:

- ? The Fairgrounds (unless there is a large event taking place such as the County Fair or Draft Horse Classic.)
- ? Nevada Union High School.
- ? The Red Cross shelter at the Baptist Church across from Nevada Union High School.
- ? The Grass Valley Veteran's Hall.
- ? For short duration, staging at the Horsemen's Lodge at the corner of Brunswick and Town Talk Roads.

**NOTE:** The chosen shelter will be announced on the radio based on current conditions.

## Shelter in Place or Fire Entrapment Checklist

### YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

It is your legal right to stay in your home through an emergency. However, history has shown that in many cases those that did, decided way too late that they really did NOT want to be a firefighter, and several civilians have died trying to evacuate too late.

So, if you:

- ☞ are of the hardy, determined nature
- ☞ do not have children, elderly or disabled at home, and
- ☞ have done your defensible space
- ☞ you choose to stay,

You should follow the checklist provided on the back pages to adequately prepare to shelter in place. Remember, one of the first things to go is electricity, so you won't have the garden hose to help you if you are on a well without a backup power supply.

Legally, you may stay and protect your home. However, your home should be very well prepared for wildfire. During a wildfire event, there will not be a fire engine available to protect every home. Defending your property from wildfire may take many hours of strenuous activity. You must be physically and emotionally able to provide for your safety during the emergency. Most people are not, but may be placed in a situation that demands you stay due to the inability to safely evacuate.

1. **REMAIN CALM** – an approaching wildfire will be extremely loud, create extreme heat and smoke and likely evoke fear and panic as it reaches your home. The duration of the fire front varies by vegetation type and density. Generally, grassland vegetation environments typically burn for 10 minutes, brush lands for 20 minutes and timber for over an hour.
2. Before the fire front arrives, identify vegetation free or green areas to serve as auxiliary **SAFETY ZONES** (for example golf courses, large ponds, irrigated pastures or swimming pools.)
3. Your home will serve as your primary **SHELTER** from the fire front.
4. **BEFORE** the fire arrives: dress in protective clothing (long sleeve cotton shirt, heavy pants, leather lug soled boots); shut all windows and doors to prevent smoke and flames from entering the house; move furniture away from windows to help prevent embers that enter the house through a broken window from igniting furniture inside of home; place a ladder next to home; fill bathtub and buckets for putting out small fires; cover your face with a cotton handkerchief to protect yourself from smoke inhalation; place wet blankets or towels around window and door edges inside the house to stop smoke and embers from entering.
5. **BEFORE** the fire arrives **OUTSIDE** the home: check water supplies around your home and fill any available containers; remove garden furniture, doormats and other loose items that could trap embers; hose down the structure and 30 feet of vegetation surrounding it; block downspouts and fill rain gutters with water; actively patrol your property for any embers blowing in from the fire front and extinguish with wet mops, buckets, backpack sprayers or fire pump; turn on your irrigation system if available; continue to monitor media outlets for updates on the fire.

6. **DURING** the fire: go inside the home when it becomes too hot to stay outside. The skin on your ears and hands will alert you that conditions have become too hot to survive outside. When you feel it has become too hot for you, go inside to take shelter. Take all fire fighting equipment inside with you, including hoses, rakes, shovels and water supplies. Stay inside your house while the fire front passes around the house and look out for burning embers landing inside the home. Extinguish any spot fires. Do not shelter in a part of your home that does not allow you to see the progress of the fire. If your home catches fire and you are unable to extinguish what has now become a structure fire – go outside onto burnt ground after the fire front has passed (or go to your auxiliary safety zone.) Keep well away from the radiant heat that is being generated from the structure fire. Do not return into the house for any reason.
7. **AFTER** the fire front has passed: continue to wear your personal protective clothing; after main fire front passes, go outside again as soon as it is safe; inspect the perimeter of the home to extinguish any spot fires; water down the outside of the home and vegetation; continue to look for small fires from burning embers for many hours after the fire front has passed.
8. **LOOK** for burning embers: inside and on the roof; under the floor boards; under house crawl spaces; on decks and patios; window ledges and door sills; roof lines and gutters; outdoor furniture; doormats; garden beds and mulch; wood piles; sheds or other outbuildings.
9. **COMMUNICATE** your status to your out of area contact so your family knows you are safe.

Work with your neighbors and your community to prepare for wildfire. It is not a matter of **IF** another **WILDFIRE** will happen in Nevada County, but rather **WHEN** it will strike. **Be prepared!**

### **CHECKLIST FOR RETURNING HOME AFTER A FIRE**

Unfortunately a fire has passed through your area and considerable damage has been done. To ensure your safety as you return, please keep these precautions in mind.

#### When driving to your property check for:

- ☞ Trees, brush and rocks which may be weakened or loosened by fire. Trees and brush weakened by fire may lose limbs or fall. Rocks loosened by fire may roll and crumble. If rocks have rolled down a slope, expect more to follow.
- ☞ Debris or damage from fire on roads and driveways.
- ☞ Debris on the road near your home and in your driveway. Clearing the debris to the edge of your driveway and removing it later will help keep your home safe from fire.
- ☞ Utility poles weakened by fire.

#### At your property, check for fire or fire damage:

- ☞ Hot embers in rain gutters, on the roof and under overhangs.
- ☞ Hot embers under decks and in crawl spaces.
- ☞ Hot embers in wood piles, debris piles and lawn.
- ☞ If well or pump-house is in working order.

☞ If your electrical service has not been interrupted you may continue to use your power for such things as pumping waters, etc.

If your utility services are off, check for burned service equipment and facilities:

☞ Is there damage to the gas meter, gas lines, or propane tank. If there is ANY visible damage DO NOT attempt to repair or turn on these services. Call your local propane or utility company for assistance.

☞ Look at the electric meter. If there is any visible damage DO NOT ATTEMPT to turn the breaker on. Call your local utility company for assistance.

☞ If there are electrical wires on the ground STAY CLEAR, CONSIDER THEM ENERGISED and contact your local utility company immediately.

When you have secured safety outside your home, check inside for fire or fire damage:

☞ Embers in the attic, which may have entered through vents.

☞ If electricity is off, before turning it on, check all appliances to ensure they are off. Once you are sure all appliances are turned off, there is no fire damage to your building and the meter does not have any visible damage you may turn on the main circuit breaker.

☞ Check if the phone is working.

☞ Check if security system and alarms are working.

☞ Use flashlights to help inspect your home and surrounding area.

If you find any of these conditions:

**Fire** – stay away and report condition to a local fire or law enforcement official in the area or call 911.

**Damaged Utility Equipment** – report electrical problems or damaged equipment to your local utility company.

**Gas Leaks** – Report gas service problems to your local supplier.

**Other** – Report any other safety issues or emergencies to 911.

After checking your property, continue to use caution and note outdoor conditions:

☞ Trees and poles with deep charring, particularly if still smoking should be considered hazardous.

☞ Smoldering holes in the ground can be full of hot coals.

☞ White ash is evidence of hot material.