Planning for an emergency evacuation, such as to escape a rapidly-moving wildfire, should take place long before an actual evacuation is needed. Make sure that you and your family are well prepared for an evacuation or to shelter-in-place at any time by following these STEPS TO PREPARE » » »

HAVE A PLAN FOR YOURSELF AND FOR YOUR FAMILY

You should have a documented family evacuation plan that includes a map of all potential escape routes, a checklist of what to take with you, how you will care for children and pets, a checklist of actions to take before you evacuate, an identified out-of-area contact and a location where and how you will meet up with other family members after the evacuation is over.

You should also have emergency supplies including Go-Bags packed and ready to grab.

Document, review and practice this plan regularly!

For additional information refer to OCP&R Guides:

#01 - Neighborhood Organization
#02 - Notifications and Warnings
#03 - Preparedness Before a Disaster
#06 - Emergency Evacuations

STEPS TO PREPARE

- Know your neighbors and be ready to help those nearby who are elderly or who may have difficulty moving. Be part of an organized neighborhood that maintains a roster of all neighbor’s contact information and emergency phone numbers.

- Study a map of your neighborhood streets and know in advance which routes (by vehicle and by foot) could be your best potential evacuation options — understand that you may encounter hazards such as wildfire or impassible roads so be prepared to alter your route if needed.

- Keep copies of important documents in your Go-Bag or handy so that you can grab them quickly.

- Have necessary pet supplies on-hand and easy to access (leashes, pet carriers, water, food, etc.).

- Identify the location of your home’s external gas shut-off valve. Have a gas shut-off wrench near your external gas shut-off valve and know how to turn it off.

- If your garage door is electrically operated, be sure you know how to open it manually from the inside and/or outside (and how to manually lock it when closed). Consider installing a garage door opener battery back-up for when the power is out.

- Always keep at least 1/2 tank of gas in your vehicle and park facing out toward the street. Plan to take only one vehicle if possible, or to carpool.

- During a wildfire or other disaster, cell phone/Internet service may not be available as cell towers may be damaged or the system overloaded. A 2-way radio can be a good option to communicate with neighbors and other neighborhood groups.

- Be trained and up-to-date on emergency preparedness and response by taking local CORE/CERT classes and by participating in emergency exercises and drills.
DRESS FOR SURVIVAL

Have personal protective clothing at the ready and put them on at the first sign of trouble:

- FLOPPY HAT
- HANDKERCHIEF or BANDANNA
- LONG SLEEVE SHIRT wool or cotton/denim, not synthetic
- STURDY BELT
- LONG PANTS wool or cotton/denim, not synthetic
- FULL COVERAGE GOGGLES
- SAFETY MASK
- HEAVY DUTY WORK GLOVES
- SOCKS wool or cotton
- STURDY BOOTS

CREATE YOUR GO-BAGS

Pre-packed emergency “Go-Bags” are personal kits that you grab in an emergency when you are told to evacuate. Each family member should have a Go-Bag. These should include items like headlamps, AM/FM radio, medications, water/snacks, protective gear, copies of important documents, etc, to get you through the first few critical days.

Put items in a backpack or other easy-to-carry bag such as a duffel bag or a sturdy shopping bag. Keep Go-Bag(s) in a quick-to-reach location such as an entry-hall closet or near a door in a garage. Make sure each bag is labeled with your name and address.

It is a good idea to have emergency Go-Bags in your vehicles and at work.

Your Go-Bags and some additional items can be stored in a large container. This can then be your Stay-Box of supplies to get you through several days if you are sheltering-in-place.

For additional recommended items for your Go-Bags, refer to: OCP&R Guide #07 - Evacuation and Go-Bag Checklists

PLAN TO SHELTER-IN-PLACE IF NEEDED

Wildfires are unpredictable and spread quickly. Even if you’ve prepared in advance, you may be required to “shelter in place” if ordered or if you find yourself trapped by a wildfire. If you are sheltering, you should call 911 and report your location.

As with knowing your neighborhood streets to identify potential escape routes, also locate in advance nearby places that may be best able to withstand a wildfire. These may be your home, another building made of more fire resistant materials and not surrounded by vegetation, a large, open outdoor area like a playing field or parking lot away from vegetation or, as a last resort, a swimming pool or a lake.

Prepare yourself for darkness (even during the day), noise, chaos, and the natural urge to flee the safety of your shelter. It is important to remain calm and keep together — practicing emergency evacuations on a regular basis will build confidence!

OCP&R is a program of the Oakland Firesafe Council.
Contact OCP&R for more information and assistance with evacuation planning.