

# The Wildland/Urban Interface



## Part B: The Approaching Wildfire

*(Rev. 01/31/2005)*

# Objectives

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Students will learn:

- How to pre-plan for evacuation
- Evacuation notification procedures
- Last minute preparations & when to evacuate
- What to do when trapped
- Other options



# Pre-planning your Evacuation

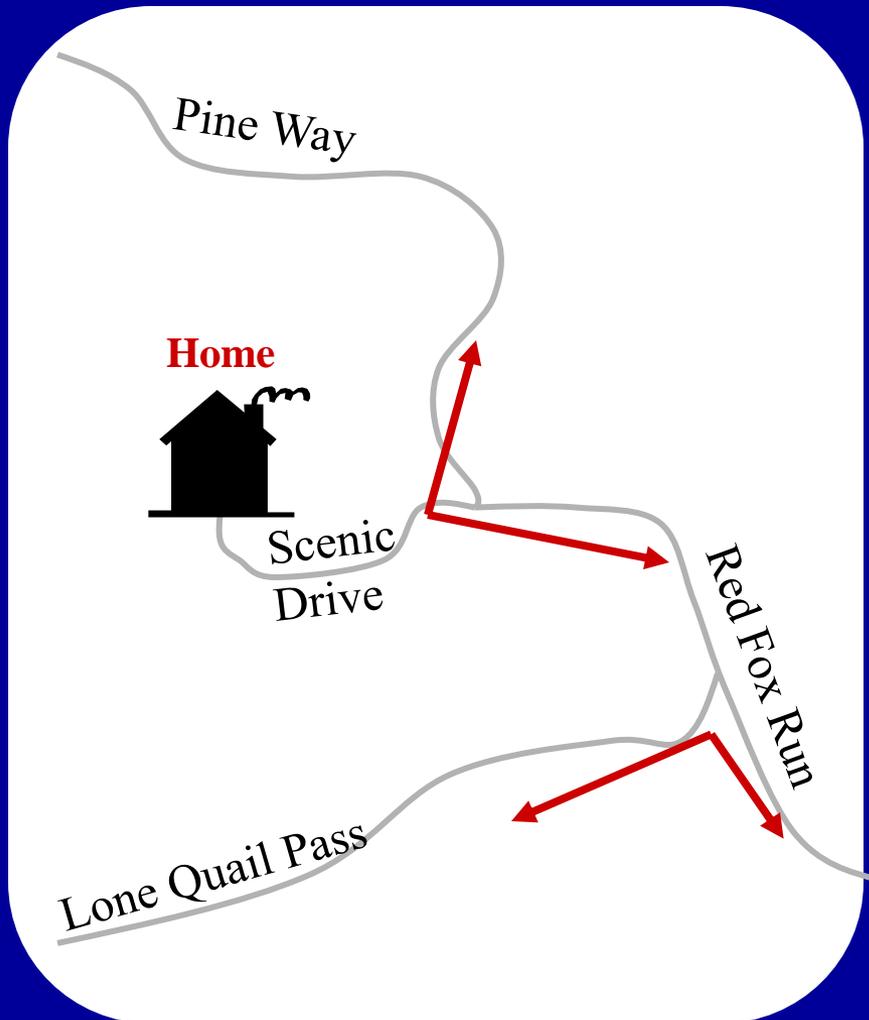


# Get Ready...



- Pre-plan your evacuation routes

# Two Ways Out



Narrow roads can cause traffic congestion, leading to panic for those evacuating.

- Pre-plan at least two evacuation routes out of your neighborhood.
- Roads should accommodate two-way traffic.

# Get Ready...

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- **Make a list of “Important Items”**  
(things that cannot be left behind)
  - Medications, prescriptions, eyeglasses
  - Important documents (birth certificates, tax records, etc.)
  - Photos, art, jewelry and other important mementos
  - Pets, pet food, leash(es), pet carrier(s)
- **Now assemble a “Go Kit” containing the above**
- **Design a Neighborhood “Network”**

# Neighborhood "Networks"

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**Emergency resources will be limited;  
build a network of neighbors to rely on!**

- Develop a neighborhood phone tree
  - This will help expedite evacuation orders, however the phone system may go down. Design a backup!
- Make evacuation pre-plans with those who have special needs in your neighborhood...enlist their help!

# Get Ready...

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Have an evacuation/transportation plan for horses, livestock, and pets.



# Evacuation Procedures

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# Evacuation Notification

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- Fire Service Officials call for evacuations
- Law Enforcement carries out evacuation orders via:
  - Patrol cars
  - Helicopters
  - Door to door
- Depending on location and speed of approaching fire, evacuation orders may not reach everyone.
- Neighborhood phone trees can help expedite evacuation orders



# Evacuation Notification

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- CERT members may be called upon to activate their local area's evacuation plan – but not always
- Working in pairs, team members should assist area residents in an orderly evacuation.
- Stay tuned to local radio stations for messages from the County's Emergency Alert System (EAS).



# When Wildfire Approaches

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# *Evacuation* Know when to go...

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**When wildfire threatens...  
put your plan into *action!***



- Activate your neighborhood phone tree and advise your family contact
- Gather your family, pets & “important items”
- If time permits, prepare your home.
- If at any time you feel threatened... GO!

# *Evacuation* Before you go...

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## **IF THERE'S TIME, PREPARE YOUR HOME:**

- Close all windows and doors
- Shut off air conditioning & heating units
- Close fireplace doors & damper, if possible
- Move furniture & draperies/curtains away from windows
- Move combustibles & fire wood away from home's exterior
- Shut off the gas meter or propane tank
- Turn all the lights on in your home



# *Evacuation* Before you go...



- Back your car into the garage & turn off the engine
- Leave keys in the ignition
- Keep garage door(s) closed until you are ready to leave
- Disconnect electric garage door(s) from the motor

## GATES:

- Disconnect motor on automatic gates
- Leave manual gates open & unlocked

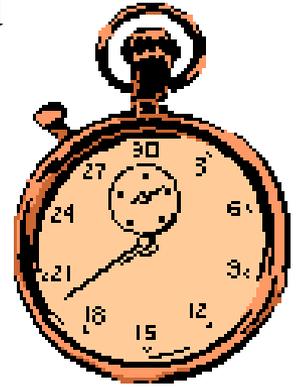


# *Evacuation* Before you go...

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## **IF THERE'S TIME, PREPARE YOUR HOME:**

- 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, opposite from where fire is approaching
- As you are preparing to leave, stay tuned to radio and TV stations for updated instructions & information



# Prepare your home...

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## **IF THERE'S TIME:**

Use a fire-resistive material (like plywood) to cover up a home's vulnerable areas:

- Eave vents
- Sub-floor vents
- Roof vents
- Windows



# Prepare your home...

**ONLY if you are **TRAINED & EQUIPPED:****

Limb-up and/or drop trees.

Remove combustible fencing to prevent fire from reaching buildings.

*Placing a sprinkler on your roof does not work in all cases. Take the steps below instead!*

Apply “special treatments” (like gel or foam) to buildings right before you evacuate.



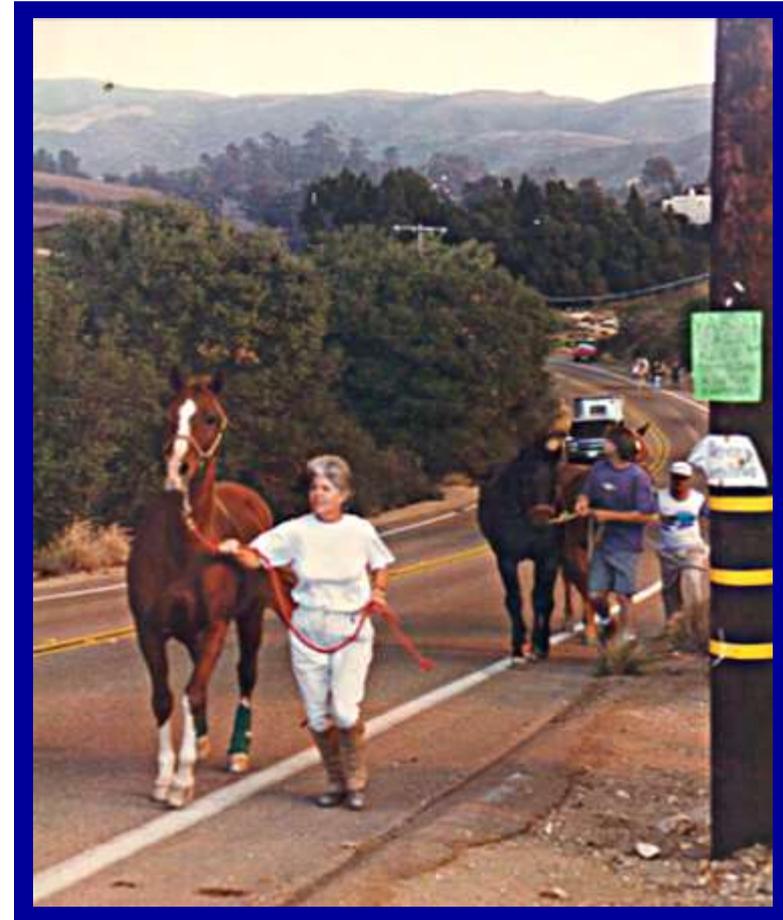
**Advanced training is needed!**

**Consult with your local fire authority to see if they support this training.**

## Evacuate large animals early!



- If you have horses, be sure you own trailers for them.
- Know how to drive a truck with trailer.
- Trailer-train your horses.



# EVACUATE!

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A photograph showing a severely damaged, charred car on a road. The car is heavily burnt and appears to be a station wagon or SUV. The background shows a road lined with trees, some of which are bare, suggesting a wildfire impact. The text is overlaid in a large, white, serif font.

Most wildfire-related  
injuries and deaths occur  
during evacuation efforts.

# *Evacuation* What to expect...

Heavy smoke

Flying embers/fire brands

High volume of cars and trailers

Panicked drivers

Abandoned vehicles



# Get Going!

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Evacuate **EARLY**... the earlier the better.

- Review your “special needs” plan
  - Does a neighbor need your assistance?
  - Are your pets ready to go?
- Close your garage door behind you
- Leave all access gates open
- Drive safely and cautiously
- Keep headlights on and windows rolled up



# *Evacuation* **TRAPPED!**

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## **IF YOU CAN NOT EVACUATE:**

### *At home:*

- Stay inside your home; it's safer than being outside or in a vehicle.
- Close all exterior doors (including garage door *after* putting the car inside).
- Stay calm, initiate contact with your out-of-state relative.
- Call your local emergency number (i.e., 911) and inform the dispatcher that you can't evacuate.

# *Evacuation* **TRAPPED!**

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**IF YOU CAN NOT EVACUATE:**

## *At home:*

- Fill sinks and bathtubs with water
- Shelter in rooms opposite the approaching fire
- Stay away from perimeter walls
- Close all interior doors, leaving them unlocked
- Stay as calm as you can, keep your family together
- Fire-fronts can take 5 to 15 minutes *or longer* to pass

# **KEEP IN MIND:**



**As hot as it gets inside your home,  
it is many times hotter outside!**

# *Evacuation* **TRAPPED!**

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## *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 A/C in “re-circulation” or “max” mode
- Lie on the floor
- Cover yourself with a wool or cotton blanket or jacket

# *Evacuation* **TRAPPED!**

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## *In your car:*

- Attempt to call your local emergency number
- Wait for the fire front to pass

### **KEEP IN MIND:**

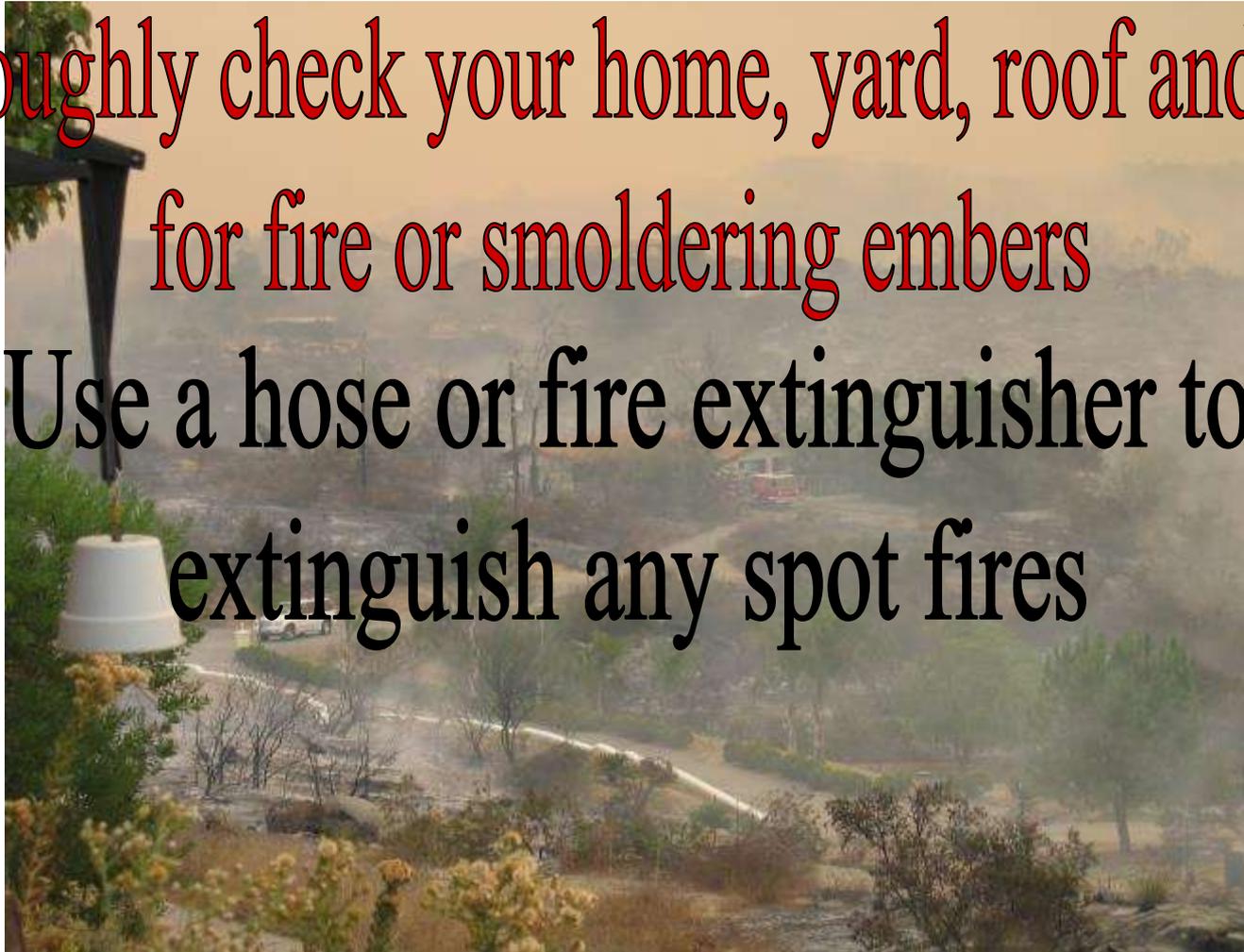
- There will be smoke in your car
- After the fire front passes, if you see flames in your vehicle, wrap yourself in clothing/blankets and exit the vehicle.

**Do not attempt to out-run a wildfire!**

# After the fire passes...

Thoroughly check your home, yard, roof and attic  
for fire or smoldering embers

Use a hose or fire extinguisher to  
extinguish any spot fires



# After the fire passes...

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- Keep the doors and windows closed
- Continue rechecking your home and yard for at least 12 hours
- Update your out-of-state family contact of your status



# Other Options

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# "Shelter in Place"

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## **DEFINITIONS:**

- **Pre-established “safe zones:”**
  - Areas where residents can safely gather until the emergency subsides
- **Neighborhoods designed to shelter citizens in their homes during a wildfire:**
  - Specific fire-resistive construction and landscape features must be in place

*Contact your local Fire Authority to find out if they support shelter in place!*

# Stay and Defend?

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- Each year, professionally trained firefighters are killed while fighting wildfires.
- Citizens also perish during these events.
- If you are considering staying behind, *and your local fire agency supports this*, advanced training is a must!



# Stay and Defend?

- **Make an informed decision based on:**
  - Your training
  - Your physical abilities
  - The known fire conditions
  - Past fire history in the area, and
  - The advice of your local emergency services
- **Dress appropriately:**
  - Wear long sleeves, pants (cotton or wool) and closed-toe shoes. **NO SYNTHETICS!**
- **Keep a level head – try to remain calm.**

# Summary

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**An approaching wildfire presents an extremely dangerous situation!**



- Have realistic expectations of the capabilities of firefighters and law enforcement
- Design a plan for evacuation; develop a “neighborhood network”
- Practice your evacuation plan in advance and know how to prepare your home before you leave
- Make educated decisions on when to evacuate and how to utilize other options, if available.

# The CERT Member

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Affects a positive impact on the survivability of themselves, their family, their neighbors and their community!

