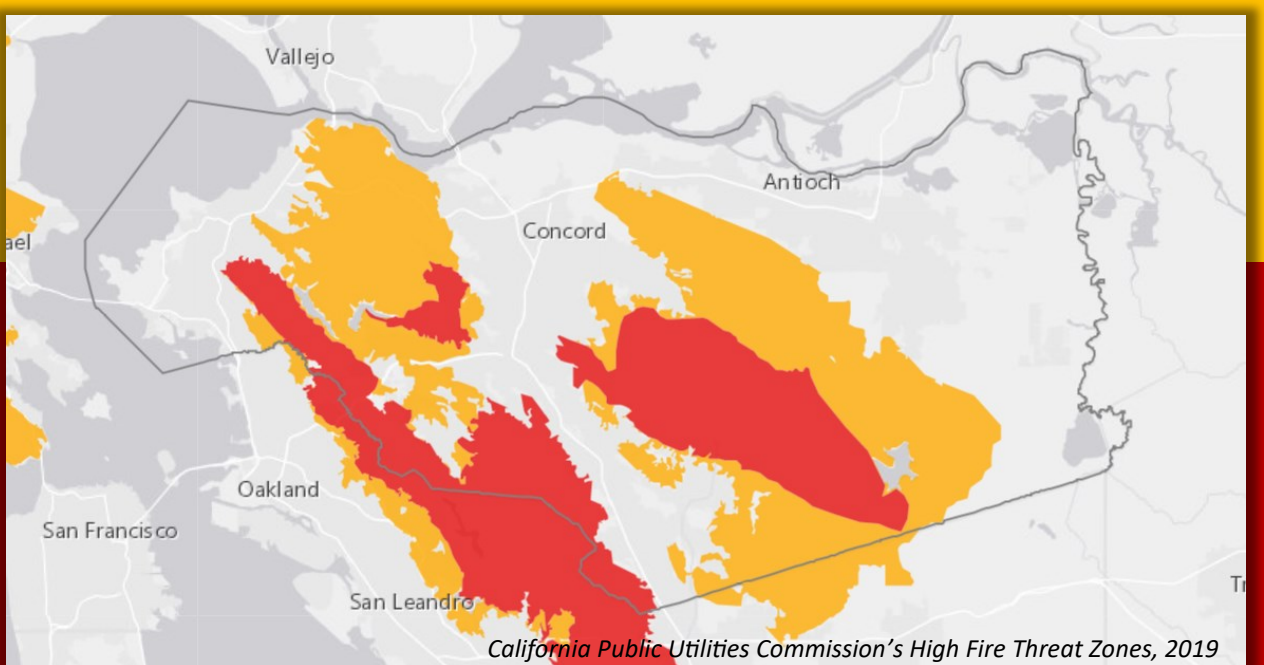
Contra Costa County Residents Guide

to

WILDFIRE

Preparedness & Evacuation



California Public Utilities Commission's High Fire Threat Zones, 2019

PREPARE YOUR HOME ***How will you ready your home?***

HAVE A PLAN ***What will you do?***

MAKE A KIT ***What do you need?***

STAY INFORMED ***How will you get information?***

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS ***How will you work together?***

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

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Over the past few years, California has experienced a dramatic rise in both the number and severity of wildland fires. These fires have ravaged wildland-urban interface areas taking lives, destroying homes and obliterating infrastructure. Six of the 20 largest fires in California's recorded history have burned in the last five years and 10 of California's most destructive wildfires have occurred since 2015.

The information included here is intended to provide Contra Costa County residents with an overview of the steps they can take to prepare themselves, their families and neighbors should an evacuation become necessary. Please heed the recommendations here; register your cellphones with the Contra Costa Community Warning System (CWS), prepare your home by removing excess fuel from around your structures and be ready to evacuate when wildfire threatens.

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For more information visit

- Ready.gov
- CalOES.ca.gov
- Cchealth.org
- Fire.ca.gov
- Red Cross.org

For digital versions of this guide visit

www.cccfpd.org

www.cococws.us

www.cocosheriff.org

*Thanks to **Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Team**, Lafayette **Police Department** and the **Contra Costa County Fire Protection District** for their guidance in producing this document.*

Understand these

TERMS

Current Fire Weather Watches and Red Flag Warnings:
https://www.wrh.noaa.gov/fire2/cafw/index.php

FIRE WEATHER WATCH Upcoming weather conditions could result in extensive wildland fire occurrence or extreme fire behavior. A watch means critical fire weather conditions are possible but not imminent or occurring.

RED FLAG WARNING Be extremely careful with open flames. The National Weather Service issues a Red Flag Warning when fire conditions are ongoing or expected to occur shortly. During these times, residents must use extreme caution. A simple spark could cause a major fire.

EVACUATION WARNING Alerts people in an affected area of potential threat to life and property. People who need additional time may consider evacuating at this time.

EVACUATION ORDER Requires the **immediate** movement of people out of an affected area due to an imminent threat to life. Choosing to stay could result in loss of life. Staying may also impede the work of emergency personnel.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE Advises people to stay secure at their current location by remaining in place as evacuating will cause a higher potential for loss of life.

RESCUE and RECOVERY Emergency actions taken within the affected area to recover and remove injured or trapped citizens.

SAFETY ZONE A place that may provide temporary refuge to residents who become trapped or are unable to evacuate to safety

If you feel you are in danger, don't wait: EVACUATE!

During a Red Flag Warning

one less SPARK means one less WILDFIRE

About 95% of all wildfires in California are caused by people. Help prevent wildfires by following these guidelines.

Current Fire Weather Watches and Red Flag Warnings: https://www.wrh.noaa.gov/fire2/cafw/index.php

EQUIPMENT USE

- Mow before 10 a.m., but never when it's windy or excessively dry
- Mowers are designed to mow lawns, not weeds or dry grass
- Metal blades striking rocks can create sparks and start fires
- Don't drive your vehicle onto dry grass or brush

Hot exhaust pipes and mufflers can start fires

CAMPFIRE SAFETY

- Obtain a campfire permit and understand campfire safety: http://www.preventwildfireca.org/Campfires/

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

- Secure chains
- No dragging parts
- Check tire pressure
- Properly maintain brakes

DEBRIS BURNING

- Learn how and when to safely burn debris: http://www.preventwildfireca.org/Debris-Burning/

Prepare your Home

DEFENSIBLE SPACE *The buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surrounds it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and it protects your home from catching fire*

ZONE ONE
-30 feet from building-

How will you ready your home for a wildfire?

- Remove all dead and dying vegetation from around the house, roof, gutters, and decks
- Keep tree limbs 10 feet from structures and other trees
- Choose fire resistant plant species
- Have a roof made of composition, metal, or tile
- Cover vents to home with a fine mesh to keep out embers

Always

- Have your go kit by the door
- Back your car in when parking
- Battery backup for your garage door opener, or
- Know how to manually open your garage door, or
- Plan ahead for assistance opening your garage door

PREPARE YOUR HOME

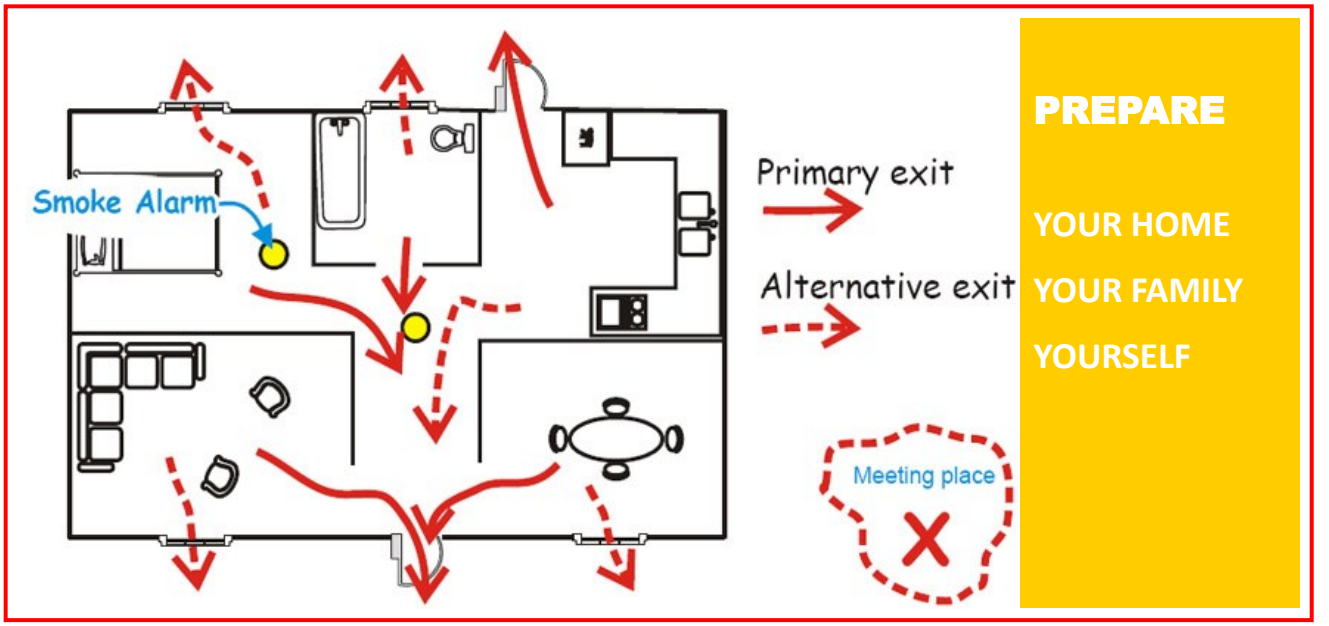
Learn more about Contra Costa County Fire Protection District's Minimum Weed Abatement Standards : www.cccfpd.org/exterior-hazards

ZONE TWO
30 –100 from buildings

- Remove dead and dying vegetation
- Keep woodpiles and combustibles in this zone
- Cut grass and clear brush
- Keep wood fencing and decks away from the home

Make sure your smoke your smoke alarms and fire extinguisher are functional and appropriately placed. If you require assistance contact the American Red Cross at getasmokealarm.org, or visit www.cccfpd.org/education-programs.

Have a Plan



HAVE A PLAN

- **Where will you go and how will you get there?**

Have multiple escape routes from your home and community

- **How will you get alerted and continue to receive information?**

Register with the Community Warning System

- **How will you contact loved ones?**

Plan to text an out-of-area contact to check in with friends and family

- **What will you bring with you?**

You know best what you will need to bring

- **Coordinate with your neighbors to share vehicles and resources in an emergency requiring evacuation**
- **Plan for the possibility of an extended power outage related to wildfire risk (refer to the Power Outage Preparedness Fact Sheet at the end of this guide)**
- **Know how to open your garage door manually or have a plan for asking for assistance**
- **Make sure your home has working smoke alarms and fire extinguishers**

Individuals with Access and Functional Needs (AFN) can work with family, friends and neighbors to plan for emergencies including those requiring evacuation. Remember to register for the Community Warning System and choose to receive alerts in the way that makes sense for you. Planning today with our AFN community members prepares us for a disaster tomorrow.

Plan for your animals

- Have pet food and supplies in a go-bag
- Keep pets indoors if there is smoke outside
- Collar and confine cats in a single room so they can be easily caught in the event that an evacuation is necessary
- Microchip your animals
- Have photos of yourself with your animal to prove ownership should you become separated
- For larger animals, have a pre-designated place for them out of the area
- Be prepared to transport or shelter your animals in place
- Keep carriers or trailers accessible

Try to take your pets with you but don't become a fatality trying to save them

INCLUDE

PETS IN YOUR PLAN

PREPARE

YOUR PET EMERGENCY KIT

PRACTICE

YOUR PLAN

Make an Evacuation Go Bag

You know best what you will need in an evacuation

COMMUNITY HEALTH TIP:

Bring a ***mask*** if you are evacuating to prevent the spread of illness

- Neighborhood map with local resources
- NOAA weather radio
- Food and water
- Whistle
- First aid kit
- Important documents
- Flashlight, extra batteries
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, hand sanitizer
- Cell phone with backup powerpack and chargers
- Medicine, medical equipment
- Blankets
- Pet supplies

HAVE A KIT *for each member of your household including pets*

Documents *stored on the cloud or a memory stick*

Type	Document
Housing	Title
	Lease or rental agreement
	Insurance policy
Personal	Birth certificate
	Passport
	Driver's License
	Resident card
	Social Security
	Military DD-214
	Will and/or Trust
Health	Insurance policy
	Medical record
	Medicare ID
	MASK and Medications
Auto	Insurance
	Title for each vehicle
	Loan for each vehicle
Other	Photographs of household belongings

Get Alerted, Stay Informed

How will you get information about an evacuation?

Register for the Community Warning System

Alerts from CWS come from caller ID (925) 655– 0195

In an emergency, timely information can save your life! The Contra Costa County Community Warning System (CWS), maintained by the Office of the Sheriff, is an all -hazards system, designed to ALERT the community of an EMERGENCY through multiple communication tools. To receive CWS alerts you must register your cell phone number or home phone number, home address, and email address. Your information will be kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose other than for emergency alerts. To register for CWS visit ***www.cococws.us***, or call 925-655-0111 Today! In addition to official CWS messages for evacuations, shelter-

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For other information about an incident

Follow on Twitter

CWS: @CoCoCWS
Fire: @Contracostafire
Sheriff: @cocosopio

Contra Costa County Fire

Contra Costa Crisis Center

211.org

Tune your radio to KCBS 740 AM

American Red Cross

American Red Cross

Red Cross.org

Contra Costa County

Public Information *Contracosta.ca.gov*

Call 9-1-1 in a life threatening emergency **Call 2-1-1 for non-emergency information**

Know your Neighbors

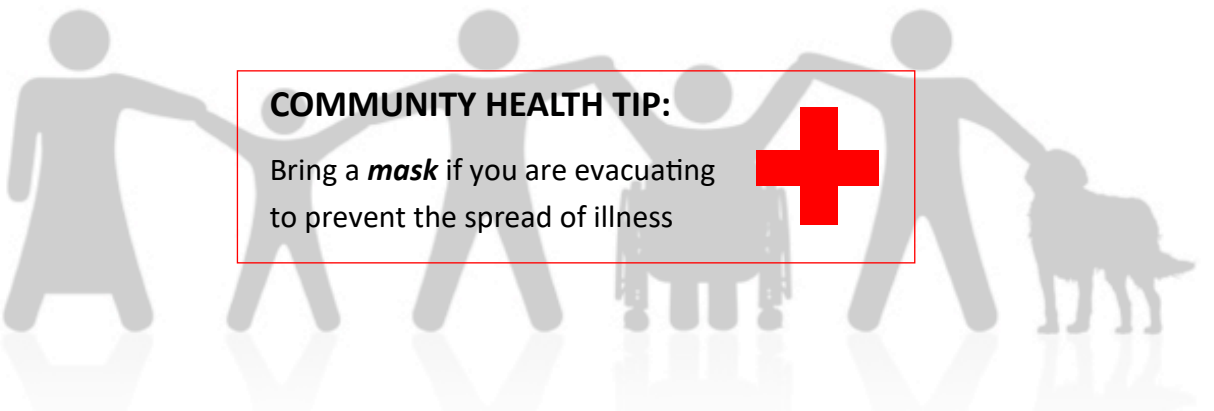
How will your community work together ?

- **Create defensible space for your mutual protection: Work together on vegetation clearance in and around shared spaces**
- **Map and share information about the location of neighborhood resources such as sources of water, routes to safety and the location of hazards**
- **Identify and support neighbors who require assistance creating defensible space, registering for emergency alerts, or preparing to evacuate**
- **Communicate with neighbors who may have Access or Functional Needs (AFN) and engage them in planning efforts. Ask them *What assistance do they require to safely evacuate?***
- **Include caregivers for AFN individuals in neighborhood planning efforts**
- **Meet with first responders before a disaster to clarify expectations and build relationships**

Access and functional needs (AFN) refers to individuals who are or have:

- Physical, developmental or intellectual disabilities
- Chronic conditions or injuries
- Limited English proficiency
- Older adults
- Children
- Low income, homeless and/or transportation disadvantaged (i.e., dependent on public transit)
- Pregnant women

- **If you are home bound, make sure you identify a family member or friend or church or community group member to check on you during an emergency**
- **Work together to identify *safety zones* where you can shelter together if you are trapped or unable to evacuate**
  - ⇒ *Any area without flammable vegetation*
  - ⇒ *Large parking lots*
  - ⇒ *School/athletic fields*
  - ⇒ *Parks with open, grassy areas*



COMMUNITY HEALTH TIP:

Bring a ***mask*** if you are evacuating to prevent the spread of illness

If you feel you are in danger, don't wait: Evacuate!

Evacuation Tips

What will you do in an evacuation?

Go!

- When in danger, evacuate immediately! Don't wait to be told
- Leave early! Take a neighbor with you who needs assistance
- Grab your go bag with important items and documents
- Leave inside and outside lights on for first responders
- Close and lock windows and doors
- Drive safely and cautiously out of the area with headlights on
- Leave gates open for first responder access / allow any remaining animals to escape on their own
- Avoid all downed power lines
- Communicate by text or call to your out-of-area contact that you are safe

If Trapped

- If you are in your car, park in an area clear of vegetation, close all windows and vents, cover yourself with a flame-resistant blanket (from your auto preparedness kit) and lie on the floor
- If you are on foot, look for a safe building or swimming pool along your path
- If you are in your home, fill tubs with water to submerge in and place wet towels under doors to keep smoke and embers out
- Use your home fire extinguisher for small fires (no larger than a small trash can).

For more evacuation tips, visit Ready, Set, Go!

www.readyforwildfire.org

Evacuation Tips

Returning home *Pay close attention to any directions given by your local authorities. When they say it's safe to return to your home, keep these tips in mind to make the transition as smooth as possible.*

After you evacuate, let your loved ones know you are safe.

Register with the American Red Cross ***Safe and Well*** *Program:*

https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php

- **Expect and prepare for disruptions to daily activities, and remember that returning home before debris is cleared can be dangerous**
- **Let friends and family know before you leave and when you arrive**
- **Gather some basic supplies to make your return a safe one. Most of these items can be picked up at your nearest hardware or grocery store if you don't have them on hand:**

⇒ Gloves	⇒ A flashlight
⇒ Goggles	⇒ Bottled water
⇒ Closed-toe shoes	⇒ Garbage bags
⇒ A cell phone (with camera)	⇒ A first aid kit

- **Avoid downed power or utility lines; they may be live with deadly voltage**
- **Walk the perimeter** before you go inside. Take note of any out-of-place electrical wiring, gas smells, or loose debris that may fall
- If you have to use a generator, a charcoal grill, or another fuel-burning device, make sure you keep it outdoors, and in a well-ventilated area
- **When in doubt, throw it out.** Food and drinks inside your fridge or freezer may need to be tossed when you return home — especially if your house lost power or was exposed to heat, ash, smoke, or any of the chemicals used to put out fires

COMMUNITY HEALTH TIP:

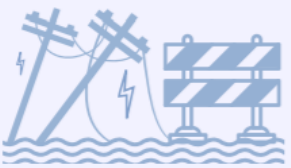
Bring a ***mask*** if you are evacuating to prevent the spread of illness

Help your first responders: Place this sign in a clearly visible location if you cannot evacuate

HELP

Preparing for a Power Outage during Fire Season

What should you be doing?



May disrupt communications, water, transportation

May close retail businesses, grocery stores, gas stations, ATMs, banks, and other services

Can cause food spoilage, water contamination

Can prevent use of medical devices

BEFORE

- **Register** for alerts from *cococws.us*
- **Update** your contact information with PG&E *pge.com/wildfiresafety*
- **Take an inventory** of the items you use that rely on electricity
- **Plan for your family and pet medical needs**
- **Keep mobile phones charged**
- **Identify backup charging methods** for phones and electronics
- **Store water and non-perishable food**
- **Install home carbon monoxide detectors** with battery backups
- **Know** how to use the manual release on your garage door or plan for assistance
- **Keep gas tanks full**
- **Talk to your family and neighbors** and share your plan

DURING

- **Keep** freezers and refrigerators closed
- **Monitor** freezer and refrigerator temperatures with a thermometer
- **Use** perishable food supplies first
- **Use generators, stoves and grills outdoors** away from windows
- **Disconnect appliances and electronics** to avoid damage
- **Check on neighbors, animals and family**

AFTER

- **When in doubt, throw it out!** Throw away food exposed to temperatures above 41 degrees for more than four hours
- **Check with your pharmacist** about refrigerated medications

Home Shelter-in-Place Kit

Consider keeping these items at your home in case of a power outage

- Neighborhood map with local resources
- Battery-powered or hand crank NOAA Weather Radio
- Portable generator
- Carbon monoxide detector, smoke detector and fire extinguisher
- Method for cooking food without electricity
- Surge protectors for appliances and devices
- Consider keeping cash on hand in case

  ATM and credit cards cannot be used
- Flashlight, extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, hand sanitizer
- Cell phone with backup powerpack
- Medicine, medical equipment
- Important documents
- Water: one gallon per person per day of water
- Non-perishable food for one week
- Pet supplies
- Blankets
- Whatever YOU think you will need for yourself, your household and your animals

Preparing for Other Hazards

While this is a wildland fire preparation guide, much of the information included here can help you prepare for other disasters, such as earthquakes, that may occur in Contra Costa County. Fires, power disruption, landslides and tsunamis are all hazards that may result from an earthquake.

Before an Earthquake

- Practice **Drop, Cover, then Hold On**
- Secure items, such as bookcases, refrigerators, televisions and objects that hang on walls. Store heavy and breakable objects on low shelves
- Create a family emergency communications plan. Plan where to meet if you get separated
- Consider obtaining an earthquake insurance policy. A standard homeowner's insurance policy does not cover earthquake damage

During

- Drop, cover and hold on!
- If you are in a vehicle, pull over and stop. Set your parking brake
- If you are in bed, turn face down and cover your head and neck with a pillow
- If you are outdoors, stay outdoors away from buildings. Do not get in a doorway or run outside

After

- Expect aftershocks
- Anticipate hazards such as damage to the building, leaking gas and water lines, or downed power lines. Do not enter damaged buildings
- Check yourself to see if you are hurt and help others if you have training
- If trapped, protect your mouth, nose and eyes from dust. Send a text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting so that rescuers can locate you
- If you are in an area that may experience tsunamis, go inland or to higher ground immediately after the shaking stops
- Text messages may be more reliable than phone calls

Visit www.EarthquakeCountry.org/step5 for tips and videos.