

# Levels of Evacuation<sup>1</sup>

Wildfires are unpredictable and change quickly. You are responsible for monitoring the situation and deciding when to leave. Leaving early helps ensure you and your loved ones safety.

## **Level 1: Get Ready**

Pack your valuables. Include important documents such as passports, birth certificates, insurance information, medications, medical equipment, and animal vaccination records. Sign up for Public Alerts at [www.publicalerts.org](http://www.publicalerts.org) (other emergency alert apps are also available).

## **Level 2: Be Set**

Be prepared to evacuate. Monitor the news. Follow Multnomah County Sheriff's Office and Multnomah County Emergency Management's social media pages. Pay attention to local TV and radio news broadcasts.

## **Level 3: GO!**

Evacuate. Information will be provided regarding where you can go to get information, resources, and support.

***People who need additional help or time to evacuate should do so at levels 1 or 2.*** This includes assisted living centers, people with disabilities or medical conditions, those needing help with small children, as well as properties with livestock needing transport.

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<sup>1</sup> Our thanks to <http://www.readyforwildfire.org>. Much of the content of this packet was taken from their website.

# Level 1: Get Ready

## Pre-Evacuation Preparation Steps

### If time allows during Level 1 Evacuation (Get Ready)

When an evacuation is anticipated and time allows, follow this checklist to give your home the best chance of surviving a wildfire. This may be the only notice you receive.

#### Inside

- Shut windows and doors.
- Remove flammable window shades and curtains, and close metal shutters.
- Move flammable furniture to the center of the room, away from windows and doors.
- Shut off gas at the meter; turn off pilot lights. Only a certified technician from your local gas company can turn the gas on again.
- Leave your lights on so firefighters can see your house under smoky conditions.
- Shut off the air conditioning.

#### Outside

- Back your car into the driveway with vehicle loaded and all doors and windows closed. Carry your car keys with you.
- Put your Emergency Supply Kit in your vehicle.
- Gather flammable items (patio furniture, children's toys, doormats, trash cans, etc.) from the exterior of the house and bring them inside or place them in an in-ground pool.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Move propane BBQ appliances away from structures.
- Connect garden hoses to outside water valves or spigots for use by firefighters. Fill water buckets and place them around the house.
- Don't leave sprinklers on or water running, they can affect critical water pressure.
- Leave exterior lights on so your home is visible to firefighters in the smoke or darkness of night.
- Have a ladder available and place it at the corner of the house for firefighters to quickly access your roof.
- Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals.
- Monitor your property and the fire situation. Don't wait for an evacuation order if you feel threatened and need to leave!

#### Animals

- Locate your pets and keep them nearby.
- Prepare farm animals for transport and consider moving them to a safe location early.

#### Neighbors

- Check on neighbors and make sure they are preparing to leave, especially neighbors who may need extra assistance (i.e. people with medical needs, people with disabilities, children, seniors)

## Level 2: Be Set

# How to Prepare For Evacuation

When immediate evacuation is necessary, follow these steps as soon as possible to get ready to GO! This may be the only notice you receive.

### When to Evacuate:

Leave as soon as evacuation is recommended by fire officials to avoid being caught in fire, smoke or road congestion. Don't wait to be ordered by authorities to leave. Evacuating the wildfire area early helps firefighters keep roads clear of congestion, and lets them move more freely. In an intense wildfire, they will not have time to knock on every door. If you are advised to leave, don't hesitate!

- Review your Wildfire Action Plan Checklist.
- Ensure your Emergency Supply Kit is in your vehicle.
- Officials will determine areas to be evacuated and escape routes depending on the fire's location, behavior, winds, and terrain.
- Law enforcement agencies are responsible for enforcing an evacuation order. Follow their directions promptly.
- You will be advised of potential evacuations as early as possible. **You must take the initiative to stay informed and aware. Listen to your radio/TV for announcements from law enforcement and emergency personnel.**
- You will be provided with information about where to go for information and/or resources. In Multnomah County, Disaster Resource Centers are opened, and if there is a need, they will include a dormitory (overnight sheltering).
- PublicAlerts.org can send you notifications about emergencies that affect you and your neighbors, such as wildfires. You can also download Red Cross Emergency, and a FEMA app.

***Do not return to your home until fire officials determine it is safe.***

***Notification that it is safe to return home will be given as soon as possible considering safety and accessibility.***

# Level 3: GO!

## What to Do When Evacuating

This may be the only notice you receive.

- Do not delay your evacuation. Leave as soon as evacuation is recommended.**
- Follow the directions provided by safety officials.
- Cover up to protect against heat and flying embers. Wear long pants, long sleeve shirt (100% cotton is preferable), heavy shoes/boots, cap, dry bandanna for face cover, goggles or glasses.
- Take your pets with you.

### What to Do If You Become Trapped:

In your vehicle:

- Stay calm.
- Park your vehicle in an area clear of vegetation.
- Close all vehicle windows and vents.
- Cover yourself with a wool blanket or jacket.
- Lie on vehicle floor.
- Use your cell phone to advise officials—call 911.
- Be aware of downed power lines

On foot:

- Stay calm.
- Go to an area clear of vegetation, a ditch or depression on level ground if possible.
- Lie face down, cover up your body.
- Use your cell phone to advise officials—call 911.

In your home:

- Stay calm, keep your family together.
- Call 911 and inform authorities of your location.
- Fill sinks and tubs with cold water.
- Keep doors and windows closed, but unlocked.
- Stay inside your house.
- Stay away from outside walls and windows.
- Place the HELP sign in a front window.

# Prepare for the future: Create a Wildfire Action Plan

Your Wildfire Action Plan must be prepared, and familiar to all members of your household well in advance of a wildfire. Use the checklist below to help create your plan. Each family's plan will be different, depending on a variety of issues, needs, and situations.

## Your Wildfire Action Plan Checklist

Create an evacuation plan that includes:

- A designated emergency meeting location outside the fire or hazard area. (It is best to have more than one, just in case something prevents you from getting to your primary re-unification location)
- How your family will report themselves as 'Safe and Well'. Red Cross hosts a website called [Safe and Well](#). There are also several social media sites that provide this kind of capability. Make sure you know which one your family will use to help notify everyone who may be very worried about you.
- Several escape routes from your home and community. Practice these often so everyone in your family is familiar in case of emergency.
- Have an evacuation plan for pets and livestock.
- A Family Communication Plan that designates an **out-of-area** friend or relative as a point of contact to act as a single source of communication among family members in case of separation. (It is easier to call or message one person and let them contact others than to try and call everyone when phone, cell, and internet systems can be overloaded or limited during a disaster.) Make sure you let this person know they have been designated, and notify the rest of your family and friends as well.

## Be Prepared:

- Ensure that your family knows where your gas, electric, and water main shut-off controls are located and how to safely shut them down in an emergency.
- Assemble an Emergency Supply Kit. Backpacks work great for storing these items (except food and water) and are quick to grab. Storing food and water in a tub or chest on wheels will make it easier to transport. Keep it light enough to be able to lift it into your car.
  - Three-day supply of non-perishable food and three gallons of water per person.
  - Map marked with at least two evacuation routes
  - Prescriptions or special medications
  - Change of clothing
  - Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses
  - An extra set of car keys, credit cards, cash or traveler's checks
  - First aid kit
  - Flashlight
  - Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
  - Sanitation supplies
  - Copies of important documents (birth certificates, passports, etc.)
  - Don't forget pet food and water!
  - Items to take if time allows:
    - Easily carried valuables
    - Family photos and other irreplaceable items
    - Personal computer information on hard drives and disks
    - Chargers for cell phones, laptops, etc.
  - Always keep a sturdy pair of shoes and a flashlight near your bed and handy in case of a sudden evacuation at night.
- Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers in a common living area and in your emergency supply kit.
- Keep an extra Emergency Supply Kit in your car in case you cannot get to your home because of fire or other emergency.
- Have a portable radio or scanner so you can stay updated on the fire.
- Tell your neighbors about Ready, Set, Go! and your Wildfire Action Plan.
- Sign up for PublicAlerts. PublicAlerts can send you notifications about emergencies that affect you and your neighbors, such as wildfires. To sign up, Multnomah County residents should go to [PublicAlerts.org/signup](http://PublicAlerts.org/signup) and click on the link to Portland, Gresham and Multnomah County. The Red Cross Emergency and FEMA mobile applications are also great resources.



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