



# ***AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE CITY OF VACAVILLE FIRE DEPT.***

## **IT'S YOUR PLACE -- KEEP IT FIRE SAFE!**

The Vacaville Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau is once again implementing our annual Wildland Urban Interface Public Education Awareness Program. Every year we send this information out to our residences whose homes abut openlands and hillsides where wildfire is a threat. We will be providing you with a number of fire-safe measures and practices that you and your family can follow to minimize this threat.

Every year in California we experience devastating wildland fires which destroy thousands of homes, businesses, and open park lands. We at the Vacaville Fire Department take the threat of wildland fires very seriously, and want you to know there are simple steps we can all take to dramatically reduce the effects a wildland fire can cause to you, your family, and your property.

Here in Vacaville, we encounter strong seasonal winds, which along with dry flat grasslands and rolling hills, can create a potential fire threat to our residents. We at times experience the same climatic conditions and wild vegetation problems as our neighbors of Southern California do and need to be prepared. It is important that we don't turn a blind eye and assume we are not at risk. We must all do our part to minimize the devastating results a wildland fire can cause.

We have listed several key safety measures which if followed, can minimize this threat. We thank you for your time and hope you find this information helpful.

### ***Maintaining Landscape:***

- \* Keep trees and shrubs properly pruned. Prune all trees so the lowest limbs are 6'-10' from the ground.
- \* Remove leaf clutter and dead overhanging branches.
- \* Mow your lawn regularly.
- \* Dispose of cuttings and debris promptly.
- \* Store firewood away from your house.
- \* Be sure your irrigation system is well maintained.
- \* Use care when refueling garden equipment and maintain this equipment on a regular basis.
- \* Store and use flammable liquids properly.
- \* Properly dispose of smoking materials.
- \* Become familiar with local regulations regarding vegetation clearances, disposal of debris, and fire safety requirements for equipment.
- \* Follow manufacturers' instructions when using fertilizers and pesticides.

### ***Disaster Plan:***

Have an escape plan for you and your family to follow in the event of a fire. Practice this plan 2-3 times annually. Ensure that smoke alarms are located at the top of all stairwells, in the hallways leading to every bedroom and if possible in every bedroom. Check all smoke alarms twice annually. An easy way to remember to do this is when you "Change your Clocks; Change the Batteries in all your Smoke Alarms." Purchase a multi-use portable fire extinguisher for your home and make sure you know how to use it. If possible, become first aid and C.P.R. certified and always keep a first aid kit in your home.

## **ARE YOUR READY?**

Disasters can include fires, floods, earthquakes or even a terrorism event. Any of these disasters can strike quickly and without warning. If a disaster strikes your neighborhood, you may be confined to your home for days, possibly without the assistance of emergency services for up to 72 hours or longer.

You and your family can cope with disasters by preparing in advance and working with people in your neighborhoods. Knowing what to do and being prepared is your best protection in the event of a disaster. Below is a list of important items you may need in order to survive unassisted for 72 hours.

- Water- one gallon per person per day
- Food- have a three day supply of canned foods, energy bars and a non-electric can opener
- First aid kit, a list of physicians and prescription medications
- Waterproof matches, paper cups, paper towels and utensils
- A radio, flashlight and extra batteries
- A whistle to signal for help
- An extra pair of glasses, contact lens, or hearing aids
- Dust mask to filter air
- Plastic sheeting and duck tape
- Basic tools and a wrench to turn off utilities
- A change of cloths, rain gear, sturdy boots, water tight boots, hat, jacket and gloves
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person in your household
- Cash- at least \$100.00
- Bleach
- Copies of important family documents
- Tent
- Auto phone charger for cell phones
- Vacuum tight bags
- Special Items for infants, elderly, disabled persons and pets
- Moist toweletts, toilet paper, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation

**For more information, call the  
Vacaville Fire Prevention Bureau  
(707) 449-5453.**

## **Precautions to take . . . . .**

**if you live in or are  
considering moving to a wildland area.**

*These tips are brought to you by the  
National Fire Protection Association  
(NFPA).*

- \* If you're moving to a new home in a rural area or buying land to build a new home, do a thorough outdoor safety check before you purchase the property. Locate a home on a lot with adequate setback from downhill slopes. Wildland fire travels uphill rapidly. Make sure your home won't be in its path.
- \* Make sure your neighborhood has adequate public fire protection available. Will emergency vehicles have easy access to your property? Is your address clearly visible from the road? Will firefighters have access to a water supply to put out a fire?
- \* Make sure your roof is fire safe. Untreated wood shake roofs are the leading cause of wild land fire losses. A roof made of fire-resistant or non-combustible materials can make your home much safer. Also, use non-combustible (metal) screening in eave vents and for windows.
- \* Sweep gutters, roofs, and eaves regularly and remove dead branches from around or near chimneys. Burning firebrand or embers can collect in the same space that leaves and pine needles do. Remove leaves and needles from cellar window walls and from corners and crevices around the outside of your home.
- \* Create a survivable space, safety zone or "firebreak" around your home. Flammable plants, woodpiles and debris should be kept as far away from the exterior walls of the house as possible. Fences, decks, or outbuildings connected to the house must be considered part of the house; constructed of non-combustible materials and keep them clear of pine needles, dead leave, etc.

**For more safety tips visit the  
Firewise Communities Web site at  
[www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)**

## Equipment Use Safety

Cal Fire wants you to know if you are doing the right thing, the wrong way?

Are you doing the right thing the wrong way- for example, trying to eliminate the fire hazards around your home and in the process starting a wildland fire? Each year CAL FIRE responds to more than 1,600 fires started by Californians using equipment the wrong way.

Whether working to create a defensible space around your home, just mowing the lawn, or pulling your dirt bike over to the side of the road, if you live in a wildland area you need to use all equipment responsibly. Lawn mowers, weedeaters, chain saws, grinders, welders, tractors, and trimmers can all spark a wildland fire. Do your part, the right way, to keep your community safe.

### Here's how to do it the right way:

- Do all your yard maintenance that requires a gas or electrical motor before 10 a.m. **Not in the heat of the day, or when the wind is blowing!**
- Lawn mowers are designed to mow lawns. Never use a lawn mower in dry vegetation.
- Use a weed trimmer to cut down dry weeds and grass.
- Remove rocks in area before you begin operating any equipment. A rock hidden in grass or weeds is enough to start a fire when struck by a metal blade.
- In wildland areas, spark arresters are required on all portable gasoline powered equipment including tractors, harvesters, chain saws, weedeaters, mowers, motorcycles, and all terrain vehicles.
- Keep the exhaust system, spark arresters, mower in proper working order and free of carbon buildup. Use the recommended grade of fuel and don't top off.
- Keep the engine free of oil and dust, and keep the mower free of flammable materials.
- In wildland areas, if you are grinding or welding a spark shield is recommended on equipment. Be sure to have 10 feet of clearance, a round point shovel and a water-type fire extinguisher ready to use.
- Hot exhaust pipes and mufflers can start fires you won't even see, until it's too late.
- Keep a cell phone nearby and call 449-5200 immediately in case of a fire.

For more information about wildland fire please visit the Cal Fire website @[www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)

## What to do before, during and after an evacuation

The terms Voluntary and Mandatory are used to describe evacuation orders. These terms are used to alert you to the significance of the danger. All evacuation instructions provided by officials should be followed immediately for you and your family's safety.

### Before a wildland fire:

Create a disaster supply kit to take with you. Include items such as:

- Medications
- Important personal papers
- Clothing
- Cell phone and charger
- Water

For a complete list go to [www.cityofvacaville.com](http://www.cityofvacaville.com)

### If an evacuation is possible:

- Park your vehicle facing outward and keep your keys with you.
- Locate your pets and keep them close to you.
- Move all propane appliances away from structures.
- Leave lights on in the house and the doors unlocked.
- Leave windows closed and turn the air conditioning off.

### Evacuation Process:

- City officials will determine the areas to be evacuated and the routes to use depending on the fire's location.
- Follow the evacuation orders.
- You will be advised of a potential evacuation as early as possible. You must take the initiative to stay informed and aware.
- Listen to 530AM or watch channel 26 to get the most up to date information available. The City of Vacaville website is also a good source for up to date information ([www.cityofvacaville.com](http://www.cityofvacaville.com)).

### Returning Home:

Fire officials will determine when it is safe to return home. This will be done as soon as possible considering safety and accessibility. When you return home:

- Be alert for downed power lines and other hazards
- Check propane tanks, regulators and lines before turning on gas.
- Check your residence carefully for hidden ember or smoldering fires.

The Vacaville Fire Department wants to wish you and your families a fire-safe year. We are available for questions or assistance at our office located inside City Hall, 650 Merchant Street, or you may telephone the Fire Prevention Bureau at 449-5453. Visit our web site: <http://www.cityofvacaville.com/departments/fire/>