

LOS ALTOS HILLS EVACUATION GUIDELINES

It is the responsibility of every individual in Los Altos Hills to have an evacuation plan for family and animals. Calling 9-1-1 for help is not a plan, it's a last resort.

WHERE TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT IN-PROGRESS EVACUATIONS

- Town Website <http://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/>
- KFJC Foothill College Radio 89.7 FM <http://kfjc.org/> (On the Hour and Half Hour)
- Commercial radio KLIV 1590 AM, KCBS 740 AM & 106.9 FM)
- Social Media (Town Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor.com)
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members
- AlertSCC – be sure you are registered!
- Nixle Alerts - be sure you are registered!
 - <https://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov>
 - Click “In Case of Emergency” and “Emergency-Alerts---Register” to add cell phone, home phone and email
 - Add information to your contacts and edit the settings so that alerts will be received even in Do Not Disturb mode.
 - For text only, text your zip code to 888777

Emergency Alerts

You may receive an AlertSCC, Nixle (or other method above) notification that there is a potential for evacuation and advising you to prepare to go when advised. **Evacuation Warning** = Prepare to go. **Evacuation Order** = Leave now.

People with sensitivities to air quality, those who will take extra time to evacuate and people who need to move horses/livestock may want to leave town when a Warning is issued and monitor the activity from a safe location.

Listen regularly to local radio or television stations for updated emergency information. Go outside to look at the fire from time to time. Follow the instructions of local officials. Local officials will be able to advise you of the safest escape route, which may be different than you expect. Wildland fires can change direction and speed suddenly.

If you believe the fire is too close to your location, evacuate immediately. The fire may move too fast for officials to issue evacuation notifications.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Roads will be clogged with cars. The more people/pets you can fit in one car, the faster everyone can get out safely.
- Thick black smoke you can't see through.
- Many first responders with lights and sirens.
- Fallen trees/poles/wires. Do not drive over downed wires.

PREPARING TO LEAVE YOUR HOME

Based on the lessons learned from real evacuees

Car to be used for evacuation

- Fill gas tank.
- Park it in the garage facing the street.
- Start packing the car.
- Close car windows but **DO NOT LOCK CAR** and leave the keys in the ignition.
- Close the garage door but leave it unlocked (disconnect automatic garage door opener).
- Plan your route. Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts, they may be blocked.
- *Take only one car to reduce road congestion.*

Coordinate Family

- If not all family members are home, **TEXT** them and come up with a reunification plan.
- Text or email your out-of-area contact and tell them where you are going.
- Only make phone calls for life threatening situations so the phones are not overloaded. (Texting is okay).
- Arrange temporary housing at a friend's or relative's home outside the threatened area. You will be more comfortable in someone's home than in a public shelter.
- Call Town Hall or other published number to let them know where you are.
- Keep pets nearby and confined for rapid evacuation.

Turn off Gas and Propane - *If you are sure you have time*

- Shut off gas at the meter only if advised to do so by local officials on the radio or television. (use wrench to move the valve crosswise to the pipe).
- Disconnect propane tanks and turn valves off.

Prepare the outside of your home

- Close or cover outside shutters, attic and air vents and other openings close to the ground.
- Connect the garden hose to outside faucet.
- Move combustible/flammable/explosive items to one spot away from the house - lawn furniture, umbrellas, tarp coverings, firewood, lawnmower gas, ammunition, chemicals, propane tanks.
- Place a ladder against the side of the house on the side opposite the approaching fire.
- Turn on exterior lights.
- Make any available equipment obvious for the firefighters to use (hoses, spigots, hoes, chain saws, ladders).
- Leave an information note on the front door detailing name, destination, cell phone.
- Place sprinklers up to 50 feet (15 meters) away from the structures to raise the moisture level of nearby vegetation.

Prepare the inside of your home

- Turn off appliances, thermostats, fireplaces (OPEN damper, CLOSE screen).
- Leave ONE LIGHT on in each general area of the house so firefighters can see your house in the dark and smoke.
- Close fire resistant window & skylight coverings, heavy drapes and venetian blinds.
 - REMOVE lace, nylon or light material drapes/curtains.
- Move combustible furniture into the center of the home away from windows and sliding-glass doors.
- Fill bathtubs, sinks and buckets with water.
- Soak burlap sacks, small rugs or large rags in the buckets or sink.
- Close doors and windows to prevent draft.
- Secure your home as you normally would but leave sliding glass doors UNLOCKED.
- Place valuables that will not be damaged by water in a pool or pond.

Livestock

- Load into trailers for evacuation or release into an open area (If Town recommends).

IF YOU ARE TRAPPED

- Do not put wet clothing or bandanas over your nose or mouth. Moist air causes more damage to airways than dry air at the same temperature.

- Crouch in a pond, stream, or pool.
- If there is no body of water, look for shelter in a cleared area or among a bed of rocks. Lie flat, face down, and cover your body with soil. Breathe the air close to the ground to avoid scorching your lungs or inhaling smoke.
- You cannot outrun a fire. Wildland fires move very fast and create their own wind, helping them to move even faster and burn even hotter.

NO TRANSPORTATION

If you do not have a car or cannot drive, make a plan with neighbors to assist you. As a last resort, call 9-1-1 and tell them where you are; however, this is NOT a guarantee that responders will have the time or the resources to rescue you.

PACKING TO EVACUATE - REALLY IMPORTANT

The only thing that can't be replaced is YOU.

Don't delay evacuation collecting "Stuff"

- **Documents**
 - Photographs of all family members (in case someone is missing)
 - Important family photographs
 - Health, Home and Car Insurance, Birth Certificate, Driver's License
 - House deed
 - Marriage License/Divorce Papers
 - Tax returns
 - Valuables
- **Personal Needs**
 - Cell phone & Charger, Computer if it's important to you
 - Cash, checkbook, credit cards
 - Eyeglasses, Dentures, Hearing Aids, Walkers, etc.
 - Baby Formula, Diapers, toys
 - Prescription Medications & copies of prescriptions
 - Special diet items
 - Snacks, Water
- **Pets**
 - Pet ID tags, medications, leashes, crates, litter boxes, vaccination records, food, water
 - Pet first aid kit
 - Put pets in one room until you are ready to leave
 - If you have many or large animals, evacuate sooner

WHAT TO TAKE - IMPORTANT *IF YOU HAVE TIME AND SPACE*

- Toiletries - Shaving, Sanitary, Toothbrush/Paste
- Wear sturdy shoes, 100% cotton long pants, long-sleeved 100% cotton shirt, and gloves to protect your skin from embers. Consider cap & goggles also.
- Bring a handkerchief to protect your face
- Irreplaceable keepsakes (jewelry, baby shoes, paintings, family Bible)
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Reading material/games
- Blankets
- N95 respirator masks (protection from breathing smoke)
- First Aid kit

PLANNING FOR EMERGENCY EVACUATION

1. Identify all evacuation routes from your home.
2. Check with neighbors who may need assistance getting out
3. For neighborhood-specific presentations about wildfire evacuation go to <https://www.sccfiresafe.org/education-outreach/wildfire-evacuation-workshops>

- ✓ Keep gas tank of evacuation vehicle at least ½ full at all times.
- ✓ Post **reflective address signs** clearly visible from the street.
- ✓ Keep fire tools (chain saw, ladder, hoes, hoses, fire extinguishers available).
- ✓ Post load limit signs on access bridges.
- ✓ Use non-combustible materials for roofing, fences and decks.
- ✓ Install shutters, fire curtains or heavy drapes on windows.
- ✓ Install screens on foundation and eave vents to prevent embers from entering (1/8 – 1/4” metal mesh).
- ✓ Install chimney spark arrester.
- ✓ Develop an outdoor water supply with hoses to reach the entire house, nozzle and pump.
- ✓ Investigate fire retardant gels and foam that can be applied to the exterior when fire is approaching.

Important documents

Scan documents and keep them offsite. *See page 4 for suggestions on what to scan.*

- ✓ Make a video tape or still photos of all belongings

Clear trees and brush

- ✓ Clear driveway to at least 20 feet wide and 15 feet vertical clearance (for emergency vehicles)

- ✓ Clear weeds, cut grass and trim brush within 10 feet of structures, propane tanks and utility boxes
- ✓ Clear debris from roof and gutters and don't let piles accumulate on the ground
- ✓ Clear vegetation from within 3 feet of fire hydrants
- ✓ Remove trees growing through or touching porch, deck or roof. Tree branches should be 15 feet away from roof and chimney
- ✓ Stack firewood uphill or on a contour at least 30 feet away from the house

COMING HOME

Obtain permission from officials before entering a burned fire area.

Pets

- The behavior of pets may change dramatically after a fire, becoming aggressive or defensive, so be aware of their well-being and take measures to protect them from hazards, including displaced wild animals, and to ensure the safety of other people and animals.
- Keep all your animals under your direct control. Hidden embers and hot spots could burn your pets' paws or hooves. -Pets may become disoriented, particularly because fire often affects scent markers that normally allow them to find their homes.
- Your pets may be able to escape from your home or through a broken fence.

Be Alert to the Possibility of Re-ignition

- Hot spots, which can flare up without warning

Turn on the Power

- If there is no power, check to make sure the main breaker is on.
- Fires may cause breakers to trip. If the breakers are on and power is still not present, contact the utility company.

Take precautions while cleaning your property.

- You may be exposed to potential health risks from hazardous materials. Keep children away from these hazardous sites.
- Debris should be wetted down to minimize health impacts from breathing dust particles.
- Use a two-strap dust particulate mask with nose clip and coveralls for protection. Wear leather gloves and heavy-soled shoes to protect hands and feet from sharp objects while removing debris.
- Wear rubber gloves when working with outhouse/septic remnants,

plumbing fixtures, and sewer piping. They can contain high levels of bacteria.

- Hazardous materials such as kitchen and bathroom cleaning products, paint, batteries, contaminated fuel, and damaged fuel containers need to be properly handled to avoid risk. Check with local authorities for hazardous disposal assistance.

Propane Tanks

- If you turned off the valves on a propane tank system, contact the propane supplier, and leave the valves closed until the supplier inspects your system. Tanks, brass and copper fittings, and lines may have been damaged by the heat and be unsafe. If fire burned the tank, the pressure relief valve probably opened and released the contents.

Heating Oil Tanks

- If you have a heating oil tank system, contact a heating oil supplier for an inspection of your system before using it. An outside tank may have shifted or fallen from the stand and fuel lines may have kinked or weakened. Heat from the fire may have caused the tank to warp or bulge. Non-vented tanks are more likely to bulge or show signs of stress. The fire may have loosened or damaged fittings and filters.

Be careful around burned trees and power poles.

- Any tree or power pole that has been weakened by fire may be a hazard. Winds are normally responsible for toppling weakened trees and poles. The wind patterns in your area may have changed as a result of the loss of adjacent tree cover.
- Look for burns on the tree trunk. If the bark on the trunk has been burned off or scorched by very high temperatures completely around the circumference, the tree will not survive. If fire has burned deep into the trunk, the tree should be considered unstable.
- Look for burned roots by probing the ground with a rod around the base of the tree and several feet away from the base. Roots are generally six to eight inches (15 to 20 centimeters) below the surface. If the roots have been burned, the tree could be toppled by wind.
- A scorched tree is one that has lost part or all of its leaves or needles. Healthy deciduous trees are resilient and may produce new branches and leaves as well as sprouts at the base of the tree. Evergreen trees may survive when partially scorched. An evergreen tree that has been damaged by fire is subject to bark beetle attack. Seek professional assistance from

the state forestry office concerning measures for protecting evergreens from bark beetle attack.

- Immediately report electrical damage to authorities. Electric wires may shock people or cause further fires. If you come across dangerous wires, if possible, remain on the scene to warn others of the hazard until a repair crew arrives.

Watch for ash pits and mark them for safety.

- Ash pits are holes full of hot ashes created by burned trees and stumps. You can be seriously burned by falling into an ash pit or landing on one with your hands or feet. Warn your family and neighbors to keep clear of the pits.

Discard food that has been exposed to heat, smoke, or soot.

- The high temperatures of fire and its by-products can make food unsafe.

If you are in doubt about the safety of your water, contact local public health officials.

- Wells at undamaged homes should be safe, unless affected by a fuel spill. If you use water from a public well, have a water sample collected and tested before consuming it. Water may have been contaminated with bacteria due to a loss of water pressure in the plumbing.

Stay out of a canyon below a burned hill or mountain if there is even a chance of rain.

- Such canyons are dangerous if it has rained heavily recently, if it is currently raining in the canyon, or if it is raining or could rain in the hills or mountains above the canyon. Risks for mudslides and debris flows are high in such burned areas for three to five years after a wildland fire.

Questions?

Marsha Hovey marshahovey@mac.com

Los Altos Hills Emergency Manager

408-722-1210