EVACUATION SAFETY TIPS

NOTE: Due to the many current wildfires throughout California, firefighting resources are spread thin. There are only a fraction of the normal number of resources currently available to combat an incident of this size. As a result, public safety agencies do not have enough equipment or personnel to rescue anyone who stays behind in violation of an evacuation order. For that reason, it is imperative that you promptly obey any evacuation order, so that emergency personnel can remain on the front lines to battle the fire and not have to commit scare resources to perform rescue operations instead.

First responders also need ready access to our roadways so they can promptly respond and quickly change locations, as fire behavior can be unpredictable and erratic due to wind and spotting. People in private vehicles can clog roads, which slows deployment of equipment and resources, and potentially compromises public safety as a result. For all of these reasons, we ask that you please keep the following things at the forefront of your mind, should an evacuation be ordered:

- Trust emergency personnel when they order an evacuation.
- If an evacuation is ordered, promptly evacuate along the prescribed route and promptly follow all instructions of emergency personnel. Do not linger to see what happens.
- These fires are moving much faster than you might think possible; for example, on August 20, the CZU Complex was expanding at a rate of 700 to 1,000 acres per hour.

Here are some other tips to keep in mind as you prepare for an evacuation.

**Vehicles**
Keep your gas tanks full. Your ability to safety escape is completely dependent on your vehicle.

- Always back your car into the driveway with the front facing the street. This will enable you to leave more quickly, as you will avoid having to back out.
- If you and your family leave in separate vehicles, pre-arrange a meeting point at a safe location.

**Know Your Exit Routes**
Always plan out at least two exit routes in advance.

- If there is traffic congestion or gridlock due to too many people trying to leave at the same time, you may be able to take an alternate route and get to safety faster.

**Lodging Needs**
These fires are causing massive numbers of people to have to evacuate and find alternative lodging. As a result, finding a hotel room will be very difficult, if not impossible.

- Assume every local hotel will be full.
- Arrange to stay with family or friends if you need to evacuate.
- Have family or friends standing by to help you at any time of the day or night.
Pack an Overnight Bag
Pack a bag with enough clothes and toiletries to last for several days. If you have pets, be sure to plan for their needs as well.
- Have everything ready to “grab and go” at a moment’s notice. Time is of the essence in an evacuation.

Documents/Photos/Other Items
Well in advance of an impending evacuation, spend time thinking about what important documents, family photographs, and other items you will want or need to take with you. Evacuations are extremely stressful events, and it is likely you will forget things or overlook them in the stress of the moment if you have not planned ahead.
- Use blue painter tape to mark items you want to take to help you remember
- Take time now to make copies of important documents (e.g. insurance policies, titles to vehicles, mortgage documents, and so forth)
- Bring a secondary form of identification if you have it (e.g. a passport).

Plan Ahead for an Insurance Claim
Well in advance of an impending evacuation, take a video of everything in your house and garage so you have a record for your insurance company. Video taken with your cell phone will suffice. Remember to capture as many of your belongings as you can. This video will be invaluable if you ever need to make an insurance claim.

Anticipated Duration of This Event
We all hope there is a break in the weather so that emergency personnel can contain the fires. Given the long-range weather forecast and the number and sheer size of these fires, though, this is likely going to be a long-term event.
- These fires are likely going to take weeks to fully contain.
- Plan with that assumption in mind.

August 21, 2020