

# LOS ALTOS HILLS EVACUATION PREPAREDNESS GUIDELINES

## PLANNING BEFORE EMERGENCIES

- ✓ Identify all evacuation routes from your home.
- ✓ Check with neighbors who may need assistance getting out
- ✓ For neighborhood-specific presentations about wildfire evacuation go to [Santa Clara County Firesafe Council](#)
- ✓ 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.

### Collect 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

### ADD NIXLE and ALERT SCC TO YOU PHONE CONTACTS

If you set your smart phone to “Do Not Disturb” at night, you won’t receive alerts unless you add Nixle and Alert SCC to your contacts and program the phone to bypass the Do Not Disturb. Add Alert SCC (408-808-7871) and Nixle (650-823-0055). Also include the alert system emails [noreply@everbridge.net](mailto:noreply@everbridge.net) or [no-reply@emails.nixle.com](mailto:no-reply@emails.nixle.com) so they don’t go to junk email.

### [Create Defensible Space](#) around your home, deck and other structures.

**0-5 feet:** The goal is to avoid home ignition from blowing embers.

- Use noncombustible materials such as rock, stone pavers, cement, bare earth, gravel, or sand.
- Remove all plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove leaves and needles from your roof, skylight, and rain gutters.

- Clear vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Remove dead branches that overhang or touch your roof. Keep branches 10 feet away from your chimney and roof.
- Remove all leaves, needles, or other debris that fall in this zone.
- Clear driveway to at least 20 feet wide and 15 feet vertical clearance (for emergency vehicles)

**5-30 feet:** The goal is to reduce heat and movement of flame.

- Remove all dead plants, grass, and weeds
- Actively prune live shrubs
- Relocate woodpiles outside of this zone
- Avoid extensive use of mulch, which can convey fire to the house
- Limit fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches to a depth of 2 inches
- Move all gas and propane tanks outside of this zone

**30-100 feet:**

- Create islands of vegetation with horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
- Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees.
- Choose low-growing, irrigated, non-woody plants such as vegetables, succulents, erosion-control grasses, flowers, or lawn to create landscaping in this zone.
- Mow or remove dead or dried vegetation.
- Trim trees regularly to maintain a minimum of 10 feet of clearance between branches of adjoining trees or shrubs.
- Mow any grass to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- To protect water quality, maintain vegetation near waterways; do not clear to bare soil. Vegetation removal can cause soil erosion that damages streams, especially on steep slopes. Remove dead trees and shrubs, leaving the roots in place, if practical.
- Break up dense shrub cover on slopes by creating small islands of pruned shrubs staggered horizontally.

## **COMING HOME**

***Obtain permission from officials before entering a burned fire area. Town, Fire Department, Public Health, Utility Companies and others must sign off that the property is safe to access.***

### **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.

### **Be Alert to the Possibility of Re-ignition**

- Hot spots 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 N-95 or KN95 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?**

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