



*Land of Natural
Wealth and Beauty*

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Don't wait until fire disaster strikes, prepare now

BUTTE COUNTY, CALIF. — The blazes continue to burn, becoming a tragic reminder that disasters like those of our southern neighbors can strike us at anytime. How do we prepare for a disaster like the Southern California wildfires?

The first step in creating a disaster plan is knowing what events are most likely to occur in the area. Northern California is no stranger to disasters; droughts, floods, weather storms and, like those still ravaging nearby, wildfires have also taken us by surprise.

"No community is truly prepared for a disaster until every individual, family and household takes personal responsibility for being prepared," says Phyllis Murdock, director of the Butte County Public Health Department.

The next step is to develop a plan, should a disaster strike. The plan should include information on both staying in the home during the disaster and on what to do in the event of an evacuation. According to the California Office of Emergency Services, the wildfires in Southern California have already destroyed 1,500 homes and displaced more than 500,000 people.

Practicing and updating a disaster plan regularly is also important. Compare the plan to those prepared by other residents or look into plans in place at work, schools, day care centers, and other places where a lot of time is spent. Work together with neighbors in the event of and evacuation to plan for the safety of large animals and livestock.

"Working together to prepare for a disaster can make a significant difference in what the outcome will be," says Murdock.

Preparing and keeping enough emergency supplies in the home to meet the needs of the family is crucial. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit in a convenient place known to all family members that includes the following:

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- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person and pet, per day)
- A three-day supply of food that won't spoil, such as ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables, and high energy foods like peanut butter, granola bars or trail mix, and pet food
- One change of clothing per person, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person
- A first aid kit that contains the family's prescription medications
- Emergency tools including a battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries
- Special items for infants, elderly, disabled family members and pets
- A safe container for transporting pets
- A Grab 'n' Go container that holds essentials needed in case of an evacuation, such as a covered trash container, a camping backpack, or a duffle bag

Additional steps that can be taken to increase emergency preparedness include posting emergency phone numbers by phones, teaching children how and when to call 911, teaching each family member how and when to turn off the water, gas, and electricity, as well as how to use a fire extinguisher, installing smoke detectors on each level of the home, and determining the best escape routes should an evacuation be necessary.

The following Web sites offer more information on how to prepare for natural disasters like the Southern California wildfires: The American Red Cross at www.redcross.org, The California Office of Emergency Services at www.oes.ca.gov, and The Federal Emergency Management Agency at www.fema.gov.

For more information contact the Butte County Public Health Department at (530) 538-7581 or (530) 891-2731.

Attachment: Grab 'n' Go Evacuation Checklist

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Butte County Public Health Department

Our Mission: To protect the public through promoting individual, community and environmental health.

Grab 'n' Go



Evacuation Checklist

Don't wait until you have to evacuate.

Plan ahead and prepare for you and your family in the event of an emergency. A simple Grab 'n' Go Kit with essentials to get you through can make a difference.

Here's what **YOU** need:

- Cash for several days' living expenses
- List of emergency phone numbers: Include local and toll-free
- Names and contact information: Doctors, veterinarians, pharmacies, banks and financial institutions, insurance companies, credit card companies and family/friends
- Photos, albums and CDs storing photos
- Passports and Photo ID cards
- Labeled photos of family members and pets
- List of important identification and account numbers: Social Security, bank accounts, loans, credit cards, driver's licenses, investment accounts and other important numbers (for example, gas and electric accounts)
- Originals or copies of important documents: Prescriptions for medications and eyeglasses; health, dental, and prescription insurance cards or numbers; homeowners, auto, flood, or renter's insurance policies and policy numbers; deeds and titles; wills and trusts; birth, death, adoption and marriage certificates; stock and bond certificates; home inventory



(print or digital photos);
first two pages of previous year's
federal and state income tax returns;
military service records; education
records (transcripts/diplomas); recent
pet vaccination records

**Store the kit
in a secure,
safe and
accessible
place near an
escape route.**

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