

## Are you ready to evacuate?



Fires raging over the hills.

Photo Cynthia Brian

### By Cynthia Brian

In the last few weeks, we've experienced unprecedented weather conditions with temperatures in the triple digits, ferocious winds, low humidity, thunderstorms, and lightning strikes resulting in more perilous and damaging wildfires. Dry conditions will only worsen in the forthcoming months. Air quality is precariously unhealthy with dangerous concentrations of tiny PM 2.5 particles that penetrate deep into the lungs.

Natural disasters know no boundaries. One never knows if a fire, earthquake, flood, mudslide, or other calamity is on the horizon. It's imperative to be prepared for all emergencies.

#### Be Prepared!

Here are ways that you can be ready for the unexpected. Add your requirements to these tips and be ready to drive away at a moment's notice. Besides Go Bag essentials listed below,

these are items that require your attention.

1. Sign up for emergency alerts via our County Community Warning System at <https://cwsalerts.com> where you can register your phones, emails, and text numbers to be notified. Add this phone number to your favorites for notifications from CCWS: (925) 655-0195 . Even if you are already registered with Nixle (<https://www.nixle.com>), our local CCWS is the alert system that will be used for location-specific information. Also, visit <https://www.lamorindacert.org> for more information. To check on air quality, visit <https://www.airnow.gov>
2. Practice an evacuation plan with your family. Know the safest exits from your home and educate everyone in the family on the best route.
3. Install an analog landline phone if you don't already have one. These are the old-fashioned phones where the jack plugs into the wall. Electricity is not necessary for them

to work. Although billing is more expensive than cell phones, when the power is out, these landlines work.

4. Designate someone out of state to report to. Everyone in the family must have their contact information in case of separation.
5. Make a rescue plan for your pets and animals and have a bag ready for them next to your Go Bag.
6. Know how to manually open automatic garage doors and gates.
7. Make copies of your passport, driver's license, credit cards, insurance information, and have small bills available. Put these in your Go Bag.
8. Backup your computers, scan your important documents, and keep files in the cloud or off-site.
9. Family mementos, jewelry, heirlooms, and any irreplaceable article that you can't live without must be stored with your Go Bag.
10. Know your neighbors and their contact numbers to keep in touch to make sure everyone is safe.
11. Make a list of a network of friends that you can call in an emergency.
12. Know where you will go in evacuations.
13. Have a sign already made with your name and phone number and the words "All Evacuated" sitting on top of your Go Bag along with a roll of blue painter's tape. Only if time permits, tape your sign to your door when you leave so that firefighters know the house is clear.
14. Listen to and obey the first responders. These trained men and women have your safety and that of your home as their priorities. Follow their orders.
15. When told to evacuate, go quickly and carefully. Take one vehicle only so as not to clog the escape routes. Do not attempt to evacuate on foot.
16. Stay calm.

Whatever the calamity, it will behoove you to have an emergency supply kit (AKA "Go Bag") in every vehicle and a larger one in your home in a closet or area near the door you will use to escape.

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