

FEMA Urges Wildfire-Prone Residents To Take Preparations Now In Case Of Evacuation

by Bend Weekly News Sources

The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is monitoring a spate of wildfires across the Pacific Northwest and encouraging residents in potentially impacted areas to stay informed on local conditions. "We've had several weeks of unseasonably hot and dry weather throughout the region. Fires can start and spread quickly," said FEMA Acting Regional Director Dennis Hunsinger. "It's important that at-risk residents take action now to protect their families and plan for possible evacuation. FEMA recommends that residents take specific action before an evacuation is necessary. Residents should clear any flammable materials from around the home and place a lawn sprinkler on the roof, which can be turned on when evacuating to wet the roof and make it more fire resistant. Another important step that FEMA recommends is preparing an evacuation kit. Items should be put in a container that can be easily loaded into a vehicle for quick departure. Items to include:

§ Flashlight

§ Battery-powered radio with additional batteries

§ First aid kit

§ Medicines, prescriptions and eye glasses

§ Water (at least one gallon per person and enough for three days for each person in the household)

§ Change of clothing

Â§ Sleeping bags and pillows

Â§ Cash and credit cards

It is also smart to have important personal documents quickly available should you need to evacuate. Consider collecting your driver's license, passport and other identification, birth and marriage certificates, Social Security card, insurance policies, tax records, wills, deed or lease and stocks and bonds. Also, know where your main turn-off switches are for electricity, water and gas. FEMA also recommends that family members discuss how to contact one another if the wildfire comes near when family members are separated. Discuss evacuation routes and relatives or friends outside the immediate area that can be contacted. Finally, make sure your pets have collars and identification tags and take your pets with you if you need to evacuate. While most shelters won't accept pets, an increasing number of communities are organizing pet shelters when large evacuations are necessary. Check with your local humane society or veterinarian. For more information on protecting your family and your home from wildfires, go to www.dhs.gov, www.fema.gov, www.firewise.gov, or www.ready.gov.

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