

---

# *Appendix E*

---

## *How to Prepare to Shelter-in-Place*

---

### **Introduction**

Every emergency is different. During any emergency, people should be prepared to evacuate or to shelter-in-place, depending on where they live and the nature of the emergency. Choose a room in your house or apartment to be designated as a shelter. Rooms with the fewest windows and doors make the best shelters. A large room with a water supply is ideal, such as a master bedroom that is connected to a bathroom.

How do you know if you need to shelter-in-place? (It is likely that you will only need to shelter for a few minutes to an hour.)

- If there is a “Red Flag” or “severe fire weather” warning or alert, you should pay attention to radio and television broadcasts to know right away whether a wildfire is announced for your area.
- You may hear from the local police, emergency coordinators, or government, on the radio and/or on the television emergency broadcast system that you need to shelter-in-place and/or that evacuation is requested. However, a fire may move so quickly that you will have to make this decision for yourself and your family with very little guidance from authorities.

### **What To Do**

Act quickly and follow the instructions of your local emergency coordinators, such as law enforcement personnel, fire departments, or local elected leaders. Every situation can be different, so local emergency coordinators might have special instructions for you to follow. In general, do the following:

- Go inside as quickly as possible. Bring any outdoor pets indoors.
- Shut all outside doors and windows. Locking them may pull the door or window tighter and make a better seal against smoke. Turn off the air conditioner or heater. Turn off all fans. Close the fireplace damper and any vents where smoke can enter the structure.
- Get inside the shelter-in-place room and shut the door.
- Turn on the radio. Keep a telephone close at hand, but don't use it unless there is a serious emergency.
- Sink and toilet drain traps should have water in them (you can use the sink and toilet as you normally would).
- If you are away from your shelter-in-place location when a wildfire event occurs, follow the instructions from emergency coordinators to find the nearest shelter. If

E-1

---

your children are at school, they will be sheltered there. Unless you are instructed to do so, do not attempt to go to the school to bring your children home. Transporting them from the school may put you and your children at increased risk, depending on the fire's location.

- Listen to the radio for an announcement indicating that it is safe to leave the shelter.
- Close all drapes and curtains
- Soak bath towels in water and stuff them into openings under doors or in open vents.
- As a preparatory measure, hold a meeting with all members of your household or employees of your business. Discuss the location of materials and equipment, installation and emergency notification procedures to be used, and hold regular drills to practice the plan.

### **When Wildfire Threatens**

- If you are warned that a wildfire is threatening your area, listen to your battery-operated radio for reports and evacuation information. Follow the instructions of local officials.
- Back your car into the garage or park it in an open space facing the direction of escape. Shut doors and roll up windows. Leave the key in the ignition. Close garage windows and doors, but leave them unlocked. Disconnect automatic garage door openers.
- Confine pets to one room. Make plans to care for your pets in case you must evacuate.
- Arrange temporary housing at a friend or relative's home outside the threatened area.

### **If Advised to Evacuate, Do So Immediately**

- Wear protective clothing: sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothing, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves, and a handkerchief to protect your face.
- Take your disaster kit.
- Tell someone when you left and where you are going.
- Choose a route away from fire hazards. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of fire and smoke.

### **If You're SURE You Have Time, Take Steps to Protect Your Home**

#### **Inside:**

- Close windows, vents, doors, Venetian blinds or non-combustible window coverings, and heavy drapes. Remove lightweight curtains.
- Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off pilot lights.

- 
- Move flammable furniture into the center of the home away from windows and sliding-glass doors.
  - Turn on a light in each room to increase the visibility of your home in heavy smoke.

### **Outside:**

- Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Place combustible patio furniture inside.
- Connect the garden hose to outside taps.
- Set up the portable gasoline-powered pump.
- Place lawn sprinklers near above-ground fuel tanks. If the roof is wooden, soak it thoroughly.
- Soak or remove shrubs within 15 feet of the home.
- Gather fire tools.

### **Emergency Supplies**

When wildfire threatens, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. Assemble a disaster supplies kit with items you may need if advised to evacuate. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks, duffle bags or trash containers.

Include:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't spoil.
- One change of clothing and footwear per person and one blanket or sleeping bag per person.
- A first aid kit that includes your family's prescription medications.
- Emergency tools including a battery-powered radio, flashlight, and plenty of extra batteries.
- An extra set of car keys and a credit card, cash or traveler's checks.
- Toiletries and other personal care supplies.
- Special items for infants, or elderly or disabled family members.
- An extra pair of eyeglasses.
- Keep important family documents in a waterproof container. Assemble a smaller version of your kit to keep in the trunk of your car.

### **Meet With Your Family:**

- Discuss the types of disasters that could occur.
- Explain how to prepare and respond to each type of disaster.
- Discuss where to go and what to bring if advised to evacuate.

- 
- Practice what you have discussed.

### **Plan How Your Family Will Stay in Contact if Separated by a Wildfire Event.**

- Pick two meeting places:
  1. A place a safe distance from your home in case of a home fire.
  2. A place outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- Choose an out-of-state friend as a “check-in contact” for everyone to call.

### **Complete These Steps**

- Post emergency telephone numbers by every phone.
- Show responsible family members how and when to shut off water, gas, and electricity at main switches.
- Contact your local fire department to learn about home wildfire hazards.