



CAHF'S READY, SET, GO!

WILDFIRES

GET READY! Are you at risk for “Wildfires”?

If yes, does your plan address:

- Communication with staff: If staff evacuates their homes, know how to reach them.
- Supply lines & “escape” routes: Know where you would evacuate to and how you would get there. Include maps with alternate routes. Know what supplies you have in place.
- Patient tracking: Develop system for patient tracking, to ensure no one gets left behind and that families are informed about where your residents have been evacuated to.
- Know who is in charge of securing the facility in case of evacuation, i.e. shutting off gas, electricity, locking doors/windows and pharmaceutical cabinets.

Before wildfires threaten your facility:

- Maintain landscaping with fire safety in mind. Regularly rake and dispose of leaves and grass trimmings. Plant trees/plants that are fire resistant.
- Create a 30-100 ft safety perimeter around your facility (fire boundary / non-burn zone).
- Ask the power company to clear away any branches near power lines.
- Have garden hoses that are long enough to reach any area of the facility and immediate areas.
- Regularly clean roof and gutters of leaves, and combustible debris.
- Consider installing fire resistant shutters, drapes or roofing materials.
- Drill your staff about their responsibilities and roles during a wildfire event.

GET SET! You’ve been notified that your facility is in an affected area.

- Listen for reports and evacuation instructions (e.g. via battery powered radio).
- Close all windows, vents and doors.
- If using HVAC, close fresh air intakes and set to re-circulate indoor air.
- Use garden hoses to water the roof and areas surrounding the facility.
- Prepare patient “evacuation” bags & records/tags for transport.
- Contact transportation companies regarding status (“We foresee we will need to evacuate”).
- Minimize indoor sources of air pollution (such as vacuuming or floor polishing).
- If available, utilize a high-efficiency particulate air filter.

GO! There is an immediate threat to your facility.

- Activate your disaster plan.
- If it is safe to do so, shut off gas.
- Mobilize residents to pre-designated staging areas within the facility to speed evacuation efforts.
- Contact your transport companies.
- Contact your evacuation receiving site to inform them that you are coming.
- Contact your county Emergency Operation Center.
- Call your local licensing office.
- Contact responsible parties and/or family members of residents.

Additional Tips and Information:

Health threats of smoke - Who is at risk?

- People with asthma
- People with heart or lung disease
- People who have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Signs that someone is affected by smoke:

- Coughing or wheezing
- Scratchy throat
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pains
- People who have respiratory allergies
- Older adults

Get medical advice prior to using masks on people with respiratory problems:

- Headaches
- Stinging Eyes
- Runny nose
- Asthma exacerbations

Safe cleanup of fire ash:

- Look for possible dangers: electrical hazards, smoldering embers, and unstable structures.
- Wear gloves, long sleeved shirts, and long pants and avoid skin contact.
- If you do get ash on your skin, wash it off as soon as possible.
- Avoid getting ash into the air as much as possible. Do not use leaf blowers, Shop-vacuums, other common vacuums or take any action that will push ash into the air.
- Gentle sweeping of indoor and outdoor hard surfaces followed by wet mopping is the best procedure in most cases. A damp cloth or wet mop may be all that is needed on lightly dusted areas.
- Avoid washing ash into storm drains whenever possible.
- Collected ash may be disposed of in regular trash. Store ash in plastic bags or other containers that will prevent it from being disturbed.
- Ash and debris inside structures may contain more toxic substances than forest fire ash, because of the many synthetic and other materials present in a building.
- Professional assistance should be sought in the removal of ash and other debris from burned structures.

Additional Resources:

- ⇒ www.firewise.org
- ⇒ www.fire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fire_prevention.php
- ⇒ www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/BeInformed/NaturalDisasters/Wildfires/Pages/Wildfires.aspx
- ⇒ www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires
- ⇒ www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/wildfire.html



We, at CAHF appreciate your thoughts and would like to ask for any disaster related suggestions or “Positive Practices” that you may have. Our goal is to use “Lessons Learned” and “Successful Applications” to help educate other facilities within our Long-Term Care Community.

Let’s work as a T.E.A.M. - Together Everyone Achieves More!

What disaster or event would you like CAHF’s Disaster Preparedness Program to use for a “Ready, Set, Go” Disaster Planning Topic? Contact us at (916) 441-6400.