

Fire Evacuation - What You Need to Know

During wildfire season, you may be forced to evacuate your home or business. People are your first priority. Most fire evacuations provide at least a three-hour notice. Take proactive steps before and during an evacuation to reduce anxiety and avoid injuries. You can also make your facility more fire resistant. Visit http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm for fire status information and <http://fire.boi.noaa.gov/> for your area's drought conditions.

Before the evacuation

- Coordinate with the American Red Cross, FEMA, and other emergency agencies to give them the locations of your evacuation sites.
- Prepare and post route maps for each site, including alternate routes. With a large fire, you may need to use "Plan B."
- Consider forming a cooperative agreement with another site to share resources and serve as an evacuation site.
- Work with your regional Forest Service to train staff on emergency procedures during offsite trips, such as trail rides and hikes. Train staff to avoid areas such as closed-in box canyons during fires. Visit www.firewise.org for training information and resources.
- Identify key equipment to be evacuated, including computers.
- Stock a four-day supply of water and easily-prepared food.

During the evacuation

- Explain your evacuation procedures. Arrange for people to communicate with their families.
- Identify special medical needs and gather emergency equipment and necessities, including trauma supplies for ready access.
- Designate enough vehicles to evacuate everyone safely.
- Equip staff with emergency communications equipment (cell phones, whistles).
- Load key equipment, food, and water.
- Warn firefighters of underground fuel storage or LP gas tanks before you leave.
- If you have horses or livestock, consider evacuating them or setting them loose in safe areas.
- For horses, consider adding a two-day supply of feed.

Filing claims

- Gather important records, which may include your computer.
- Using a video or disposable camera, photograph buildings, interiors, and contents to document what was lost in the fire.

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Making your facility fire resistant

- Wet down buildings and roofs.
- Have qualified personnel cut down trees in the fire path.
- Using qualified staff, bulldoze a firebreak, or cut field grass as short as possible.
- Remove brush and dry vegetation near buildings.
- Ask qualified associates to disconnect and move LP gas tanks to a safer location, such as a gravel lot, or follow the manufacturer's instructions to empty the tanks.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.