

IT CAN HAPPEN WITHOUT WARNING...

YOU HAVE TO EVACUATE YOUR HOME



In the event of a disaster whether to evacuate or shelter-in-place is a critical decision. Once the evacuation order is given, it is time to go. No question about it.

Hesitating or “staying to protect my property” can be a fatal decision. That has happened, tragically, in nearly every disaster. If your thought is “I’m not putting anyone in danger but myself”, you are wrong. Possibly dead wrong. Once an incident changes to rescue mode, it will involve everyone who is available. It takes them away from other necessary duties. Rescue requires many people. Simple structure protection can usually be provided by just a few emergency workers.

The goal of this document is to assist the Rohnert Park resident in finding some routes of evacuation, should the need arise. In today’s ever-changing environment, it is only a matter of when, not if you will need to evacuate.



Under everyday circumstances, most would simply hop into their car and head out of town to a safer place. Once a disaster occurs, power and streetlights may not function. Traffic backs up. Downed trees and power lines may block streets. Floods may also block streets. It is important to know alternate means of evacuation. Walking or driving through a flooded street is very dangerous and should never be attempted.



The first step: Where to go?

Once your home is no longer safe to stay in for whatever reason, a new place of refuge must be chosen. The best time to select that location is now. I repeat: The best time to select that location is now!!

Some suggestions:

A relative's or a friend's house nearby or in another area, depending on the disaster.

A community center or church. It might need to be in another area or city.

Do not assume a disaster will happen when your entire household is home. That is unlikely to happen. Designating a primary and secondary place of refuge is important. Also, make sure everyone knows these ahead of time. Keep in mind cell service will likely be overwhelmed.

How do we get there?

There might be traffic jams. We have seen this during recent disasters. Driving away might not work.

Take a look at the following trails map. It may even be quicker to walk or ride a bicycle down the creek path if you can.

https://scta.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/rohnertpark_12272013.pdf

A suggestion: you may wish to purchase a Clipper Card, which you can use on the SMART train and most busses. This will likely be a good means of evacuation.

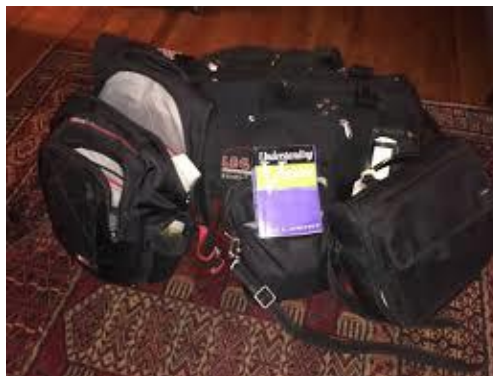
If you need to evacuate, when a Public Safety Officer is at your door is NOT the time to pack things up. The City website has some good checklist of things to be prepared to take with you. Do not forget medicine, food, water and any other needs for pets.

Once you have left, you may be the only person who knows where you are headed. Leaving a note on your door is a wise way for your family or loved ones to locate you and know you are safe.

Q: When were you given warning before an earthquake occurred?

A: It has never happened, it may never happen. Be ready beforehand.

A checklist of things to have ready before an evacuation order is provided for guidance. It is wise to keep packed bags, ready to go.



Additional information is available on Red Cross and Readyamerica websites.

Emergency packing checklist

For your family

- Clothes to last several days
- Sturdy shoes
- Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, etc.)
- Baby items (diapers, wipes, bottles, formula, etc.)
- Blanket and pillow for each person
- First-aid kit
- Medicines and prescriptions
- Items for seniors or anyone with special needs
- Comfort items (games or toys for kids, a favorite knitted throw or book for adults)

For your safety and convenience

- 1 gallon of water per person a day
- Nonperishable food
- Manual can opener
- Extra keys to home and cars
- Cash in small bills and quarters
- Mobile phone chargers (for electrical outlet, car and possibly a solar-charged one)
- Portable radio and/or national weather radio
- Flashlights
- Extra batteries for radios and flashlights

- Spare tire
- Jumper cables
- List of important contacts (family, friends, neighbors, doctors, insurance company, etc.)
- Maps of the evacuation routes and areas

For your pets

- Food
- Water
- Medicines
- Litter box
- Leash
- Crate/carrier
- Vet records
- Collar with ID tags and number where you can be reached

Important documents to bring

- Financial account information
- Birth and marriage certificates
- Passports
- Social Security cards
- Wills
- Deeds
- Tax returns
- Certificates for stocks and bonds
- Immunization records



Want to report property damage to USAA? Need assistance with getting a rental car or repairs? Use the USAA Mobile App, go to usaa.com or mobile.usaa.com or call 1-800-531-8722.

Checklist is not intended to be all inclusive but is provided for your consideration. Please use your own judgment to determine what safety features/procedures should be used in each unique situation. USAA means United Services Automobile Association and its affiliates.

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Once you get to your area of refuge, you will need food, water, medications and a cel phone charger, among other things. Do not forget about your pets, they will need food and water also.

Elderly or physically challenged residents will require more effort and time to evacuate. Please plan accordingly.

When it's over.....

Here's some insight I received from an associate who had to evacuate recently:



Yes, I too had to evacuate. The image to the left is what I saw from my front porch as I was loading the car on Wednesday afternoon.

So now, as I am sitting in a hotel after being evacuated, I thought I would offer some information about exactly that. Below is some good advice I borrowed from CAL FIRE and FEMA to share with you all about exactly that. I hope you find it useful.

Although wildfire damage can be immeasurable, the danger is not over after the flames are out. When returning, Fire Safe Sonoma recommends that you keep these tips in mind:

- Send text messages or use social media to reach out to family and friends. Phone systems are often busy following a disaster. Make calls only in emergencies.
- Have a battery-powered radio to listen for emergency updates, weather forecasts, reports of flash flooding, and news reports.
- Do not return until advised to do so by proper authorities.
- Do not drink or use water from the faucet until emergency officials say it is okay; water supply systems can be damaged and become polluted during wildfires. If your well has been damaged by fire, contact a local licensed and bonded well constructor or pump installer to determine the extent of the damage and what must be done to either repair or decommission the well.
- Use caution around burned trees, power-poles and similar tall structures - the bases may be unstable and a mild wind can topple them over.
- Do not go near downed power lines.
- Before entering your home, first check for the smell of gas. Turn off power until you are sure no gas (natural or propane) is present.
- If your gas has been shut off, have a knowledgeable professional relight pilot lights for you. In most cases, your gas provider will do this for you.

- If there is no power, check to make sure the main breaker is on. If the breakers are on and power is still not present, contact the utility company.
- Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke, floodwaters, or soot.
- Avoid hot ash, charred trees, smoldering debris, and live embers. The ground may contain heat pockets that can burn you or spark another fire. Consider the danger to pets and livestock.
- Routinely check around your home for hot spots in combustible mulch, rain-gutters, dense bushes etc. where a smoldering ember can evolve into a fire.
- Wear a NIOSH certified-respirator and wet debris down to minimize breathing dust particles.
- Document property damage with photographs. Conduct an inventory and contact your insurance company for assistance.
- Wildfires dramatically change landscape and ground conditions, which can lead to increased risk of flooding due to heavy rains, flash flooding and mudflows. Flood risk remains significantly higher until vegetation is restored—up to 5 years after a wildfire. Consider purchasing flood insurance to protect the life you've built and to assure financial protection from future flooding.

Summary: Being prepared to evacuate is a year-round priority. The time to prepare was yesterday. I strongly urge you to do so, right away. Communications and a good pre-emergency plan can save your life and the lives of your loved ones. There are plenty of resources for additional information.

Links:

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services.html>

www.FEMA.gov

www.FireSafeSonoma

www.redcross.org

www.ready.gov

www.readyamerica.com

