



## Tips to Coordinate an Evacuation Drill

This document will walk you through how to practice a drill on your own, and then coordinate and run an evacuation drill for your neighborhood. It is important to practice on your own first, including any housemates/family members, and pets, before trying to participate in a larger evacuation drill with the neighborhood.

The purpose of these exercises is to remind people of the need to prepare in advance for an evacuation and think about:

- Does the family have a plan?
- Do they understand the warning systems?
- Do they have some idea of what to bring and where to go?

### As a reminder, FIRE Safe MARIN recommends:

- **Create defensible space, or a buffer zone, around your home before fire season.** Start with the home and work your way out.
- **Creating an action plan** and to include any family members and housemates. Please refer to the Wildfire Evacuation Preparedness presentation for more information on steps to take before the fire is an imminent threat.
- **Once you receive an evacuation order, GO!** We suggest trying to be the first to evacuate! Try to be in the car, leaving within 15 minutes of an evacuation alert. If you have time, please remember to check on any of your neighbors that may need some assistance. Do you know which neighbors near you may need assistance?
- Once you get in your car, your goal is to follow your evacuation route and get down to the valley floor. **Please stay in your car!**

### It will be important to prep a few things before the day of the drill:

1. Prepare your "go bags" or emergency "go kits"
2. Familiarize yourself, family, and pets with procedures
  - a. If you have pets, they need to be crate trained well in advance. Check out Marin Humane society training classes if you need help w/ training: <https://training.marinhumane.org/oh-behave/events/seminars-events>
3. Know your evacuation route options (e.g. one possibility is the route you take to your grocery store)
4. Decide which vehicle to take if you have more than one.
  - a. Which one accommodates most needs and can fit your entire family?
  - b. Go with whichever has highest clearance
  - c. Fill the tank with gas or fully charge battery
5. Follow the Evacuation Checklist (**THIS IS YOUR MAIN RESOURCE FOR GUIDANCE on proper steps**):  
<https://www.firesafemarin.org/evacuation/checklist>



## **Drill #1: Practice on your own. Include family members/housemates and pets.**

FIRE Safe MARIN recommends practicing on your own first before trying to take part in a larger drill so that you have nailed down your own wildfire action plan and everyone in your family is aware of what to expect. Each home will have its own unique challenges, so it is important to familiarize yourself with them.

Our goal for this exercise is to focus on those first few moments after which you receive an evacuation order. It is recommended to have everyone in the car and ready to leave within 15 minutes. This happens fast, and when we receive an alarm like this, our minds can sometimes get scattered with the adrenaline kicking in. Practicing will help to ensure some of these steps become more natural so you are not overwhelmed during a real evacuation. During a moment of high stress it is always helpful to take a few deep breaths, so incorporate this into your drill at the beginning. This may be the best initial step when you get the alert.

### **Run Drill #1:**

- 1) Pick a day and time that works for your family or housemates
  - a) Once a day is selected, you can choose a specific time and go when the clock strikes that time. Or, you can set an alarm, or be the alarm:
    - i) You could set an alarm on your clock for that specific time
    - ii) You could send a text or email to all of your family members/housemates at that time
  - b) Time yourselves—from the start of the evacuation drill to getting into your vehicle. Can you do it in 15 minutes or less?
- 2) Alarm goes off at set time. GO!
  - a) Take a few deep breaths to start. Fill the lungs fully with air through the nose, then exhale through the mouth. Controlled breathing will help you calm down and think more clearly.
- 3) Get dressed! And, dress appropriately (ideally, we would want these items easily accessible and already near the bedside or in a bag during red flag warning days):
  - a) Sturdy leather boots with Vibram-lug soles
  - b) Full-coverage goggles
  - c) Leather work gloves
  - d) Long pants (wool or cotton) with sturdy belt
  - e) Long sleeved shirt that covers neck (tuck into pants)
  - f) Floppy cotton or wool hat
  - g) Handkerchief or bandana to cover face
  - h) N95 mask for smoke
  - i) Wool socks
- 4) Grab your go bags/go kits (1 for each person) and throw inside the vehicle.
  - a) Use your car if at all possible (and choose only 1 if you have multiple)



but if circumstances find you without a car, you may have to walk/bike.

- 5) Grab your pets' go bags/go kits and have them ready in their crate and load into vehicle
- 6) Don't forget your phone (and a charger) and any easily accessible irreplaceable items
- 7) If time allows, Prepare the Home (utilize column 3 on Evac. Checklist)
- 8) Once you have everything packed and in the car, stop the timer. How long did it take you?
  - a) Once in the car, you would want to take the most direct paved route to a valley floor. Proceed downhill, away from the fire if possible, and know of at least two routes.



## **Drill #2: Practice with your neighbors.**

Coordinating with a larger group of people will be a little more difficult, so we'd suggest selecting a date about a month or so ahead of time. Whomever is the lead, can possibly send out weekly reminders leading up to the event. Alert the Fire Department and the Police Department so that they are aware.

### **For selecting a specific time on the given day, you could:**

- Choose a specific time and rely on the participants to start on their own at that given time, or
- Choose a window (i.e. 1pm-4pm) on a given date, and then make everyone aware that the lead will send out a mass email or mass text at any given point in that window to start the event

### **Choose an Evacuation Area, or number of homes to include**

It is important to select a realistic number of homes that can participate in a small to modest size exercise. The purpose of the exercise is to remind people of the need to prepare in advance for an evacuation. Does the family have a plan? Do they understand the warning systems? Do they have some idea of what to bring and where to go?

### **Publicize the Event**

- Involve block captains if you have them
- Place door hangers advertising the event on each home be sure to ask them to give you their contact information so you can give them "the alert"
- Email residents
- Make short reminder phone calls to each resident in the week/ or days prior to event

Participation should only require a 15-20 minute time commitment. Leave the house, sign in at the evacuation site, return home or stay for the Safety Fair.

### **Choose an evacuation site:**

- Choose a local park parking lot
- Have a designated lead located at the evacuation site with a stopwatch and a notepad to check people off a list. Could also include, but not limited to the following:
  - Person at base can tally kids, adults, and pets
  - Record video to see people wearing
  - Check their supplies (what did they bring with them?)
  - Is their car tank full (the gas stations may not have power during a real evacuation so hopefully this was filled up during red flag conditions)?
- Or, you could even run the drill with everyone, but forgo any evacuation site and have them text you when they are in their car. Then you can simply check them off the list and record the time when you receive their response



## **Run Drill #2**

- 1) Lead initiates alert at set time or within timing window.
- 2) Residents are alerted to evacuate to a central site.
  - a. Use your car if at all possible (and choose only 1 if you have multiple) but if circumstances find you without a car, you may have to walk/bike.
- 3) Residents adhere to Drill #1 above and GO!
- 4) Once at the central site, have them check in and register. This is an important opportunity to:
  - a. Get updated contact information
  - b. Encourage residents to sign up for Alert Marin
  - c. Get feedback on the exercise:
    - i) Was communication okay?
    - ii) Suggestions to make it better?
    - iii) Time it took you to get ready?
    - iv) What were the issues?

## **MYTHS with drills:**

- TRAFFIC IS OKAY. It is not necessary for everyone to get into their car and create a traffic jam...this is inevitable. Get into the car and stay in the car.
- It is not necessary to conduct these drills with FDs.