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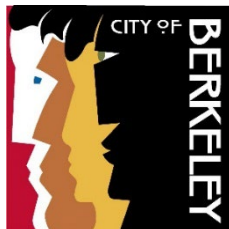
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Household name

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Home Address

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# HOUSEHOLD FIRE WEATHER PLANNING TOOL

CITY OF BERKELEY FIRE DEPARTMENT



Dear Berkeley community,

This Household Fire Weather Planning Tool will guide you through important decisions to stay safe during “Extreme Fire Weather” and evacuations. By taking time to think through these issues now, ahead of an emergency, you will have more power when the time comes to act.

### **Our fire challenge**

Fire has always been a natural part of our ecosystem, maintaining forest health, controlling invasive species, and providing a rich habitat for wildlife. In Berkeley, densely-built homes and vegetation have been introduced to hillside areas that required burning to maintain ecological balance. For many years people have tried to prevent fire in forests and developed areas, disrupting this balance. As a result, catastrophic fires are now occurring throughout the Bay Area and the world. We must respect that in Berkeley, we built densely on a place that nature wants to periodically burn, and we must be ready to act when this natural process occurs.

History has shown that evacuations out of the Berkeley hills will be challenging. In the 1991 Tunnel Fire, cars backed up on narrow roadways. Many people had to abandon their vehicles and run. Twenty-five people lost their lives. We have seen similar situations play out in wildfires across the West including the Camp Fire in Paradise (85 deaths), the Tubbs Fire in Santa Rosa (29), and the Maui fires in Lahaina (101).

When the Berkeley Fire Department examined wildfire history, it became clear to us that the most catastrophic fires started under extreme fire weather conditions. During extreme fire weather, low humidity and strong winds spread fires with breathtaking speed. Normal firefighting is hampered, and firefighters shift their focus to moving people out of harm’s way. With climate change, fire weather is becoming more frequent. Berkeley’s roadways are still constrained, and do not have capacity to quickly move large populations out of the way of a fast-moving fire. **For these reasons, we recommend that you leave the hills during extreme fire weather, even before a fire starts.**



## **Make the right decisions for your household**

Ultimately, you are responsible for choosing when to leave. In this document we share key decisions you'll need to make about your safety during extreme fire weather or an evacuation. We designed this tool so you can complete it with everyone in your household, giving you a shared plan before you are put into a crisis situation.

### **Planning together**

Especially here in our city, we live in community with one another. Every day we rely on people around us for help. As you make your plans for fire weather and evacuation, think about the friends, family, and caretakers you rely on every day – will you need their help to pack up and leave? If so, create this plan with them.

The people we rely on the most don't always live nearby. Once you have used this planning tool to understand the help you will need, create your second line of defense – say hello to your neighbors. Ask them for the help you will need to safely evacuate. These conversations can feel uncomfortable. Many of us have lost touch with the people living next to us. There is good news: time after time disasters bring communities together. Don't wait for a disaster to make a connection. We hope this document will help facilitate conversations with the people who are closest to you and can help in an emergency. Once your plan is ready, share copies with anyone who will help you, and keep a copy readily accessible so you can review it in the event an emergency occurs.

In service,

David Sprague  
Fire Chief  
City of Berkeley

**DAVID SPRAGUE / FIRE CHIEF**

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## Members of our household

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- Everyone in our household knows their role in our plan.

List Household members (humans and pets):

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## Our household has decided to leave...

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### Before a fire

- Red Flag Warning conditions
- Extreme fire weather conditions

### After a fire starts

- Evacuation warning for our zone
- Evacuation order for our zone



### Definitions and details:

Will you wait to evacuate until after a fire starts, or will you leave during periods of heightened threat?

#### Fire weather: heightened threat

- Red Flag Warning: Indicates elevated fire risk. Declared by National Weather Service.
- Extreme fire weather: Rare conditions of extremely elevated fire risk. Declared by Berkeley Fire Department.

The Berkeley Fire Department recommends that residents in [Fire Zones 2 and 3](#) (the Berkeley Hills) leave during extreme fire weather, before a fire starts. A fire that starts during extreme fire weather will spread quickly, and you may not have enough time to evacuate. See [www.berkeleyca.gov/wildfire](http://www.berkeleyca.gov/wildfire) to learn about fire weather in Berkeley.

#### Evacuation warning/order: a fire has ignited

- Evacuation Warning: Prepare to evacuate. Evacuate now if you will need extra time to evacuate (children, pets, elders, people with mobility challenges).

- Evacuation Order: Evacuate now.

Even if you have not received an evacuation warning or order, you should leave immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Fire in a home adjacent to yours, or
- Fire in a home close to yours and the wind is strong, or
- Strong winds are carrying smoke or embers through or over your neighborhood, or
- You feel threatened.

Our household is ready to receive emergency alerts.

Berkeley's emergency alerting systems will be used to share Red Flag Warnings, extreme fire weather, and evacuation instructions.

All members of my household:

- Have signed up for [AC Alert](#)
- Have listened to the [fire evacuation alert](#) from the Outdoor Warning System sirens
- Have visited [Berkeley's Emergency Map](#) and learned our evacuation zone.
- Have downloaded the Genasys Protect app to our smartphones to get alerts about emergencies in the areas of Berkeley we care about.
  - We have also added addresses we care about (ex: home, work, school) as "My Saved Locations."

Our Household's Evacuation Zone: BER-E \_\_\_\_\_

- Know what to do if they hear an emergency siren tone: Find more information!
  1. Check their phones
  2. Check [Berkeley's Emergency Map](#)



#### Definitions and details:

- **AC Alert** is Berkeley's primary emergency alerting system. [Sign up](#) for AC Alert before a fire to make sure you get messages. Officials will use it to send alerts about fire weather and evacuations.
- During a fire, responders will post real-time evacuation information on **Berkeley's Emergency Map**. You can [bookmark the site](#) on your phones and computers.
- The **Outdoor Warning System** is a network of emergency sirens designed to alert people outdoors to a life-threatening emergency. Check out [our library of](#)

[siren messages](#) to get familiar with alerts you could hear from Berkeley's outdoor warning system.

When we leave, we will stay at...

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**Evacuation Location 1 (friend, family, or hotel):** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers: (\_\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_/ (\_\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_

Evacuation Zone for this location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Evacuation Location 2 (friend, family, or hotel):** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers: (\_\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_/ (\_\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_

Evacuation Zone for this location: \_\_\_\_\_



**Tip:** Plan now for places you can stay outside the Berkeley Hills during fire weather and/or fire evacuation. Your options might include friends, family, or a hotel.

If there is a fire evacuation and residents are required to stay away from their homes for a long period, the City will work with the Red Cross to designate shelters for evacuees and their pets who have nowhere else to go. These shelters will be group living situations to meet basic needs. You will sleep on a cot, sharing a large space (ex: a basketball court or community room) with many other evacuees. Your pet will be in a kennel. If you can make your own plans now, you will likely be more comfortable.

Getting help to pack and leave

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Think about your household and choose one:

- No one in our household will need help to pack and leave, **OR**
- One or more people in our household will need help to pack and leave, so:
  - Before a fire starts, we will get help from \_\_\_\_\_ to pack and leave. Phone:(\_\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_
  - In an emergency evacuation, I will get help from my neighbor, \_\_\_\_\_, to pack and leave. Phone:(\_\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_



**Tips:**

- Answer the following questions:
  - What kinds of help will you need to leave your home?
    - Navigating stairs
    - Lifting heavy items
    - Gathering pets
    - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Can everyone in your household pack and leave on their own?
  - In an emergency, normal helpers might not be available. Neighbors and people who live close by are the best option. Who is around to help you in emergencies?
- Involve your friends, family, and neighbors in planning now – don't wait for an emergency to ask for help.

How we will get there

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**Leaving Before a Fire**

We will (select all that apply):

- Drive
- Take the bus
- Use Paratransit
- Take Uber/Lyft/Taxi
- Ride bike
- Walk

**Leaving After a Fire Starts**

We will (select all that apply):

- Drive\*
  - Carpool with: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
  - Carpool with: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
  - Carpool with: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
- Bike\*
- Walk

\*We will always be ready to walk.



**Tip:** You will have more choices the earlier you leave. If you choose to leave after a fire starts, you must always be ready to walk in case you encounter a traffic jam, get a flat tire, or the roadway is blocked.

## Our path of travel

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### Leaving Before a Fire

Any route we choose to our designated location (family, friend, or hotel)

### Leaving After a Fire Starts

If you leave after a fire starts, you should plan multiple routes away from your home in multiple directions. Plan at least 2 routes for driving and another 2 for walking.

- We have chosen routes out of the hills:
  - 2 or more driving routes
  - 2 or more walking routes
- We have highlighted routes on a map and placed them in our go-bag (backpack to carry your evacuation needs), see “What we will pack” below



#### Tips:

- While wind-driven fires generally push from east to west, you may also be able to evacuate to the north or south to get out of harm’s way.
- When you choose walking routes, include [Berkeley Path Wanderers paths](#). These paths often offer the most direct path out of the hills.
- Highlight your evacuation routes on a map.
- Practice using the different routes you’ve chosen to leave your neighborhood. Make it a fun family outing or weekend routine. Habits you create now will help during an emergency.
- During a fire evacuation, if possible, law enforcement personnel will provide fire evacuees with evacuation directions. If you do not receive directions, use main roads to connect to major streets or freeways. Once you are clear of the fire area, go to a friend or family’s home or to a hotel. If these are not options for you, drive to a parking lot out of the hazard area and await additional information and instructions.

## What we will pack

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### Leaving Before a Fire

- Items to be safe and comfortable while we are away
- Medications, prescriptions, and medical devices
- Computers, electronics & chargers
- Irreplaceable items (family treasures, art, photo albums)
- Other valuables

### Leaving After a Fire Starts

Have a go-bag (backpack) packed and ready with basic items:

- Flashlight/headlamp
- Area map, marked with driving/ walking evacuation routes
- Printed list of phone numbers and email addresses for important contacts
- Map with evacuation routes marked
- Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- Prescriptions or critical medications
- Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses
- Extra set of keys
- Whistle - to signal for help
- Cell phone charger
- Copies of important documents (paper copy or jump drive)
- Cotton face mask or dry bandana for use while evacuating
- N95, KN95 or surgical mask for use at your evacuation location
- Toiletries and change of clothing
- Hand sanitizer
- Add last minute:** Wallet, cell phone



#### Tips:

If you are leaving before a fire starts, focus on:

- Items you need to be safe and comfortable when you arrive at your destination
- Irreplaceable or valuable items that you wouldn't want to lose in a fire.

If you are leaving during a fire evacuation, focus on:

- Items that you need to safely evacuate the fire area
- Items that you need to safely live until you arrive at your personal evacuation location, or until government/Red Cross sheltering and assistance become available
- **Remember:** You are responsible for carrying your go-bag. Make sure you can lift and carry your go-bag for your entire evacuation route.

## What we will wear

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### Leaving Before a Fire

Any clothes we choose

### Leaving After a Fire Starts

If there is time to change:

- Closed-toe shoes
- Cotton clothes (no polyester!) - Long sleeved shirts, pants, and a hat with a brim
- Cotton mask or dry bandana (**NOT** N95, KN95 or surgical mask which may melt to skin in high temperatures)

 **Tip:** The best clothes for fire evacuation are made of natural fibers including wool that will not melt, and will protect your skin from flying embers.

## Planning for our children

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### Our children will leave before a fire

- Our children will leave (when): \_\_\_\_\_
- Our children will go to:
  - Same place as household (see above)
  - Different place:
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone: (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
- Evacuation Zone for this location: \_\_\_\_\_

### Our children will leave after a fire starts

We are ready to walk with our children:

- Our children can walk/run for long periods without help.
- We are ready to carry our children out on foot with carriers/baby wearing, backpack.

## Planning for our pets

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### Our pets will leave before a fire

- Our pets will leave (when): \_\_\_\_\_
- Our pets will go to:
  - Same place as household (see above)
  - Different location (pet boarding, etc.) – see below:
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone: (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_
- Evacuation Zone for this location: \_\_\_\_\_

### Our pets will leave after a fire starts

We are ready to walk with our pets:

- Our pets can walk/run for long periods without help. We have leashes ready.
- We are ready to walk our pets out using carriers (consider a pet carrier with wheels).
- We have made a plan with our neighbors for them to take our pets if there is an evacuation order and we are not at home.

Before we leave, we will take final steps to protect our home.

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### Leaving Before a Fire

Inside our house

- Shut all windows and doors
- Raise shades and remove curtains
- Move flammable furniture to the center of the room, away from windows and doors
- Turn on inside lights
- Turn off air conditioning

Outside our house

- Move any flammable outdoor items inside, or move them far away from the home (ex: patio furniture, toys, doormats, trash cans)
- Move propane BBQs away from structures
- Connect garden hose with a spray nozzle to outside water valves and spigots
- DO NOT leave sprinklers on or water running
- Turn on outside lights
- Leave a ladder visible for firefighters to use

- If vents to the attic, basement, and crawlspace are not ember-resistant, seal them with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals
- Make sure vehicles are parked so that they allow easy access for emergency vehicles both on the street, and in the driveway.

### **Leaving After a Fire Starts**

#### Evacuation Order (“Leave Now”):

- Close and lock doors.

#### Evacuation Warning (“Prepare to Evacuate”):

- If anyone in your household needs extra time to leave (ex: children, elders, people with mobility constraints), pack up and leave.
- If no one in your household needs extra time, consider taking the “Leaving Before a Fire” steps to prepare your property.

We have taken steps to protect our home.

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**Defensible space** is a buffer around your home that will slow the spread of fire to your home. **Home hardening** steps prepare your home for wildfire.

Together, hardening your home and creating defensible space around it can increase the chances that your home will survive a fire.

### **Berkeley hills residents (Fire Zone 2 & 3):**

- We reviewed our home's [Defensible Space Report](#) and followed the instructions on defensible space and home hardening.



#### **Tips:**

Fire Zones are different from Evacuation Zones. Not sure which Fire Zone you live in? Use this [online fire zone map](#) to find out.

The Fire Department conducts annual defensible space inspections for properties in the Berkeley hills (Fire Zones 2 and 3). You can access your [Defensible Space Report](#) to get specific instructions to make your home safer.

- *Lost your access code?* Use the “Submit a Request” button at the bottom of the page to access your report.

### **All Berkeley residents:**

- We use the free [Berkeley Chipper Day Program](#) for curbside pickup, chipping, and disposal of vegetation material from our home's yard.



**Tip:** Even if you live in Fire Zone 1 (the Berkeley flats), you can also take steps to protect your home from fire. Visit [FireSafe Berkeley](#) for more information.

## Links

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Berkeley's Emergency Map	<a href="https://protect.genasys.com">https://protect.genasys.com</a>
Genasys Protect App	Download on Apple's App Store or on Google Play for Android
Sign up for AC Alert	<a href="http://www.ACAAlert.org">www.ACAAlert.org</a>
Outdoor Warning System Map	<a href="https://bit.ly/berkeleyoutdoorsirens">https://bit.ly/berkeleyoutdoorsirens</a>
Outdoor Warning System Message Library	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/cityofberkeley">https://soundcloud.com/cityofberkeley</a>
Map: Berkeley Fire Zones 2 and 3	<a href="https://bit.ly/BerkeleyFireZones">https://bit.ly/BerkeleyFireZones</a>
Learn more about Fire Weather and Evacuation	<a href="http://www.berkeleyca.gov/wildfire">www.berkeleyca.gov/wildfire</a>
Berkeley Path Wanderers Paths	<a href="https://www.berkeleypaths.org/path-list">https://www.berkeleypaths.org/path-list</a>
Defensible Space Report	<a href="https://www.defensiblespacereport.org/berkeley">https://www.defensiblespacereport.org/berkeley</a>
FireSafe Berkeley	<a href="http://www.berkeleyfiresafe.org">www.berkeleyfiresafe.org</a>
Berkeley Chipper Day Program	<a href="https://www.chipperday.com/berkeley/">https://www.chipperday.com/berkeley/</a>

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