

Woodside Ranch

FIRE NEWSLETTER

Woodside Ranch Fire Education Committee

September 2020

EVACUATION INFORMATION AND ADVICE

The current 2020 fire season is making us even more aware of the need to be prepared to evacuate when a fire strikes Woodside Ranch. **READY, SET, GO** is the County program that sets out the details of evacuation. For more information on getting READY to evacuate go to the [Fire Newsletter](#) and/or a one page printable Deschutes County Evacuation [flyer](#).

Interview with Nathan Garibay, Emergency Services Manager

Deschutes County Sheriff's Department

1 What agency is in charge of evacuations?

A. Evacuations are coordinated and managed by the Sheriff's Office in consultation with fire managers.

2 Who determines when it's time to evacuate?

A. This is usually determined by the Sheriff's Office after consultation with fire managers. In the early stages of an incident, fire managers may make some evacuation decisions immediately to get people out of harm's way. Fires are usually managed through unified command which means that two or more agencies that share jurisdictional responsibility are united in joint command. They share information, resources and decision-making.

3 How are we notified to evacuate?

A. We do our very best to make prompt notifications through our Deschutes Alert System (go [here](#) to sign up to receive alerts) and door to door notifications. Sometimes it takes us time to catch up to the event and citizens may make the decision to leave on their own based on what they are seeing. We urge caution in these situations as situational awareness may not be established and people should use caution while evacuating. People need to be careful in taking too much information from nonofficial sources or from sources such as PulsePoint as the dispatched situation may not be accurate.

4 What are the best communication sources for real time information as the fire progresses?

- A. We try to get information out on our social media pages very quickly. People should pay close attention to the Central Oregon Fire site. Twitter is commonly used for breaking news and we put stuff out pretty quick. KTVZ is usually on top of things on their site and especially on Twitter.

Official Sites (provided by Nathan Garibay, Sheriff's Office):

- a. [Deschutes.org/emergency](https://www.deschutes.org/emergency) - Map with fire location, road closures, evacuation levels/routes & shelters.
- b. [Centraloregonfire.org](https://www.centraloregonfire.org) - Wildfire and prescribed burn updates.
- c. [Twitter.com/DeschutesSO](https://twitter.com/DeschutesSO) - official Twitter feed of Deschutes County Sheriff's office.
- d. [Facebook.com/DeschutesCountySheriff](https://www.facebook.com/DeschutesCountySheriff) - Official Facebook page of Deschutes County Sheriff's office.
- e. [Twitter.com/CentralORFire](https://twitter.com/CentralORFire) - Official information on Central Oregon wildfires.

Local Radio and TV:

- a. KBND 1110 AM and 100.1 FM
- b. KTVZ (Z21) Tune to the channel you regularly use. [KTVZ.com](https://www.ktvz.com) website will have the station's timeliest updates.
- c. KOHD or KBNZ Tune to the channels you regularly use. [CentralOregonDaily.com](https://www.centraloregondaily.com) will have current updates.

5 Will there be traffic control? Specifically, controlled access onto Knott Road?

- A. Our strategy is to manage arterials and major collectors with the intent to manage traffic flow, so cars keep moving. Obviously, there are challenges in many locations around the county particularly in more developed areas. Some of the strategies we may use would be to avoid conflicts by directing evacuees in different directions, managing left turns, closing legs of intersections to keep traffic moving, and to avoid evacuating into congested areas.

6 Which direction and how far should we go when evacuating? Where do we find that out in the middle of an emergency? Will the phone notification or door to door person tell you which direction to go when it is pitch dark, all smoked in, etc.?

- A. Yes, that is information they can and will provide. Always follow the directions of law enforcement personnel. If the normal route is blocked, we will attempt to notify you of a better exit. Familiarize yourself with as many paths of egress as you can so you are personally familiar with them. People should evacuate well out of the area. We usually establish a shelter or an evacuation center. I would encourage people to go there since it will be out of the danger area and they can check in and receive more information.

7 *When should we go on foot?*

A. This is a judgement call, but I would say rarely. I would save this for a situation when you have evacuated in your vehicle and for whatever reason your vehicle is disabled (also make sure you try to get your disabled vehicle out of the roadway or travel lane if possible). You cannot typically cover a lot of ground on foot and your vehicle does provide a limited degree of protection from radiant heat. Getting caught in the open without any protection and inadequate area of clearing from heavy fuels (think 4 times the flame length) is very dangerous. I would argue that in most cases if you have done all the defensible space and fire safe improvements to your home, you would be better off sheltering in your home than trying to flee on foot.



Evacuation Paradise CA Nov 2018

8 *What to look for in an open space area to shelter?*

A. Very large area clear of fuel to burn (think gravel, concrete, irrigated grass (or at least mowed short). I would say look for an area 4 times the height of fuel (on flat ground...more on slope) at least and if there are noncombustible structures or even your vehicle that could provide additional protection from radiant heat.



Parking Lot, Paradise CA Nov 2018

9 *What if there is a family member trapped inside, eg. you have an elderly/child person at home, you are in town and not able to get back home to pick them up. What do you do?*

A. Call 911 and let us know...we cannot guarantee, but that will improve the odds we can rescue them. I would also discuss with your family strategies to survive and ensure your home is well defensible. Develop alternate strategies such as identifying neighbors that can take them out or at least check on them.

10 *What do we do if we can't evacuate eg. road blocked, fire too close, etc ?*

A. The reality is evacuation is always best if you can and everyone should do as much as they can to make their home as fire safe as possible, which could afford you the best possible outcome. Click [here](#) for some tips for improving your odds if you have to shelter in place or are trapped in your car.

11 *What do we do if cell phone communication goes down?*

A. Discuss with your family what happens when you cannot communicate. Have a planned rally point and a backup communication plan. Have a local and out of area check in contact that everyone knows. Also, if cell phones go down and you see what looks like a big fire approaching your area turn to local radio and consider evacuation. A battery and/or crank radio is also good to have in case the electricity is also out.

BE SAFE. EVACUATE EARLY.