



# GO PLAN

(GET OUT)

*A guide for creating your own custom wildfire evacuation plan*





# **GO PLAN**

## **(GET OUT)**

### **Safely Evacuating from a Wildfire**

Operation Unite®  
POB 922  
Nevada City, California 95959



Prepared for:  
All citizens exposed to wind driven fires

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## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION



## THE GO PLAN (GET OUT)

### Safely Evacuating from a Wildfire

Operation Unite®

**Our communities are vulnerable to a new type of wildfire and this is dangerous for you. Climate changes are now causing the hot, dry western states to stay parched and vulnerable to fire as fall winds take hold. This, in combination with societal slip-ups and Mother Nature's more severe weather places our communities in the red zone for wind driven fire events.** The problem with a wind driven wildfire is it can very quickly travel, day or night, large distances and burn everything along its path. This GO plan is designed to do one thing only, get you and your neighbors out of harm's way and into a safe place.

The name of the plan is GO (Get Out). This plan is designed to help you safely evacuate your home and neighborhood during a wildfire. Although the Go Plan can be implemented by an individual, it is strongest when a core neighborhood group is organized and working together. GO is very simple; 1) prepare for your evacuation, 2) create good communication for monitoring wildfire conditions and 3) evacuate.

The backbone of any safety plan is personal AWARENESS. Awareness will be frequently mentioned in both the individual and neighborhood GO plan. The purpose of personal awareness is to develop your alertness to your surroundings. Adding some preparation to your awareness skills is what you ultimately rely on to safely evacuate from a wildfire. The GO Plan helps you do this. I can not emphasize enough the importance to also follow the well-planned details of your local fire safe agencies (county environmental health- for us this is ReadyNevadaCounty.org).

Rather than create a manuscript of a Wildfire evacuation plan, this plan illustrates how to create your own GO plan by example. I have included a biographical and recipe dialog of how we completed our GO plan in our own Sierra Nevada Mountain foothill neighborhood. Simply mimic our steps and create your own plan. I have included a couple blank forms that can help you more easily and quickly create a GO plan for your own neighborhood (i.e. Membership List and Communication forms). As you develop your own plan, use each paragraph as a check list for what to do and check the paragraph off when you have completed the described task.

As I have already said, the GO plan offers two approaches; 1) a plan for an individual and 2) a plan for a neighborhood. If you simply want to know how to get out safely and not take a lead role, that is fine. Remember, our goal is that everyone reaches a safe place. For individuals, I suggest you read the chapter titled; Individual. You will be informed of your personal responsibility, how you communicate and the buddy system. You can also look through the evacuation check list and horn evacuation alert that is located near the end of this document.

We found that the neighborhood plan is the most consistently effective plan for our neighborhood. Each of us live busy lives and sometimes forget or are simply too tired to adequately prepare and take action for red flag days and wildfire evacuation concerns. Working together as neighbors is a way to develop a synergistic environment that helps most of us compensate from these shortcomings. Ultimately each neighbor needs to read, at a minimum, the *Individual* chapter of this document.



If you would like to start a neighborhood, GO team, you will need a leader; someone who can effectively work with the neighbors to plan and implement an exit strategy from a wildfire. This person will take the GO plan by the horns, assign volunteer neighbors to complete the simple plan tasks and orchestrate its implementation. Individual neighbors focus on coordinating with the group leader and their assigned buddies (I'll get to this) and, of course, implement their personal evacuation needs. If you are inclined to be the neighborhood leader in expediting the GO Plan, become familiar with this entire document. It is written in biteable pieces that allow you to easily find the specific topic that you have interest. The Neighborhood GO plan describes how you will create a plan in eight steps:

1. Putting the Initial GO Group Together,
2. Leader Responsibility,
3. Personal Responsibility,
4. How You Communicate,
5. The Buddy System,
6. Red Flag Days,
7. The Evacuation,
8. Final Check-in.

The remainder of this publication contains a description of various components of the Go plan including:

- Fire Watch Guidelines,
- Horn Evacuation Alert,
- Evacuation Checklist for You and Your Car,
- Communications Form,
- Membership List Forms and
- Useful references and URLs.

When you see a line along the left side of a paragraph, implement the task and check it off when completed. Once all the paragraphs beginning with a line are checked, you have accomplished the important tasks.

Lastly, as this plan is used by more people across the country, corrections, new ideas and information will be discovered. Please email **Operation Unite**® with your ideas. They will be considered for the next edition of the GO Plan. Everybody can contribute to improving our Get Out strategy!

You might be thinking by now that a GO Group is not limited to fires only. That is true. The group can also be used for sharing critical or emergency information for earthquake, flooding, crime in the neighborhood or severe winter storms too. You would simply add the details for addressing each specific type of emergency event. We have used our GO Group for winter storms and crime events.

Have you been wondering why Operation Unite® is supporting wildfire evacuations? Wonder no more. **Operation Unite**® is a hands – on, results - oriented, capacity building initiative that engages Stakeholders (that's you) and the Impacted Public (general public) in solving water related problems thereby building public responsibility for generated projects. Wildfire issues involve us and are most certainly created by higher temperatures, winds, a lack of adequate precipitation or too much precipitation in the American West. This is why we have included wildfire response to our outreach



and disaster preparedness activities. Our success is achieved when you take appropriate actions individually or collectively in your community. No one is left behind.

You and your family are of the greatest value. That is why the GO Plan has been created. Make sure you emphasize with your family, tenants or neighbors the importance in developing the three priorities of preparedness; 1) Early Detection (this is awareness), 2) Notification of others and 3) Prompt "thoughtful" evacuation. Know where you are going with B, C and D contingencies. If you have questions, please email [water@operationunite.co](mailto:water@operationunite.co). I'd be happy to help.

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## CHAPTER 2

# THE INDIVIDUAL





## PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

### PREPARATIONS BEFORE A WILDFIRE

\_\_\_\_\_ Sign-up for CodeRed Emergency Alerts through your County and ([www.onsolve.com/landing/sign-up-for-codered-emergency-alerts/](http://www.onsolve.com/landing/sign-up-for-codered-emergency-alerts/)).

\_\_\_\_\_ Know what Evacuation zone your home is located. For us, we get on the web and go to [community.zonehaven.com](http://community.zonehaven.com), type in your address and read the Zone, status and other information for your specific address. A map that illustrates all zone locations can be found at <https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/40264/Evacuation-Zone-Map-Packet-PDF>. If you are not in our area, contact your local county or Firesafe organization and ask for this map.

\_\_\_\_\_ Fire Weather Watch Days are also days that some counties will assign when there is a heightened fire threat. When a Fire Weather Day is announced, be alert and ready.

\_\_\_\_\_ It is important to emphasize with your family and neighbors the three priorities of preparedness; 1) Early Detection (this is awareness), 2) Notification of others and 3) Prompt "thoughtful" evacuation. Know where you are going with B, C and D contingencies. This is what you are doing when you prepare as discussed below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Assemble a Go-Bag (see Evacuation Checklist) and place everything together at the beginning of the wildfire season. Choose an area in your home that will provide the easiest access to your evacuation vehicle.

\_\_\_\_\_ Include in your Go-Bag pictures of everything in your home and fire insurance documentation. It is a good idea to place these pictures and documents in the iCloud. If you know you must evacuate and you have a little time, complete a walkthrough of your home and document what you have including garage tools, tractors, outbuildings and expensive items.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prepare a hard paper copy of your "Communication List" (distributed by your Group Leader) and place it in your evacuation vehicle, with your Go-Bag and on a counter in your home.

\_\_\_\_\_ Identify your evacuation routes in several different directions and generate an evacuation map for your use (we put this together for our wildfire group and distributed it as directed by our Group Leader). Download and install the "Signal" app on your cell phone and work with your Group Leader and become a member of your group. Recognize that cell phone apps don't always work in a wildfire emergency.

\_\_\_\_\_ Drive all evacuation routes before a wildfire event occurs. Be familiar with each route. A route may look a lot different at night or when the air is filled with smoke, or both.

\_\_\_\_\_ Talk with your household members and choose two destination meeting places ahead of time; 1) within a short distance of your home (e.g. 5 miles away) and 2) a long distance away (i.e. 50 miles away).

\_\_\_\_\_ Buy and keep fire blankets and an air horn in your vehicle.



\_\_\_\_\_ It is to your advantage to get a Ham Radio license and buy a ham radio. The technician license requires a test. The test is not that difficult to pass. Locate your local ham radio club for more information (google your county name and "ham radio club"). Ham radio is the most basic electronic way to communicate when cell phones, landlines and the internet are not working. It can really save the day! Nearly half of our group bought two-way radios (GMRS) from radioddity.com. They are turned on when there is an emergency event so we can talk to each other while cell coverage and internet are down.

\_\_\_\_\_ Check all your exit routes beginning at your home. Make sure you trim combustible debris back (ten feet off each side of the road and driveway).

\_\_\_\_\_ If there is an elderly person in your neighborhood, consider adding them into your evacuation plans. This conversation needs to happen before the fire emergency.



## ON A RED FLAG DAY

\_\_\_\_\_ **Personal responsibility is constantly needed to stay alert and ready (situational awareness).**

\_\_\_\_\_ During Red Flag Days, park your vehicle facing in the direction of your exit (e.g. toward the street).

\_\_\_\_\_ Have your evacuation vehicle pre-loaded with your Go-Bag on all Red Flag Days. **This step saves lives.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Keep the fuel tank of your evacuation vehicle full, check your engine oil and water levels and fill up the reservoir of windshield wiper fluid.

\_\_\_\_\_ Remember to always keep your cell phone batteries charged and ready to go.

\_\_\_\_\_ When it is time to go to sleep, go to bed with your cell phone next to your bed and make sure it is connected to a charging station. **Make sure the cell phone volume is at its maximum and the Signal App notifications on.**

\_\_\_\_\_ If a fire is reported close to your neighborhood, you will likely be notified by one of the group members via the SignalApp or telephone. You may also hear an emergency air horn blasting from a nearby passing vehicle that is evacuating or the high/low tones from a sheriff's vehicle.

\_\_\_\_\_ Depending on where you live, you may need to load a chain saw and chain cutter into your evacuation vehicle in the event you need to move obstructions out of your way during evacuation. Make sure these tools are in good working order and the chainsaw is sharp and filled with fuel and oil.

\_\_\_\_\_ If you have useful information of a nearby fire that may threaten the neighborhood, emergency information can be posted on the Signal App. **Do not use the Signal App for non-emergency messaging. Irrelevant text messages confuse and irritate members. We created a separate Signal thread called "Banner Chat." All non emergency chats are moved to the "Banner Chat" thread.**

\_\_\_\_\_ CodeRed, phones, cell and WiFi are not 100% reliable, especially during Public Safety Power Shutoffs. Individuals and groups must at all times take responsibility for being situationally aware and alert for fires that may start in their proximity. This is especially important during periods of peak fire danger. Use your sense of sight, smell and hearing to monitor your environment. Turn on and listen to your local radio station and internet fire blog. Listen to a public safety scanner. A scanner can give you the earliest notification.



\_\_\_\_\_ During periods of high fire danger, volunteers may be asked to stand watch during night time hours (Nighttime Fire Watch) in order to detect fires and notify residents at the earliest possible time. We have done this numerous times in the last many years.

\_\_\_\_\_ You can purchase a public safety scanner to receive early notifications. Scanner apps are also available for your cell phone (e.g. Scanner Radio Pro, Broadcastify, Police Scanner).

\_\_\_\_\_ Generally, everyone should be extra aware and alert during fire season.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Personal responsibility is constantly needed to stay alert and ready.**



## EVACUATION

\_\_\_\_\_ **Personal responsibility is constantly needed to stay alert and ready.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Be vigilant in listening to notifications broadcasted on CodeRED Emergency Alerts and your fire group SignalApp.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Our county uses [www.ReadyNevadaClunty.org](http://www.ReadyNevadaClunty.org) and CodeRED Emergency Alerts to be notified in case of emergency. Understand the Evacuation Status level by going to the [ReadyNevadaClunty.org](http://ReadyNevadaClunty.org) website and follow the directive.

\_\_\_\_\_ Go as soon as you can. **Early evacuation saves lives.** If you leave and later find that it wasn't necessary, consider the day as a training day and enjoy the day at the movie theater or other fun activity. Nothing is lost.

\_\_\_\_\_ If there is an elderly person in your neighborhood that is counting on you, make sure they get out as well. They can always go with you.

\_\_\_\_\_ Have your evacuation vehicle pre-loaded with your Go-Bag on all Red Flag Days. This step saves lives.

\_\_\_\_\_ Remember to bring your cell phone and computer chargers with you during evacuation events.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a ham radio and GM two-way radio. They will be loaded into the evacuation vehicle along with a battery, charger and antenna, as well.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Leave early in a wildfire.** It is very likely that county and city roads will be backed up with traffic if you wait until the last minute.

\_\_\_\_\_ As you exit your property during an evacuation, attach your evacuation label at the head of the driveway so Emergency personnel know that you have evacuated your property.

\_\_\_\_\_ As you exit your property during an evacuation, sound off your air horn with three distinct short pulses. This is our neighborhood evacuation fire signal for others to hear and respond.

\_\_\_\_\_ Conditions change during a wildfire, so constantly reevaluate the safest route and adapt your evacuation route accordingly.

\_\_\_\_\_ Use WatchDutyApp to monitor fires and direction of wind movement. This will help you decide which way to evacuate (away from the approaching fire).

\_\_\_\_\_ Communicate your departure with your Buddies and post on the Signal App.

### NOTE:

Leave your trailers at home. Pulling trailers more often than not have difficulty due to rough terrain, breakdowns, a flat tire and/or overheating. When they get stuck or can't be moved, they become obstructions that block everyone else from escaping the fire. We owe it to our communities to maintain clear and continuous escape routes from a wildfire. **PLEASE, LEAVE YOUR TRAILERS AT HOME UNLESS YOU LEAVE EARLY.**

## HOW TO COMMUNICATE

CodeRED Emergency Alerts and Signal Private Messenger will be used to communicate all emergency information within the GO Fire Alert Group. Information and guidelines for using the Signal alert group include:

- **The Signal alert group is for emergency information only, not for routine messaging.** You can, however, use the Signal App for communicating only to individuals. An example of this would be making phone calls when cell towers are down. Of course, you would have to be on wifi. We have also used the Signal App and created a chat for our neighborhood.
- Any member of the GO Fire Alert Group can send an emergency alert. For example, you can post Red Flag alerts, PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) notices, active fire(s) that could affect our area, Code Red alerts and evacuation notices.

**NOTE: There are three kinds of evacuation notices; an evacuation order, warning and advisory. An evacuation order means your lives are threatened and you must leave now. An evacuation warning means there is a potential threat to life and property and those citizens with pets and livestock should leave now. An advisory is a notice to be on alert and follow county recommendations.**

- Repeat messages should not be sent. This will only slow people down from doing what they should be doing. *New or updated* information can be sent by anyone.
- Emergency messages should be brief and to the point. DO NOT acknowledge or reply to emergency messages...unless you need assistance or have new information.
- Non-emergency chatter is shifted to a secondary chat. Only emergency messaging is used on our main Group Chat.
- When an emergency message is sent, buddies should check on each other by phone or person to person. This is the best way to ensure everyone receives the message and is able to take necessary action.
- For more information, Google or tune in to your local radio or television stations, AlertWildfire.org, local fire blog (for us, this is YubaNet.com) or check with your buddies.
- If anyone needs assistance to evacuate, or is unclear as to what they need to do, get help by contacting your buddies for assistance. If buddies are unavailable, a Signal message can be sent to the group to ask for help. People closest to the individual needing help should render assistance, if possible.
- Only send useful emergency information to the Signal alert group. Individual chats should be sent via other systems or the secondary Signal Chat Group. (Signal person to person, WhatsApp, email, etc.)



- Keep your cell phone charged, turned on, and turned up so that you have the best chance of receiving emergency alerts, day or night.
- Make sure your notifications are on.
- In the event, power is out and Wi-Fi is down, you may still be able to send text messages (i.e. Signal, WhatsApp) via wireless data. Cell towers may also be without power.
- The GO Fire Alert Group is not limited to fires and can be used for sharing any critical or emergency information (e.g. flooding, severe winter storms).
- Almost half our neighborhood has purchased short-range two-way radios (GM-30 by Radioddity. These radios are turned on during a red flag night or during an emergency event (i.e. wild fire, winter storm, crime activity). Sometimes, this is the only way to contact each other because our electrical and internet service is not working.
- Lastly, in the event important messages need to get out even further while cell phones, landlines and the internet are not available, go to your neighborhood ham radio operator. They may be able to help.
- **Do not call 911 during an evacuation for information. 911. A 911 call is used for emergency help (e.g. I am trapped and can't get out of my house! I don't have transportation! I see fire!).**
- Contact 2-1-1 or 1-833-DAIL211 with any questions once you are safely evacuated.



## THE BUDDY SYSTEM

To ensure everyone in the neighborhood is connected with others.

\_\_\_\_\_ Everyone in the Fire Alert Group will be in a buddy group of 2 - 3 households, based on proximity to each other. Make sure our elderly and handicapped are included. Buddies usually live near each other. Any orphan neighbors are automatically picked up by everybody. Redundancy is good.

\_\_\_\_\_ Buddy groups routinely stay in touch and check on each other. For example, you can keep an eye on each other's property during absences or account for each other and offer assistance when ill or during an emergency. I know you can find ways to stay connected.

\_\_\_\_\_ During red flag periods, power outages, evacuation warnings and evacuation orders, ensure your buddies are informed and are prepared and able to do what is needed.

\_\_\_\_\_ In your buddy group, discuss the benefits and measures of being prepared and evacuating early. **Operate on the side of caution and do not take chances.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Buddy groups are encouraged to set up a separate message or phone group (e.g. WhatsApp phone group, Signal message group) to stay in touch with each other on a regular or emergency basis.

**NOTE: 1) Buddy groups are based on residential parcels. If there are children, renters or guests on a parcel, they are part of the parcel unit. All residents with a smart phone are encouraged to sign up for Code Red and join the Signal App so that they can receive emergency notifications. Each residential unit should decide how they will communicate with children, tenants and guests, in the event of an emergency.**

**2) During periods of power blackouts, WIFI, cell phones and landlines may be out of service. Check with your buddies to know which communication systems are working. Short distance, two-way radios are a good addition for communicating with all neighbors that have radios.**





## FINAL CHECK-IN

Circumstances in the midst of a calamity can be pretty confusing and a wildfire is no exception. As you escape from the fire and the immediate threat is behind you, continue offering useful information to others or act as a communication point between your family, friends and neighbors and their needs to communicate. We are not finished helping until everyone is safe. **Conditions change, so stay alert and ready to adapt to new situations.**

You can imagine; everyone may be going to different destinations after they evacuate, sometimes even unexpected destinations. It is certainly OK for individuals to check on each other by phone, message or any other means. Particularly, buddies could/should check on each other just to ensure they are OK. Buddies may make an effort to evacuate and stick together as a group.

Start thinking about how you want to communicate with your buddies, family and neighbors. There is no wrong way. Just, do what friends do, stay connected with one another and help in whatever way that you can.



## HORN EVACUATION ALERT

If an *Evacuation Order* is given for your area, use car horns and/or air horns to notify neighbors as you leave. Evacuation guidelines include:

- Time permitting, check on your buddies to make sure they received the evacuation order and are ready and able to leave.
- If a Signal alert has not gone out to the group, send an alert. Get on your 2-way radio.
- As you leave, sound the horn of your car and/or the air horn in a can. Some vehicle horns are very weak.
- Direct the car horn or air horn toward the house so there is a better chance of being heard, especially at night.
- *Use groups of three short (one-second) bursts as you drive by homes.*
- Time permitting, drive into the neighbor's driveway to sound the alert and look for signs of acknowledgement (lights coming on or someone waving to you).

NOTE: **Everyone is encouraged to evacuate early and not wait for an evacuation order.** If you wait, congestion, blocked roads, down trees and powerlines, and fire conditions could make evacuation extremely hazardous or impossible.

It is important to also mention the universal evacuation warning system that many counties and cities use. My experience is in the county that I live; Nevada County. The County Sheriff, cities of Grass Valley, Nevada City and the Town of Truckee Police Departments have installed sirens on their patrol cars that are only used for evacuations. Go to <https://www.mynevadacounty.com/3040/Hi-Lo-Siren> and listen to what an evacuation siren sounds like. It is best described as a High-Low Tone. When you hear these tones, drop everything and leave immediately. Seconds matter.

## EVACUATION CHECKLIST FOR YOU AND YOUR CAR

You will not always be home when you need to evacuate. You will not have time to round up these items when fire strikes. Therefore, you may want to keep these items in the car during Red Flag days. They can be kept in the glove box, trunk, or a small plastic tote. Some items can remain in the trunk and some will be needed in the passenger cabin.

- Know your Evacuation Zone (for our group, we go to <https://nevadacountyca.gov/3223/Evacuation-Zones> or <https://protect.genasys.com/search?latlon=39.29122005508074%2C-120.62345591883616&z=8.802403868423466> and type in our address). Your zone will be identified.
- Dress appropriately – wear cotton, wool or flame-retardant clothing. No man-made materials that will easily melt on your skin. Be able to cover entire body
- Air horn in a can
- Water – at least one bottle for each person. Drinking water has a calming effect and helps to reduce anxiety
- Food – snacks. You could sit in traffic for hours
- Medications
- Goggles – airtight, to prevent watering and drying of your eyes from smoke
- Face mask – N95/99/100 to remove contaminants from the air and help cool the air when you breath. Remember, however, these masks do not provide oxygen or remove all toxins.
- Radiant heat shield – wool/fire blankets, sunshield, foil survival blanket
- LED Flashlight with strobe, high lumen
- Battery radio with extra battery and a charger
- Cell phone with charger
- First aid kit – include burn gel or aloe vera cream for minor burns
- Maps with escape routes and safe zones highlighted
- Fire extinguisher
- Life vests, if near a lake or river, with rope or paracord
- Chainsaw and bolt cutter to remove obstacles
- Sanitation kit – container, plastic bags, wipes, TP, female funnel. Again, you could be stuck in your car for hours
- Vehicle power pack (lithium ion)
- Important items; pictures, passports and other documents



DO NOT carry spare gas. Heat will cause the gasoline to vaporize and could rupture or explode. Fill your tank before you leave.



# CHAPTER 3

# NEIGHBORHOOD



## PUTTING THE INITIAL GO GROUP TOGETHER

Starting a GO Plan is simple. Start talking to your neighbors by asking them how they are planning on safely leaving their properties whenever threatened by wildfires. Most people don't give this much thought. That is why your repeated messages regarding the safety of your neighborhood is really important. Let your neighbors know that a GO Plan will improve their chance of survival from a wind driven wildfire. It takes a small amount of preplanning, a process for communicating when telephone and power services are interrupted, a pathway and safe place to evacuate. It is easily achievable. The GO Plan is the answer and well within the capability of your neighborhood. You might want to share the Paradise, California Fire (Camp Fire) story as an example of the chaos that occurs and the importance in pre-planning. Wikipedia has an article on the Camp Fire ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp\\_Fire\\_\(2018\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Fire_(2018))).

Because you may be the one instigating a GO Plan in your neighborhood, you become the temporary Group Leader. If your neighbors are interested, schedule a meeting in someone's garage, front or backyard or other appropriate area in your neighborhood. You can get the word out by going door to door with a flyer, making phone calls or simply emailing a flyer to everybody that seems interested. Ask them to pass the word around as well.

Our first meeting was held in a neighbor's garage and had close to twenty people attend. During this meeting, we were informed of the dangers of wildfires that we could experience, the vulnerabilities that we have in our neighborhoods and actions that will keep us safe. Everyone had an opportunity to ask questions. After questions and comments were heard and answered, everybody had a vote to start (or not) a Wildfire Alert Group and choose the group leader. We were unanimous in wanting to start a group. The first several actions that we made were completed in a neighborhood garage with all our interested neighbors. Fortunately, the number of fire alert members has increased as more people in the neighborhood found out about the GO plan.

Here are some items that we incorporated into our meeting agenda at our first meeting:

- Pick a date that works best for everyone;
- Prepare any handouts and copies of the GO Plan;
- Communicate with your County and collect your County's maps;
- Coordinate getting everyone to load the Signal App or another text messaging App. We helped neighbors that attended the meeting sign up with the SignalApp;
- Develop Buddy groups; and
- Our leader put together a show-and-tell kit of items that you want to keep at your house and in your car (e.g. air horns, fire protective clothing, bolt cutters).

Subsequent steps that our Group Leader completed are described in the next section (Leader Responsibility and Red Flag Days). Turn the page and see what we did.



## LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

A Group Leader (leader of our neighborhood wildfire group) was chosen on the first neighborhood wildfire meeting that we held. **The backbone of any safety initiative is AWARENESS so develop your alertness to your surroundings and be prepared. The GO Plan will help you do this in your neighborhood.** Our first meeting was held in a neighbor's garage and had close to twenty people attend. During this meeting, we were informed of the dangers of wildfires that we could experience, the vulnerabilities that we have in our neighborhoods and actions that will keep us safe. Everyone had an opportunity to ask questions. After questions and comments were heard and answered, everybody had a vote to start (or not) a Wildfire Group. We were unanimous in wanting to start a group. The first several actions that we made were completed in a neighborhood garage with all our interested neighbors.

\_\_\_\_\_ Our first task was to pick a group name with all the members. We chose "Banner Terrace Fire Alert." Our second task was to download the Signal App (or text messaging App of your choice) into our cell phones and iPads. One person was given the title of Neighborhood Signal Expert and people that needed extra help in the installation of the Signal App and CodeRed Emergency Alert would contact this person. This worked out well.

\_\_\_\_\_ It is important to emphasize with your neighbors the three priorities of preparedness; 1) Early Detection (this is awareness), 2) Notification of others and 3) Prompt "thoughtful" evacuation. Know where you are going with B, C and D contingencies. Repeat, repeat, repeat.

\_\_\_\_\_ Encourage all new members to also join WhatsApp. This communication App allows you to send text even though the cell phone grid is compromised by using wifi (read attached section on how you communicate).

\_\_\_\_\_ Our third task was to fill out a membership list so we had everyone's name, address, cell phone, landline and email address in one place (see attached form). Everybody added their name to the membership list before leaving the meeting. This makes it a lot easier for the Group Leader when someone requests the address or phone number. The list was circulated by the Group Leader to all members by email.

Subsequent tasks were completed by email.

\_\_\_\_\_ Based on the location of members, the Group Leader assigned (see "The Buddy System") one to three households that were adjacent or nearby one another as buddies. Buddies are members who take care of each other in all the steps leading up to an evacuation, including the evacuation. Some of the members, like myself, added other close (affectionally speaking) people to our buddy list. A list was circulated via email that listed the buddy groups to everyone.

\_\_\_\_\_ One more group meeting at our neighbor's garage was scheduled to discuss evacuation routes and to organize a work party for clearing combustible debris from a ten foot wide stretch along both sides of the primary private road exiting our neighborhood. If you are located along a county or city road, this will probably already be completed. If it is not, call the city or county and make sure it gets done. Make sure that your driveway also has no combustible material too close to the driveway. If a fire was crossing your driveway as you were evacuating, you could have a difficult or impossible time attempting to leave your property.



\_\_\_\_\_ Make an evacuation map illustrating as many exits from the neighborhood as possible. Because some of the chosen evacuation routes were located on private property, the Group Leader gained permission by the land owners to allow an exit, in the event of a wildfire, through their property. Once permission was received, a date was scheduled for interested people to walk or ride the entire evacuation route. We also needed to find an evacuation route that traveled to the northeast. This required a couple neighbors to drive their 4WD vehicles the entire route. This route eventually connected with a state road located nearly twenty miles away. All information was shared in an "Evacuation Escape Routes" map (see attached example).

\_\_\_\_\_ Distribute the GO Plan personal Responsibility Description and Evacuation Map to everyone in your Fire Alert group.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Group Leader was also contacted when new members wanted to join the group. This entailed helping them download and install the Signal App (with the help of the Signal Expert) and adding them into the group membership list.

\_\_\_\_\_ Once the group came together and the buddy subgroups were created, there was nothing more to do except provide answers to question that other interested people and members would ask. Read the Buddy System section found in this document.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Group Leader steps back into action when fire season begins. The leader becomes much more focused on fire hazards surrounding the neighborhood as compared to non-fire season days. Reengagement includes monitoring the radios, scanners and neighborhood for the possibility of fire or the notification of a Red Flag Day (announced by the County in our area). If a Red Flag Day is scheduled, the Group Leader will follow procedures for Red Flag Days (see specific section in this plan). If the leader is not around, the leader picks another member of the group to be acting leader.

\_\_\_\_\_ In the event of an actual Evacuation Advisory or Warning (prepare for evacuation) or Evacuation Order (evacuate immediately), the Group Leader will communicate what is happening, track known and changing conditions, and provide instructions to the group, as needed via the Signal App or other communications. Other members will also contribute new information.

## **SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS**

\_\_\_\_\_ If cell phones are not working, members will need to connect with someone in the neighborhood who has a ham radio. It is best that the Group Leader work closely with someone in the neighborhood who has a ham radio and license. The Group Leader will work with the ham operator and connect with as many two meter and 70 cm frequency repeaters as possible. Make sure the repeater frequencies are added to the memory of the radio before the fire (in the preparation phase of your GO Plan). We have two people with a ham radio license and radios, including myself in our neighborhood.

Ham radios are of great benefit when all other electronic communications fail. This does happen. Messages can be relayed by ham radio operators outside the emergency zone. A ham radio operator can be requested to make a phone call for you, find some information from the internet or provide knowledge about the fire and then relay the information back to you by ham radio. Read through the "Communication Form" and see some examples of questions that you might ask.



## PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

### PREPARATIONS BEFORE A WILDFIRE

\_\_\_\_\_ Signup for CodeRed Emergency Alerts through your County ([www.onsolve.com/landing/sign-up-for-codered-emergency-alerts/](http://www.onsolve.com/landing/sign-up-for-codered-emergency-alerts/)).

\_\_\_\_\_ Know what Evacuation zone your home is located. For us, we get on the web and go to [community.zonehaven.com](http://community.zonehaven.com), type in your address and read the Zone, status and other information for your specific address.

\_\_\_\_\_ Fire Weather Watch Days are also days that some counties will assign when there is a heightened fire threat. When a Fire Weather Day is announced, be alert and ready.

\_\_\_\_\_ It is important to emphasize with your family and neighbors the three priorities of preparedness; 1) Early Detection (this is awareness), 2) Notification of others and 3) Prompt "thoughtful" evacuation. Know where you are going with B, C and D contingencies. This is what you are doing when you prepare as discussed below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Assemble a Go-Bag (see Evacuation Checklist) and place everything together at the beginning of the wildfire season. Choose an area in your home that will provide the easiest access to your evacuation vehicle.

\_\_\_\_\_ Include in your Go-Bag pictures of everything in your home and fire insurance documentation. It is a good idea to place these pictures and documents in the iCloud.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prepare a hard paper copy of your "Communication List" (distributed by your Group Leader) and place it in your evacuation vehicle, with your Go-Bag and on a counter in your home.

\_\_\_\_\_ Identify your evacuation routes in several different directions and generate an evacuation map for your use (we put this together for our wildfire group and distributed it as directed by our Group Leader). Download and install the "Signal" app on your cell phone and work with your Group Leader and become a member of your group. Recognize that cell phone apps don't always work in a wildfire emergency.

\_\_\_\_\_ Drive all evacuation routes before a wildfire event occurs. Be familiar with each route. A route may look a lot different at night or when the air is filled with smoke, or both.

\_\_\_\_\_ Talk with your household members and choose two destination meeting places ahead of time; 1) within a short distance of your home (e.g. 5 miles away) and 2) a long distance away (i.e. 50 miles away).

\_\_\_\_\_ Buy and keep fire blankets and an air horn in your vehicle.

\_\_\_\_\_ It is to your advantage to get a Ham Radio license and buy a ham radio. The technician license requires a test. The test is not that difficult to pass. Locate your local ham radio club for more information (google your county name and "ham radio club"). Ham radio is the most basic electronic way to communicate when cell phones, landlines and the internet are not working. It can really save the day!





\_\_\_\_\_ Check all your exit routes beginning at your home. Make sure you trim combustible debris back (ten feet off each side of the road and driveway).

\_\_\_\_\_ **Personal responsibility is constantly needed to stay alert and ready.**



## ON A RED FLAG DAY

\_\_\_\_\_ **Personal responsibility is constantly needed to stay alert and ready.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Be vigilant in listening to notifications broadcasted on CodeRED Emergency Alerts and your fire group SignalApp.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Our county uses [www.ReadyNevadaClunty.org](http://www.ReadyNevadaClunty.org) and CodeRED Emergency Alerts to be notified in case of emergency. Understand the Evacuation Status level by going to the [ReadyNevadaClunty.org](http://ReadyNevadaClunty.org) website and follow the directive.

\_\_\_\_\_ During Red Flag Days, park your vehicle facing in the direction of your exit (e.g. toward the street).

\_\_\_\_\_ Have your evacuation vehicle pre-loaded with your Go-Bag on all Red Flag Days. **This step saves lives.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Keep the fuel tank of your evacuation vehicle full, check your engine oil and water levels and fill up the reservoir of windshield wiper fluid.

\_\_\_\_\_ Remember to always keep your cell phone batteries charged and ready to go.

\_\_\_\_\_ When it is time to go to sleep, go to bed with your cell phone next to your bed and make sure it is connected to a charging station. **Make sure the cell phone volume is at its maximum.**

\_\_\_\_\_ If a fire is reported close to your neighborhood, you will likely be notified by one of the group members via the SignalApp or telephone. You may also hear an emergency air horn blasting from a nearby passing vehicle that is evacuating.

\_\_\_\_\_ Depending on where you live, you may need to load a chain saw and chain cutter into your evacuation vehicle in the event you need to move obstructions out of your way during evacuation. Make sure these tools are in good working order and the chainsaw is sharp and filled with fuel and oil.

\_\_\_\_\_ If you have useful information of a nearby fire that may threaten the neighborhood, emergency information can be posted on the Signal App. **Do not use the Signal App for non-emergency messaging. Irrelevant text messages confuse and irritate members.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Code Red, phones, cell and WiFi are not 100% reliable, especially during Public Safety Power Shutoffs. Individuals and groups must at all times take responsibility for being situationally aware and alert for fires that may start in their proximity. This is especially important during periods of peak fire danger. Use your sense of sight, smell and hearing to monitor your environment. Turn on and listen to your local radio station and internet fire blog. Listen to a public safety scanner. A scanner can give you the earliest notification.

\_\_\_\_\_ During periods of high fire danger, volunteers may be asked to stand watch during night time hours (Nighttime Fire Watch) in order to detect fires and notify residents at the earliest possible time. We have done this numerous times in the last couple years.



\_\_\_\_\_ You can purchase a public safety scanner to receive early notifications. Scanner apps are also available for your cell phone (e.g. Scanner Radio Pro, Broadcastify, Police Scanner).

\_\_\_\_\_ Generally, everyone should be extra aware and alert during fire season.



## EVACUATION

\_\_\_\_\_ Go as soon as you can. **Early evacuation saves lives.** If you leave and later find that it wasn't necessary, consider the day as a training day and enjoy the day at the movie theater or other fun activity. Nothing is lost.

\_\_\_\_\_ Have your evacuation vehicle pre-loaded with your Go-Bag on all Red Flag Days. This step saves lives.

\_\_\_\_\_ Remember to bring your cell phone and computer chargers with you during evacuation events.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a ham radio. It will be loaded into the evacuation vehicle along with a battery, charger and antenna, as well.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Leave early in a wildfire.** It is very likely that county and city roads will be backed up with traffic if you wait until the last minute.

\_\_\_\_\_ As you exit your property during an evacuation, sound off your air horn with three distinct short pulses. This is our neighborhood evacuation fire signal for others to hear and respond.

\_\_\_\_\_ Conditions change during a wildfire, so constantly reevaluate the safest route and adapt your evacuation route accordingly.

\_\_\_\_\_ Communicate your departure with your Buddies and post on the Signal App.

### NOTE:

Leave your trailers at home. Pulling trailers more often than not have difficulty due to rough terrain, breakdowns, a flat tire and/or overheating. When they get stuck or can't be moved, they become obstructions that block everyone else from escaping the fire. We owe it to our communities to maintain clear and continuous escape routes from a wildfire. **PLEASE, LEAVE YOUR TRAILERS AT HOME UNLESS YOU EVACUATE YOUR HOME WELL BEFORE TRAFFIC BUILDS UP ON THE ESCAPE ROUTE.**



## HOW TO COMMUNICATE

Signal Private Messenger will be used to communicate all emergency information within the GO Fire Alert Group. Information and guidelines for using the Signal alert group include:

- **The Signal alert group is for emergency information only, not for routine messaging.** You can, however, use the Signal App for communicating only to individuals. An example of this would be making phone calls when cell towers are down. Of course, you would have to be on wifi.
- Any member of the GO Fire Alert Group can send an emergency alert. For example, you can post Red Flag alerts, PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) notices, active fire(s) that could affect our area, Code Red alerts and evacuation notices.
- **NOTE: There are three kinds of evacuation notices; an evacuation order, warning and advisory. An evacuation order means your lives are threatened and you must leave now. An evacuation warning means there is a potential threat to life and property and those citizens with pets and livestock should leave now. An advisory is a notice to be on alert and follow county recommendations.**
- Repeat messages should not be sent. This will only slow people down from doing what they should be doing. *New or updated* information can be sent by anyone.
- Emergency messages should be brief and to the point. DO NOT acknowledge or reply to emergency messages...unless you need assistance or have new information.
- When an emergency message is sent, buddies should check on each other by phone or person to person. This is the best way to ensure everyone receives the message and is able to take necessary action.
- For more information, Google or tune in to your local radio or television stations, AlertWildfire.org, local fire blog (for us, this is YubaNet.com) or check with your buddies.
- If anyone needs assistance to evacuate, or is unclear as to what they need to do, get help by contacting your buddies for assistance. If buddies are unavailable, a Signal message can be sent to the group to ask for help. People closest to the individual needing help should render assistance, if possible.
- Only send useful emergency information to the Signal alert group. Individual chats should be sent via other systems. (Signal person to person, WhatsApp, email, etc.)
- Keep your cell phone charged, turned on, and turned up so that you have the best chance of receiving emergency alerts, day or night.
- In the event, power is out and Wi-Fi is down, you may still be able to send text messages (i.e. Signal, WhatsApp) via wireless data. Cell towers may also be without power.
- The GO Fire Alert Group is not limited to fires and can be used for sharing any critical or emergency information (e.g. flooding, severe winter storms).



- Lastly, in the event important messages need to be sent but cell phones, landlines and the internet are not available, go to your neighborhood ham radio operator. They may be able to help.
- **Do not call 911 during an evacuation for information. 911. A 911 call is used for emergency help (e.g. I am trapped and can't get out of my house! I don't have transportation! I see fire!).**
- Contact 2-1-1 or 1-833-DAIL211 with any questions once you are safely evacuated.



## THE BUDDY SYSTEM

To ensure everyone in the neighborhood is connected with others.

\_\_\_\_\_ Everyone in the Fire Alert Group will be in a buddy group of 2 - 3 households, based on proximity to each other.

\_\_\_\_\_ Buddy groups routinely stay in touch and check on each other. For example, you can keep an eye on each other's property during absences or account for each other and offer assistance when ill or during an emergency. I know you can find ways to stay connected.

\_\_\_\_\_ During red flag periods, power outages, evacuation warnings and evacuation orders, ensure your buddies are informed and are prepared and able to do what is needed.

\_\_\_\_\_ In your buddy group, discuss the benefits and measures of being prepared and evacuating early. **Operate on the side of caution and do not take chances.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Buddy groups are encouraged to set up a separate message or phone group (e.g. WhatsApp phone group, Signal message group) to stay in touch with each other on a regular or emergency basis.

**NOTE: 1) Buddy groups are based on residential parcels. If there are children, renters or guests on a parcel, they are part of the parcel unit. All residents with a smart phone are encouraged to sign up for Code Red and join the Signal App so that they can receive emergency notifications. Each residential unit should decide how they will communicate with children, tenants and guests, in the event of an emergency.**

**2) During periods of power blackouts, WIFI, cell phones and landlines may be out of service. Check with your buddies to know which systems are working.**



## RED FLAG DAYS

**IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO STAY ACUTELY AWARE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS INCLUDING TEMPERATURE, HUMIDITY AND WIND. WEATHER IS KEY, ESPECIALLY DURING DRY SEASONS.**

You are interested in two types of fire events; Red Flag Days and new, nearby fires. I will walk you through the steps that I take as neighborhood Group Leader.

\_\_\_\_\_ Listening to local radio and receiving red flag notifications from the county or power company is critically important. Red Flag warnings are usually announced several days before the red flag day. You may receive a telephone message, hear about it on local radio or newspaper or from a friend. Verify the planned Red Flag Day beginning date and possible ending date. **When verified, post on the SignalApp the day before the Red Flag Day begins. Include the beginning and ending dates. You will then begin focusing on two tasks; 1) monitoring for nearby fires and 2) evaluating the need to call-out a nighttime fire watch.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I usually monitor conditions by listening, periodically during the day, to our local radio station (KVMR) and YubaNet Fire News (local internet fire blog), view webcams from the internet and check the wind direction and speed on our home weather station. If a wildfire has started within a 50-mile radius, I monitor its movement. If no wildfire has occurred, I check the local humidity, temperature and wind conditions expected during the upcoming night (through the internet – Nevada County Weather Underground.com). If humidity is expected to be less than 25% and wind speeds greater than 10 mph, I post a request on the Signal App for volunteers that will spend their allotted nighttime hours monitoring wildfire conditions. Four time slots are needed; 11 pm-1 am, 1-3 am, 3-5 am and 5-7 am. Volunteers (i.e., 11 pm-1 am) drive around the neighborhood or a nearby high location while monitoring radio reporting that they hear on their scanner, AM/FM radio, ham radio or cell phone. In addition, the volunteer has their vehicle windows down so they can smell smoky conditions developing. My high spot that was close to our neighborhood was on top of Banner Mountain. One time, I could see the Plumas wildfire along the northern ridgeline over 25 miles to the north. If the wildfire was progressing towards our neighborhood, it would have been easily seen. Fortunately, this was not the case.

When your prescribed nighttime fire watch time interval ends, text the next person that will replace you (make sure they wake up) and provide a very short fire status (e.g. all good this evening or “wildfire occurred at XYZ ridge but it is being attacked now by air so monitor” or “we may have a wildfire evacuation need- call me for details). The next nighttime wildfire volunteer acknowledges receipt of the text with comment. **Over communication of important information is better than under communication.**

\_\_\_\_\_ In the event you hear of a nearby wildfire traveling toward your neighborhood on the radios or scanners, attempt to contact the source of information with confirmation of the need to prepare for evacuation or to evacuate immediately. If it is obvious that the fire is moving rapidly in your direction (increasing smoke, flames, emergency crew horns or mobile megaphone messaging to evacuate), immediately post to the Signal App with a brief description including the evacuation directive (Evacuation Warning (prepare) or **Evacuation Order (Get Out; GO)**). Suggest the direction to evacuate but let everyone know conditions can change. **DO NOT EVACUATE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE FIRE.** And remember, the wind directions can change so everybody needs to continue monitoring fire conditions. The Group Leader continues reporting of conditions as best as possible





during this time (Group Leader is also evacuating). The Group Leader depends on cell phones, scanners and ham radios for keeping up to date and posting to the Signal App.

Each individual in the group immediately responds to the message on their Signal App and contacts their assigned Buddy(s). Our county uses [www.ReadyNevadaClunty.org](http://www.ReadyNevadaClunty.org) and CodeRED Emergency Alerts to be notified in case of emergency. Understand the Evacuation Status level by going to the [ReadyNevadaClunty.org](http://ReadyNevadaClunty.org) website and follow the directive. Stay informed.

Neighborhood evacuation then begins. Individual members are encouraged to report evacuation conditions (on the Signal App) as they evacuate in order to give others behind them knowledge of safe paths, dangerous conditions and changing situations. **Remember, we coordinate with each other before a wildfire starts, when evacuation begins and continue coordinating with each other until everyone's evacuation is complete.**



## FIRE WATCH GUIDELINES

During periods of high fire danger (Power shut-offs, Red Flag Alerts), we will initiate a night-time fire watch from sunset to sunrise, in two-hour shifts.

Fire watch goal is to detect presence of a fire, as early as possible. Methods to do this include:

- Monitor the environment with eyes, ears and nose. You will likely smell fire before you see fire.
- You may notice smoke in the air, ash or embers, hear crackling sounds, or see glows in the dark.
- Time spent outside is most effective for your senses to detect the above. Sitting inside your house will not be effective. At minimum, step outside frequently to look, listen and smell or, ideally, get in your car and ride to a location that gives you the best observation position for your neighborhood.
- Driving neighborhood streets with the windows down is the most effective way to observe different parts of the neighborhood and terrain features.
- Use monitor cameras on AlertWildfire.org. Go to menu drop-down in upper left corner. I select Greater Tahoe. This will take you to a map. Then select camera icon in upper right corner. All available cameras will be displayed. The arrows indicate which way the camera is pointing.
- Monitor emergency scanner or phone app for local activity. KVMR (our local emergency radio station), or Yubanet.com (our local internet fire blog) will broadcast emergency information but their information will be more delayed in contrast to listening to local responders on a scanner.
- When you finish your shift, call or text the next person and pass on any useful information such as wind conditions, smell of smoke, etc., that you observed.
- If you detect signs of a fire, send out a alert message to your group (in our case, Banner Terrace Fire Alert) on Signal and call 9-1-1.
- Follow-up by contacting your buddy group.



## THE EVACUATION

\_\_\_\_\_ **Personal responsibility is constantly needed to stay alert and ready.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Be vigilant in listening to notifications broadcasted on CodeRED Emergency Alerts and your fire group SignalApp.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Our county uses [www.ReadyNevadaClunty.org](http://www.ReadyNevadaClunty.org) and CodeRED Emergency Alerts to be notified in case of emergency. Understand the Evacuation Status level by going to the [ReadyNevadaClunty.org](http://ReadyNevadaClunty.org) website and follow the directive.

\_\_\_\_\_ Go as soon as you can. **Early evacuation saves lives.** If you leave and later find that it wasn't necessary, consider the day as a training day and enjoy the day at the movie theater or other fun activity. Nothing is lost.

\_\_\_\_\_ Have your evacuation vehicle loaded with your Go-Bag on all Red Flag Days. This step saves lives.

\_\_\_\_\_ Remember to bring your cell phone and computer chargers with you during evacuation events.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a ham radio. It will be loaded into the evacuation vehicle along with a battery, charger and antenna as well.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Leave early in a wildfire.** It is very likely that county and city roads will be backed up with traffic.

\_\_\_\_\_ As you exit your property during an evacuation, sound off your air horn with three distinct short pulses. This is our evacuation signal for others to hear and respond.

\_\_\_\_\_ Conditions change during a wildfire, so constantly reevaluate the safest route and adapt your evacuation route accordingly.

\_\_\_\_\_ Communicate your departure with your Buddies and post on the Signal App.

### NOTE:

Leave your trailers at home. Pulling trailers more often than not have difficulty due to rough terrain, breakdowns, a flat tire and/or overheating. They become obstructions that block everyone else from escaping the fire. We owe it to our communities to maintain clear and continuous escape routes from a wildfire. **PLEASE, LEAVE YOUR TRAILERS AT HOME.**



## FINAL CHECK-IN

Circumstances in the midst of a calamity can be pretty confusing and a wildfire is no exception. As you escape from the fire and the immediate threat is behind you, continue offering useful information to others or act as a communication point between your family, friends and neighbors and their needs to communicate. We are not finished helping until everyone is safe.

You can imagine; everyone may be going to different destinations after they evacuate, sometimes even unexpected destinations. It is certainly OK for individuals to check on each other by phone, message or any other means. Particularly, buddies could/should check on each other just to ensure they are OK. Buddies may make an effort to evacuate and stick together as a group. **Conditions change, so stay alert and ready to adapt to new situations.**

Start thinking about how you want to communicate with your buddies, family and neighbors. There is no wrong way. Just, do what friends do, stay connected with one another and help in whatever way that you can.



# USEFUL INFORMATION



## HORN EVACUATION ALERT

If an *Evacuation Order* is given for your area, use car horns and/or can horns to notify neighbors as you leave. Evacuation guidelines include:

- Time permitting, check on your buddies to make sure they received the evacuation order and are ready and able to leave.
- If a Signal alert has not gone out to the group, send an alert.
- As you leave, sound the horn of your car and/or the air horn in a can. Some vehicle horns are very weak.
- Direct the car horn or air horn toward the house so there is a better chance of being heard, especially at night.
- *Use groups of three short (one-second) bursts as you drive by homes.*
- Time permitting, drive into the neighbor's driveway to sound the alert and look for signs of acknowledgement (lights coming on or someone waving to you).
- If the air is very smoky, keep your windows closed and honk your vehicle horn only.

NOTE: **Everyone is encouraged to evacuate early and not wait for an evacuation order.** If you wait, congestion, blocked roads, down trees and powerlines, and fire conditions could make evacuation extremely hazardous or impossible.

It is important to also mention the universal evacuation warning system that many counties and cities use. My experience is in the county that I live; Nevada County. The County Sheriff, cities of Grass Valley, Nevada City and the Town of Truckee Police Departments have installed sirens on their patrol cars that are only used for evacuations. Go to <https://www.mynevadacounty.com/3040/Hi-Lo-Siren> and listen to what an evacuation siren sounds like. It is best described as a High-Low Tone. When you hear these tones, drop everything and leave immediately. Seconds matter.

## EVACUATION CHECKLIST FOR YOU AND YOUR CAR

You will not always be home when you need to evacuate. You will not have time to round up these items when fire strikes. Therefore, you may want to keep these items in the car during Red Flag days. They can be kept in the glove box, trunk, or a small plastic tote. Some items can remain in the trunk and some will be needed in the passenger cabin.

- Know your Evacuation Zone (for our group we go to [www.community.zonehaven.com](http://www.community.zonehaven.com) and type in our address). Your zone will be identified.
- Dress appropriately – wear cotton, wool or flame-retardant clothing. No man-made materials that will easily melt on your skin. Be able to cover entire body
- Air horn in a can.
- Water – at least one bottle for each person. Drinking water has a calming effect and helps to reduce anxiety
- Food – snacks (non-perishables). You could sit in traffic for hours
- Medications
- CPAP machines
- Charge your electric wheel chair
- Goggles – airtight, to prevent watering and drying of your eyes from smoke
- Face mask – N95/99/100 to remove contaminants from the air and help cool the air when you breath. Remember, however, these masks do not provide oxygen or remove all toxins.
- Radiant heat shield – wool/fire blankets, sunshield, foil survival blanket
- LED Flashlight with strobe, high lumen
- Battery radio with extra battery and a charger
- Cell phone with charger
- First aid kit – include burn gel or aloe vera cream for minor burns
- Maps with escape routes and safe zones highlighted
- Fire extinguisher
- Life vests, if near a lake or river, with rope or paracord
- Chainsaw and bolt cutter to remove obstacles
- Sanitation kit – container, plastic bags, wipes, TP, female funnel. Again, you could be stuck in your car for hours
- Vehicle power pack (lithium ion)
- Important items; pictures, passports and other documents



DO NOT carry spare gas. Heat will cause the gasoline to vaporize and could rupture or explode. Make sure your tank is full during all Red Flag days.



## MEMBERSHIP LIST

**NAME**

**ADDRESS**

**PHONE NO.**

**EMAIL**

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Operation Unite® is about bringing people together to solve water problems. Wildfire issues are most certainly caused by higher temperatures, winds, a lack of adequate precipitation or too much precipitation in the American West. This is why we have included wildfire response to our outreach and disaster preparedness activities. Our success is when you take appropriate actions with your community. No one is left behind.

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# COMMUNICATIONS FORM

## What kind of questions might you ask?

What direction is the fire moving now? Can you make some phone calls for me? Can you look up some information or email someone for me? What direction is the fire traveling? What roads are open for evacuation from my location? Is the fire going toward my address? Can you get information off the internet for me? Is this a red flag day? When should I evacuate? Where are the closest shelters for evacuees? Where can I take my animals? Can you patch a hospital doctor/nurse to me? I need medical advice. Do you know someone that can help? Where can I get my medications?

## Monitoring for information

Keep your cell phone charged, keep the volume high and make sure it is near you. The Signal App is your primary connection with everyone. If you need to call someone attempt to use a telephone landline or cell phone. If they are not working, try texting from your cell phone on Facetime, WhatsApp, the Signal App or another App. If that does not work, try emailing on the internet. If that doesn't work, go to your neighborhood ham radio operator.

Emergency reporting can be listened to on a scanner. Keep your scanner on during the dry season, red flag days and evacuations. Scanners can also be standalone plugins (sold at Walmart, Home Depot, to name a couple) or cell phone App Scanners.

## Neighborhood Ham Radio Operator

Call Sign

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Available Repeaters on the 2-meter or 70 cm frequencies

Name	Frequency	Off-set	Tone	Repeater Location

## Important Phone Numbers

Name	Phone Number



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## Wildfire Status

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## Webcams

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## Useful Websites

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## Monitoring for information

Keep you cell phone charged, keep the volume high and make sure it is near you. The Signal App is your primary connection with everyone. If you need to call someone attempt to use a telephone landline or cell phone. If they are not working, try texting from your cell phone on Facetime, WhatsApp, the Signal App or another App. If that does not work, try emailing on the internet. If that doesn't work, go to your neighborhood ham radio operator.

Emergency reporting can be listened to on a scanner. Keep your scanner on during the dry season, red flag days and evacuations. Scanners can also be standalone plugins (sold at Walmart, Home Depot, to name a couple) or cell phone App Scanners.

## Neighborhood Ham Radio Operator

Name: STEVE BAKER (K3GLAU) Address: Wines of Morning Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Available Repeaters on the 2-meter or 70 cm frequencies

Name	Frequency	Off-set	Tone	Repeater Location
<u>YUBA SUTTER</u>	<u>146.085</u>		<u>127.3</u>	
<u>WYD</u>	<u>146.625</u>		<u>151.4</u>	
<u>LITTON</u>	<u>147.285</u>		<u>151.4</u>	<u>Grass Valley, near Sierra Collg</u>
<u>MT. VACA</u>	<u>147.195</u>		<u>123.0</u>	
<u>SIMPLEX</u>	<u>146.490</u>			
<u>SIMPLEX</u>	<u>146.460</u>			

## Important Phone Numbers

Name	Phone Number
<u>Buddy 1</u>	
<u>Buddy 2</u>	
<u>Sierra Memorial Hospital</u>	<u>530-274-6000, 155 Glasson Way, Grass Valley</u>
<u>Emergency Radio Station; KUMR</u>	<u>530-265-9073 9555</u>

**Wildfire Status**

KVMR, local community radio; KVMR.org; 89.5 FM; 530-265-9073, <sup>530-265-9555 studio</sup>  
KNCO, local radio; 830 AM; 530-272-3424; listener line 530-477-5626  
KNCO.com/submit-to-krpn  
YUBANET; local internet; yubanet.com/Fires; voice 530-478-9600  
text 530-409-9889; direct Email news@yubanet.com  
Nevada County website; mynevadacounty.com/civicAlerts.aspx

**Webcams**

Ready Nevada County Dashboard; mynevadacounty.com/CivicAlerts  
MyAirDistrict.com/index.php/air-quality-info/web-cams  
Alertwildfire.org/sierra/?camera=Axis-Bullion

**Useful Websites**

Nevada County Weather Underground



## USEFUL REFERENCES AND URLS

### Signal App

Find it on your phone app store and download.

### Ham Radio

There are many different kinds of radios. I purchased one handheld (YAESU FT-60; FM dual band) and a portable (Kenwood TM-V71; dual bander)

Yaesu.com

[www.kenwood.comusa/com/amateur](http://www.kenwood.comusa/com/amateur)

### Local Ham Radio Club

[www.arrl.org/find-a-club](http://www.arrl.org/find-a-club)

### Radio Scanner App for Cell Phone

I use Scanner Radio (go to your cell phone app store and pick one out).

RadioReference.com (a national website that you can listen to local fire departments through your cell phone)

### Scanner

There are many scanners on the market. Search the web for “police and fire scanner” and see what looks right for you. I use a Ham radio made by Yaesu (FT-600). It has a variety of emergency-oriented channels. It is important to recognize that you need a ham radio license to operate these radios.

### Weather website

[www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com) type in your city and state in the search bar

### Home Weather Stations

I use an “Ambient Weather WS-2902C Wi-Fi OSPREY Solar Powered Wireless Weather Station

### Fire blankets and an air horn

We purchased several JJ CARE fire Blanket fire Suppression Blankets 40" X 40" as our fire emergency blankets. We keep two of them in our evacuation vehicles along with a small fire extinguisher.

We also purchased a marine/sport horn for each vehicle that would be used as our evacuation vehicle.

In my county (Nevada County), monitor messaging from the following sites:

[www.ReadyNevadaCounty.org/Dashboard](http://www.ReadyNevadaCounty.org/Dashboard)

[www.Know your Zone/Zonehaven](http://www.Know your Zone/Zonehaven)



## Add Your Own Notes



## Acknowledgments

I have always felt that educating our communities on topics relevant to their lives is only a part of the task to improve and strengthen lives. We need to empower people to actually apply the information that we share. The Go Plan is an example of this process in action. Wildfire response in my Sierra Nevada foothill neighborhood started through conversations made during my early morning exercise sessions with a few neighbors. We shared thoughts between pushups and planks of our concerns in effectively responding to the wildfire threat that existed in our neighborhood. It was Dave Kapler, retired Fire Chief of San Francisco, South Lake Tahoe and a Minnesota Fire Department, that started this effort. He organized our neighborhood, educated everyone on our vulnerabilities and provided direction on how we could stay safe and evacuate effectively. My role was merely supportive.

It was after Dave and his wife Ceci left our neighborhood that I fell into the position of coordinating and implementing our awareness/preparedness/evacuation plan. We have been using this plan for two fire seasons and are continuously being contacted by other neighbors that want to become a part of the program.

Today (2021), California is in its second year of significant drought and wildfire projections suggest this may be a challenging season. I contacted Dave and talked to him about my idea of formalizing his plan so more people could protect their families. He offered help in whatever way was needed. He has supported this entire effort to document the GO Plan.

My first thank you is to Dave. His moral compass and willingness to take pro-active action for safeguarding others are qualities that I attempt to emulate. He is a great mentor and friend. Dave, you have told me that I am taking this plan to a new level but I acknowledge the foundation is forever rooted in your effort. Thank you for being who you are.

I would also like to thank my entire neighborhood. It is they that have demonstrated the Operation Unite® initiative by walking their talk and actually implementing the GO Plan. Thank you, neighbors; Katherine, Taylor, Dan, Erin, Danny, Catherine, Anne, Cindy, Dave, Diana, Aaron, Gary, Loren, Scott, Diane, Hunter, Dan, Rick, Glenda, Larry, Aida, Vanessa, for exercising the fundamental principles that we stand on; kindness, trust, commitment and service for each other.

It was the creative skills and expertise of Katherine Young that provided the cover of the Go Plan. Her artistic talents were offered the moment that I shared the project. Thank you, Katherine.

I have the good fortune to have a son-in-law that has a wealth of experience in emergency response. I thank Collin and Angela Nunnink for their review and ideas that made great improvements through insight and information that I was not aware.



When I asked Phillip Nunnink, fire captain for his review of the GO Plan, he immediately accepted the task. Thank you, Phillip. You stand between harm and the public on a daily basis yet you also help during your off-duty time.

There have been numerous other neighbors and friends that have kindly offered to review the plan and comment. Thank you, Taylor Carey, Diana and Dan Behn, Vanessa Williams and Catherine Busch. Your comments and editing suggestions have greatly contributed to this document.

And, of course, everything that I work on is also held and supported by my wife, Aida. I love you and thank you for supporting me on all my Operation Unite® projects. You keep my feet on the ground and my eyes focused on what is most important.





# OTHER OPERATION UNITE® PROGRAMS



# THE KNOW YOUR WATER® Program

An Operation Unite® Outreach

**Nobody wants to experience a dry well.** The **KNOW YOUR WATER®** program makes your groundwater needs manageable.

Building a citizen response to a sometimes limited resource, like water, requires an expanded understanding of its presence and function in our lives. This is why our first step is to provide you with information describing your water supply. Once recognized, adaptive capacity, resourcefulness and willingness to work with our neighbors becomes the necessary component that transforms limitation into accommodation and satisfaction in your life and community.

Operation Unite® wants to help. We have created several programs that are designed to build your capacity in handling a more varied and changing presence of water in your life. The **KNOW YOUR WATER®** program informs and teaches you very important aspects of your water supply. The **Neighborhood Water Alliance** is another program that brings neighbors together to create a water contingency plan for the neighborhood.

These programs are special because you build them to accomplish what you want to achieve; a healthy water supply. The most basic level of the **KNOW YOUR WATER** program simply provides observation of groundwater depths in your well through time. This information is interpreted and presented to you as a concise reporting of groundwater conditions and life-style stresses. You use it to decide on your water demand options. We even provide a one-hour consultation to help you decide on a plan of action for the next water year. This is where your adaptive skills come into play.



The **KNOW YOUR WATER®** program can be expanded based on your level of interest and these expanded parts can be changed each year.

- Wellhead Survey
- Water Quality Testing
- Rainwater Harvest Potential
- Groundwater Recharge Potential
- Life-style Well Test
- Neighborhood Survey

So, join the Operation Unite® **KNOW YOUR WATER®** and **Neighborhood Water Alliance** programs and make your life's groundwater needs manageable today and into the future. We give you the information you need and teach you how to use it. You make all the decisions.

**CALL: 530-205-6388;**

**email: [water@operationunite.co](mailto:water@operationunite.co)**

Operation Unite® also has a Facebook page  
Operation Unite®, POB 922, Nevada City, California 95959



# MANAGING GROUNDWATER IN FRACTURED ROCK AQUIFERS IS NOW POSSIBLE

Operation Unite® outreach programs are now available for managing groundwater in rural residential and farming areas in the mountains and foothills of the west.

Operation Unite® outreach programs strengthen the individual's ability to make good water decisions, reduce vulnerabilities through neighborhood collaborative groups and manage Groundwater Sustainability Agency responsibilities by combining the Operation Unite® public facilitation program and Groundwater Sustainability Outreach with your agency.



Citizens benefit at the individual level, neighborhood level and community level. Call Operation Unite® to find out more:

**Know Your Water® program**

**Neighborhood Water Alliance program**

**Groundwater Sustainability Outreach**

**Call: 530-205-6388**

**Email: [water@operationunite.co](mailto:water@operationunite.co)**

*Bringing People Together to Solve Water Problems*



## **SPRING WATER CONFIRMATION PROGRAM**

If you want continued access to your spring water, Operation Unite® has a perfect program for you; *the Spring Water Confirmation Program.*



Think about it:

- Continue your access to water
- Know your spring water history
- Optimize your water right protection
- Defense of your rights requires validation through recorded history

The Spring Confirmation Program adds certainty to your spring water rights with current and historic documentation.

Call Operation Unite® today and ask for a free telephone consultation:

**Call: 530-205-6388**

**Email: [water@operationunite.co](mailto:water@operationunite.co)**

*Bringing People Together to Solve Water Problems*



# THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATER® ALLIANCE

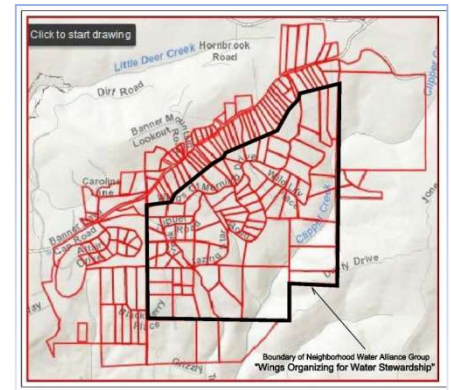
An Operation Unite® Outreach

The **NEIGHBORHOOD WATER ALLIANCE** program establishes water contingencies and alternatives for neighborhoods.

A **NEIGHBORHOOD WATER ALLIANCE** creates water contingencies and alternatives by building collaboration and adaptability into neighborhoods. Individual water supply vulnerability can be reduced by bringing neighbors within a neighborhood together to support neighborhood goals for utilizing the available resources.

## Do you really need to work together?

Our families and neighborhoods need water every day. Our lives become dysfunctional, from a practical perspective, if we don't have a consistent water supply. A **NEIGHBORHOOD WATER ALLIANCE** group recognizes that each water well and property is vulnerable in different ways. These physical differences between properties can actually strengthen water supply reliability if neighbors work together. **NEIGHBORHOOD WATER ALLIANCE** groups realize that protection and long-term reliability of the local groundwater resource needs to be effectively and properly managed together.



So, create an Operation Unite® **NEIGHBORHOOD WATER ALLIANCE** in your neighborhood.

- **You are not alone anymore**
- **You are much stronger and resourceful as a group**
- **Your exposure to losing your water supply is significantly reduced**
- **You define the goals of the neighborhood**

Protect your neighborhood. **START A NEIGHBORHOOD WATER ALLIANCE** group in your neighborhood.

**CALL: 530-205-6388; email:**  
[water@operationunite.co](mailto:water@operationunite.co)

Operation Unite®, POB 922, Nevada City, California 95959