

Fire Safety

Take it Personally

You have the power to protect your family and home during a wildfire.

The past few years have made it painfully clear that first responders and county agencies do the best they can, but may not be able to directly help individual families during the chaos of a fast-moving fire. **But we can take action to protect ourselves.** The common-sense steps we take before and during a fire emergency will help save lives and property.

1. PRE-EMERGENCY PLANNING: Before there is a threat of wildfire, create a plan to protect your home and family.

- Follow Riviera West guidelines to clear your lot to fire-safe standards. Check www.rivierawesthoa.com for details, or talk to Fire Safety Committee members. The office can give you the names of lot-clearing and tree-removal services. When clearing your property, do not use Round Up or similar products on bushes and leave them standing. This leaves highly combustible dead vegetation. When a lot clearing service gives you an estimate, be sure they include hauling the dead brush away from your property. Once you have thoroughly cleared your lot, you'll find that keeping it clear every year becomes a routine and manageable project. Think long-term: this may be a great time to invest in a more fire-resistant landscape plan.
⇒ Riviera West will hold free chipping days beginning June 17. More information on this will be forthcoming.
- In an emergency, you need accurate information. Visit www.lakesheriff.com today and sign up for CodeRED to get authorized evacuation alerts and other bulletins you will need during the confusion of an approaching fire. Riviera West also recommends that you subscribe to the free emergency warning system called Nixle for alerts and advisories. Sign up at www.nixle.us/92ZYP. The County Office of Emergency Services is also on facebook at *Lake County OES*.
- Make sure you can open your garage door if the power is out. Local home improvement stores and contractors can help you install a manual opener if you have an automatic opener.
- Harden your home. Recent studies have shown that in large wildfires one of the main differences between homes that are lost and those that survive in the same area is the amount of combustible material adjacent to the walls of the house or on its roof. Trash, wood piles, dead vegetation, pine needles, outdoor furniture and other such materials give flying embers a chance to start a spot fire which can ignite the house. Take advantage of our Phos-Chek fire retardant program to spray around your home. And visit www.readyforwildfire.org for a wealth of helpful information on strengthening your property against fire.
- Know how to evacuate. Familiarize yourself with Riviera West evacuation routes. Take some practice trips to the evacuation points. Try different routes so you have options during a real evacuation. If, and only if, the main exit from Riviera West onto Soda Bay Road is blocked during an evacuation, there is an emergency exit at the south end of Shoreline View Drive. The marked gate opens to a service road that vehicles can travel and leads to an exit on Soda Bay Road. The gate has a combination lock and/or volunteers will open the gate. Please do not trespass on the service road at other times or we will lose access. If the situation demands, we may need to evacuate to the lake. Take the time now to visit the Riviera West marina so you are familiar with the route and the area near the lake.
- Create a wildfire action plan for your family. Each member of the family should know what to do, whether they are at home or somewhere else when fire approaches. Know where to meet and how to stay in touch during and after a fire. Be sure each family member knows what to take at the last minute and how to evacuate. Prepare a destination: can you stay with a friend or relative after evacuating, or will you head to a local shelter? Make sure all family members know the evacuation destination. Visit www.ready.gov and www.readyforwildfire.org/Prepare-Your-Family for advice on preparing all members of your family for evacuation.
- Are you living with a disability? If you know you will need assistance in evacuating, it is important to make plans ahead of time to develop a support network who can assist you. The www.ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs website offers practical advice for those with disabilities. Regularly practice the evacuation process with your support network so you will be able to leave your home safely and quickly when the need arises.
- Make a checklist for your "go-bag" - essential things to take with you in an evacuation. (See the attached checklist).
- Make sure first responders can find your property. In an emergency, seconds count. The Lake County Fire Safe Council and County firefighters encourage all residents to use highly-visible, reflective address signs. The signs are produced here in Lake County, and require only a \$30 donation. Order forms for the "Reflect to Protect" signs are available at the Riviera West office or online at www.lakecountyca.gov.

2. FIRE CLOSE BY: There is a nearby fire but we have not been told to evacuate. Time to put your plan into action!

If the fire turns in our direction, stay calm and prepare to evacuate at short notice. Start by confirming all family members know what to do, where to go after evacuation and how to stay in touch. It's good to have a friend or relative who doesn't live in the area serve as a central communications point for your family. Review the Riviera West evacuation map and evacuation process. Be sure that preparations are up-to-date for young children, seniors and family members living with disabilities. Arrange for somewhere to go, be it a local shelter, a friend or relative, or a motel.

Stay up-to-date on advisories using authorized online sources. Authorities will not be coming through the neighborhood telling us to evacuate!

Keep your cell phone charged and program emergency numbers into your phone (see links below). Place ID tags on your pets, and have pet carriers and pet food ready to go. Keep your car gassed up and be sure you have access to your garage even if the power is out. Use the list you made ahead of time to prepare your go-bag. Back up essential documents onto usb drives or other small media that's easily transported even if you don't have time to take your computer. The Riviera West website and many other online sources have excellent information on how to pack for evacuation.

Dress to protect yourself; wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, a hat, heavy shoes and use a bandana for face covering. Stay close to your house, drink plenty of water and keep an eye on your family and pets until you are ready to leave.

Bring lawn furniture, toys, doormats and other outdoor items indoors. Remove curtains and other flammable window coverings. Metal blinds should be closed.

3. VOLUNTARY or MANDATORY EVACUATION: County authorities issue an evacuation notice. Time to move out!

NOTE: If you feel threatened by a nearby fire, evacuate immediately even if there is no official evacuation notice. As we saw last year in Sonoma and Napa Counties, some communities had no notice at all and the fire swept through in the middle of the night. In many cases, lives were saved simply because people took the initiative to protect themselves.

According to Cal Fire, *Leave as soon as evacuation is recommended by fire officials to avoid being caught in fire, smoke or road congestion. Don't wait to be ordered by authorities to leave. Evacuating the fire area early also helps firefighters keep roads clear of congestion, and lets them move more freely to do their job. In an intense wildfire, they will not have time to knock on every door. If you are advised to leave, don't hesitate! The terms "Voluntary" and "Mandatory" are used to describe evacuation orders. However, local jurisdictions may use other terminology such as "Precautionary" and "Immediate Threat." These terms are used to alert you to the significance of the danger. All evacuation instructions provided by officials should be followed immediately for your safety.*

You must take the initiative to stay informed and secure! Listen to the radio/TV for further announcements from authorities.

Riviera West recommends that you leave as soon as you receive any evacuation notice for our area, or when you see dangerous conditions developing. Leaving early increases your chance of survival and facilitates emergency response that can save our homes. You will face less traffic and obstructions on the road, and you will have an easier time finding lodging if needed. You can always come back if the situation improves.

As soon as you get the notice, pull your car out of the garage and park it facing the street, unlocked and with doors and windows closed. Pack your go-bag(s) in the car. If you have time, check if neighbors have received the evacuation notice. Move flammable furniture to the center of the room, away from doors and windows. Turn off propane at the tank. Leave your lights on so firefighters can see your house in smoky conditions. Turn off your air conditioning. Shut all doors and windows, leaving them unlocked. (See the attached checklist for last-minute packing.) Put your pets in secure pet carriers in the car just before you leave.

Make your way to Soda Bay Road and follow instructions from law enforcement staff in the area. You may be directed to temporary assembly areas to await transfer to a safe location. If the main entrance to Riviera West is blocked, proceed to the alternate evacuation points.

Links and resources:

CalFire Emergency Supply Kit advice: <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/Emergency-Supply-Kit/>

Evacuation Plans from the US Department of Homeland Security: <https://www.ready.gov/evacuating-yourself-and-your-family>

Kelseyville Fire Protection District contact information: <http://www.kelseyvillefire.com/contact/>

Lake County Sheriff's Office contact information: <http://www.lakesheriff.com/Contact/contact.htm>

Lake County Office of Emergency Services: <http://www.lakesheriff.com/Page10546.aspx>



Riviera West Fire Safety Committee ♦ For more information, visit www.rivierawesthoa.com