

# Packing and Using Your “Go-Bag”

## You can do most of your packing before the need arises

When a wildfire is bearing down on the community, you won't have time to pack the things you need. The fires in 2015, 2016 and last year hit close to home. And they taught us an important lesson — some people were lucky to escape with only the clothes they were wearing. You can never assume there will be time to gather belongings before you evacuate. Throughout fire season, we should be ready to evacuate on short notice. No evacuation is easy, but you'll handle it much better if you are ready well in advance.

### PRE-EMERGENCY PACKING AND PREPARATION

These pre-emergency items can be located and packed at the beginning of fire season. Many people rely on one or two sturdy bins with snap lids. Once packed, store the bins, along with your pet carriers, in an easy-to-access place near your exit. If time allows during an evacuation, you may be able to quickly put the bins in your car. Spend time now to identify your family's highest-priority items; the list will be different for every household. Your pre-emergency bins can include:

- Important documents, including wills, birth certificates, passports, social security and medicare cards, insurance files, financial papers, medical records and prescriptions, and monthly bookkeeping files
- Cell phones and chargers, back-up drive(s) containing essential digital files and family photos
- Contact numbers for medical, business and financial contacts, as well a contact list of family members and neighbors
- Cash, credit cards and extra checkbooks
- Personal needs:
  - Medicines, extra eyeglasses or contacts, other medical needs (don't forget sun block), first-aid kit
  - Bottled water and compact, healthy snacks for everyone in the family
  - Change of clothes, sturdy shoes, hats and gloves, and a cotton scarf to cover your face if needed
  - Blankets and pillows for the car if there is space
  - Food, water and leashes for your pets (be sure your pets have ID tags)
- It's a good idea to pack flotation devices for family members in case evacuation to the lake is needed.
- Other needs:
  - Extra keys for the house, car, safe deposit box and storage unit
  - Flashlights and batteries, portable radio and batteries, notebook and some pens
  - Maps (paper maps will be helpful if coverage is interrupted)
  - Pack a separate bin with family keepsakes and small valuables, that you can take along if there is time



### LAST-MINUTE PACKING DURING AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Some things are in daily use and can't be packed ahead of time, (cell phones, purses, prescriptions and laptops, etc.). Each family member should have their list of a few personal items to grab at the last minute (if there is time!). Review these items as a family and put your personal lists on the fridge door so you don't have to try to remember in the midst of a crisis. If an evacuation order is issued, EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY! Avoid injury, traffic problems and other difficulty by evacuating early.

NOTE: The above are general suggestions drawn from various emergency response sources. Every family's needs are different. Please refer to authorized agencies and websites, as well as your own health care provider, for specific evacuation advice your family may need.

#### 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>

