

Washington State Patrol

Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



Office of the State Fire Marshal **State Fire Marshal Michael Matlick**

Evacuation during a Wildfire

The need to evacuate during a wildfire is a real possibility for anyone that lives in a wildfire prone area. During the 2008 fire season the threat was real and the danger was very close to home for residents of East Wenatchee during the Badger Mountain Fire. With above normal significant fire potential predicted for areas of Eastern Washington this summer, the State Fire Marshal's Office is asking homeowners: Have you and your family talked about what you would do in the event you are asked to evacuate due to the danger of an approaching wildfire?

It is the responsibility of local law enforcement and fire officials to order and execute an orderly evacuation. This includes going door to door and making face-to-face contact whenever possible. In Washington State there are three generally recognized evacuation alert levels that homeowners should be familiar with during a fire:

Level I – This is an initial notification in person to inform the residents of the situation, and the process which may follow.

Level II – People are requested to consider leaving the area, or be ready to leave at a moment's notice due to the high possibility of the fire reaching the area. Access back into the area may be limited at this point. This may be the only notice that you receive.

Level III – The fire is in the area. People are to leave immediately. Access to the area is restricted.

Below are some basic preparedness questions to think about as you plan for possible evacuation and the fire season:

- Are you familiar with your community's disaster-preparedness plans and have you created a family plan? Do you have plans to care for your pets in case of an evacuation? Do you know where the closest police, fire and emergency medical facilities are located?
- Have you planned different escape routes from your home and neighborhood and designated an emergency meeting place for the family to meet? Is there an established contact point to communicate with concerned relatives?
- Have you put together an emergency kit? It should include the following: at least a three-day supply of drinking water and food that needs no refrigeration or cooking; a portable NOAA weather radio; first aid supplies and medications; basic tools, such as a wrench, a flashlight and

gloves; portable lanterns and batteries; credit cards and cash; and important documents, including insurance policies.

For more information on planning for evacuation and creating a family disaster plan visit the Washington Emergency Management Division website at www.emd.wa.gov or the Federal Emergency Management Agency website at www.fema.gov.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State including inspections of state licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data.

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PREVENT FIRES
IT'S YOUR JOB!