

# The Knowledge House Guide to:

## Emergency Preparation & Planning

*Local officials are the best source of information when determining whether to evacuate or shelter-in-place.*

### How to Prepare Ahead of Time

- Develop and practice a family fire drill, disaster and evacuation plan.
- Post address sign clearly visible from street.
- Document an itemized list of all belongings with photos or video.
- Prepare a list of items to take with you in case of evacuation (store in one place if possible).
- Keep evacuation vehicle gas tank at least half full.
- Install non-combustible roof material; clear debris from roof and gutters.
- Install screens on foundation and eave vents.
- Remove trash and debris accumulations from the yard.
- Stack firewood uphill or on a contour at least 30 ft. away from house.
- Clear weeds and cut grass within 10 ft. of structures, propane tanks, utility boxes, hydrants.
- Thin and prune your trees and brush; remove overhanging branches within 15 ft. of roof.
- Clear driveway to at least 20 ft. wide with 15 ft. vertical clearance (for emergency vehicles).
- Keep tools, ladder, hoses long enough to reach entire house, and fire extinguishers handy.

### What to Do Before Evacuating

- Follow official agency's evacuation instructions.
- Plan a travel route and destination; determine where separated members will meet.
- Don't tie up telephone lines (notify friends and relatives by e-mail where to contact you).
- Fill evacuation vehicle's gas tank and park in driveway facing toward the street.
- Close car windows and leave keys in ignition; DO NOT LOCK CAR.
- Close outside shutters, cover outside vents, plug air vents and openings.
- Close window shades, drapes, and blinds.
- Move all flammable furniture away from windows, to the center of house.
- Shut all interior doors, but leave them unlocked.
- Fill bathtubs, sinks, and containers with water.
- Make safety equipment obvious for firefighters (spigots, ladders, chain saws, hoses, etc.).
- Leave a note on front door stating your names, date and time, destination, and contact info.
- In your note, also tell where flammables are stored (gas, ammo, chemicals - move them all into one place away from house).
- Remove combustible items (patio furniture, etc.) away from the house.
- Soak burlap sacks, small rugs, or large rags in buckets of water outside.
- Turn off appliances, thermostats, fireplaces, stoves, natural gas, disconnect propane tank.
- Turn on exterior lights so firefighters can see your house in dark and smoke.
- Lock doors and windows.

### How to Shelter-in-Place

- You will need your home survival kit; if it is stored outside, bring it indoors.
- Close and lock all doors and windows to the outside.
- Turn off all heating and air conditioning systems, and switch vents to the closed position.
- Close all fireplace dampers and fireplace screens.
- Seal gaps around window air conditioners, fireplace dampers, doors and windows with plastic sheeting, wax paper, or any other suitable material and tape the material down.
- Close drapes or shades over windows.
- Stay away from windows.
- If time does not permit you to seal the entire home, close as many internal doors as possible, move to the most central room in your home, and seal that room as above.
- Remain in place until you are told by police or fire officials, or through radio or television broadcasts, that it is safe to leave.