

# You may need to leave quickly.

Wildfires and storms don't give much warning. The calmest evacuations are the ones you've half-planned already. Here's how to be ready to go in under 20 minutes.

## READ FIRST

### If any of these happen, act first

#### ! **Officials tell your zone to leave.**

Go. Per Ready.gov, the people that wait for the situation to “look bad enough” are the ones that end up driving through it. Your stuff is insured; your hours aren't.

#### ! **There's water across the road.**

Turn around — per the NWS, a foot of moving water can float a car, and you can't judge depth from the driver's seat. Find another route, even a slow one.

## FREE, RIGHT NOW

### Start with these — they cost nothing

- ☐ Keep your gas tank above half during fire and storm season, so you never have to stop for fuel while leaving.
- ☐ Make a one-page grab list meds, documents, chargers, and pet supplies. Tape it inside a cabinet door.
- ☐ Photograph your important papers snap your IDs, insurance, and each room of the house for any future claims.
- ☐ Pick a meeting spot and an out-of-town contact everyone can check in with if you get separated.
- ☐ Back your car into the driveway so you can load up and pull out without delay.

## UNDER 12 HOURS

### A watch is issued — get ready

- ☐ Top off the gas tank now — stations jam and lose power once an order comes.
- ☐ Charge every phone, battery pack, and device while you still have power.
- ☐ Set your go-bag, grab list, and a carrier for each pet by the door.
- ☐ Bring pets inside so you are not chasing them later, and put meds in one labeled bag.
- ☐ Park facing out, or back into the driveway, so you can load and leave fast.
- ☐ Decide your route and a backup route, plus where you'll go and who you'll call.

## An order comes — go

- ☐ Leave early — if you're on the fence, that's your signal to go now, not later.
- ☐ Load pets, medications, documents, and your grab list before anything else.
- ☐ Follow the official route even if it looks longer; other roads may be closed or unsafe.
- ☐ Text a relative your route and destination so someone always knows where you are.
- ☐ Shut off gas if told to, lock up, and leave a light on so the house is visible to crews.

## 48 HOURS AND BEYOND

## You're away from home

- ☐ Keep devices charged from the car or a power station so you stay reachable and informed.
- ☐ If your shelter has questionable tap water, filter or boil it before drinking.
- ☐ Check official sources — not social rumors — before you even think about heading back.
- ☐ When cleared to return, watch for downed lines, washed-out roads, and ash or debris.
- ☐ Photograph any damage before you touch it, for your insurance claim.

## KNOW THE LINE

## When it's more than an inconvenience

- **Call 911: You're trapped, or every route out is blocked.**
- **Call 911: A medical emergency happens on the road.**
- **Call 911: You see someone stranded in rising water or in the fire's path.**
- **Leave: The moment your zone gets the order — no bargaining with it.**
- **Leave: Before the order, if it feels wrong: embers or an orange glow, water creeping up the street, a strong gas smell. Per CAL FIRE, leaving early is what keeps the roads usable for everyone.**
- **Leave: If you'd struggle to leave fast — mobility issues, livestock, a big family — treat a watch as your order and get a head start.**

## WORTH KNOWING

## Easy mistakes to avoid

- **Packing like it's a vacation**  
The go-bag is already packed — that's the whole point. Meds, documents, chargers, people, pets. Fifteen minutes, out the door.
- **Driving into smoke or water to save ten minutes**  
If you can't see the road or the road is wet and moving, that route is closed — whatever the map app says.
- **Leaving without telling anyone your route**  
One text to your out-of-area contact: where you're headed and which way. If plans change, text again. Rescuers can't search a route nobody knows about.

- **Coming home before the all-clear**

Downed lines, gas leaks, and re-flaring hotspots do their worst work after the storm looks over. Wait for officials to reopen your area.