

Module 5 - Going home!

Tips for returning after a wildfire evacuation.

Good to Go Sunol!

How to get ready, stay informed, evacuate and return from wildfire



Download additional workbooks at <https://GoodtoGoWildfire.com>

Questions? E-mail us at GoodToGoSunol@gmail.com

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Module 1 - Getting Ready to Go!

How to know when to go.

Module 2 - Set to go!

What to take when you go.

Module 3 - Way to go!

How to know which way to go.

Module 4 - Everyone goes!

Evacuating pets and large animals.

Module 5 - Going home!

Tips for returning after a wildfire evacuation.

Module 6 – Just in time!

Last minute tips to help you evacuate from wildfire evacuation.



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Fire Protection
as part of the California Climate Investments Program.

Module 5 – Going Home!

What to expect after an evacuation.

Topics

- Going home
- Outside and inside your home
- Cleaning up & health issues

Actions

- *Going Home Checklist*
- *What to Look For Around Your Home Checklist*
- *Inspecting Your Home from the Outside Checklist*
- *Inside Your Home Checklist*
- *Going Home - Cleaning Up Checklist*
- *What's in Your Fridge Checklist*
- *Your Pets' Return Home After a Wildfire Checklist*
- *It's still smoky out.*
- *What to Expect to Find Group Exercise.*



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Action: Going Home Checklist



What to look for on your way home.

Fire officials will determine when it is safe for you to return to your home. This will be done as soon as possible considering safety and accessibility. Continue to listen to news updates for information about the fire. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.

Be ready to re-evacuate if necessary.

What to look for:

- ☐ Do not try to return home until fire officials say it's safe.
- ☐ Watch roads for downed power lines, fallen trees, brush, rocks and other debris.
- ☐ Use extreme caution around trees, power poles, and other tall objects. Most burned structures and surfaces will be unstable.
- ☐ Stay out of burned forests during windy conditions, as burned trees are easily downed by wind.
- ☐ Watch out for other hazards, such as:
 - Hot spots that can flare up. Wildfires may have left burning embers that could reignite.
 - Flash floods, if rainy season has started as you return home. Stay away from burned forests, storm channels, rivers, creeks, and engineered channels. Deadly flows of water and debris can occur after a wildfire. Be ready for further evacuations from flash floods.
- ☐ Be ready to re-evacuate if necessary.



Action: What to Look for Around Your Home Checklist



Continue to listen to news updates for information about the fire.
Return home only when authorities say it is safe.

Be ready to re-evacuate if necessary.

What to look for around your yard and outside of your home:

- ☐ Keep a “fire watch.” Look for smoke or sparks throughout the house and on rooftops (e.g., in gutters), etc. Check for embers in:

- Rain gutters
- On the roof
- Under overhangs
- Under decks and in crawl spaces
- In wood piles and debris piles

For several hours afterward, recheck for smoke and sparks throughout the home, including the attic. The winds of wildfires can blow burning embers anywhere. Keep checking your home for embers that could cause fires.

- ☐ Look for downed power lines around your home.
- ☐ Visually check for hazardous trees. Any tree that has been weakened by fire may be a hazard. Look for burns on the tree trunk. If the bark on the trunk has been burned off or scorched by very high temperatures completely around the circumference, the tree will not survive and should be considered unstable. Check hazardous trees at the roots and partially scorched trees.
- ☐ Be aware of potential hazardous materials. Take precautions while cleaning your property. You may be exposed to potential health risks from hazardous materials.
- ☐ For more detail on what to look for around your home see <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/post-wildfire/after-a-wildfire/>.

Action: Inspecting Your Home from the Outside Checklist



Check the outside of home before you enter.

- ☐ Check for the smell of gas and check for damage to gas meter or lines that enter your house. If there is any visible damage do not attempt to repair. Call PG&E.
- ☐ Look for downed electric wires and electric meter.
 - If there is any visible damage or downed wires call PG&E. Stay clear of all electric wires on the ground.
 - If power is on, turn off at main until you've completed your inspection of inside the house. Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home.
- ☐ If you have a solar electrical system, this system should be inspected by a licensed technician to verify that the solar panels and electrical wiring are safe for continued operation.
- ☐ If you have a propane tank or system, contact a propane supplier, turn off valves on the system, and leave valves closed until the supplier inspects your system. If you have a heating oil tank system, contact a heating oil supplier for an inspection of your system before you use it
- ☐ Watch for hazards:
 - Slip, trip and fall hazards
 - Detect or suspect any source of heat or smoke, notify fire department immediately.
 - Sharp objects such as metal pieces, concrete, wood, nails.
 - Ash, soot, demolition dust
 - Hazardous materials - Workplace chemicals, kitchen and bathroom cleaning products, pesticides, paint, batteries, fuel containers that have been partially damaged or destroyed.
 - Propane cylinders for heating or BBQ.



Action: Inside Your Home Checklist



Use caution as you enter your home. Complete the checklist for outside of your home before you enter.

- ☐ Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home. (Note: the flashlight should be turned on outside before entering. The battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.)
- ☐ Check for embers in the attic and other vented spaces.
- ☐ Turn off all appliances before turning on main circuit breaker. Do not use appliances that have been in contact with fire water or fire retardant until they have been checked and cleared for use by a qualified electrician.
- ☐ Do not drink or use water from the faucet until emergency officials say it is okay; water supply systems can be damaged and become polluted during wildfires or as a result of subsequent post-fire flooding.
 - Do not use water that you think may be contaminated to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, wash hands, or to make ice or baby formula or give to your pets/ animals.
 - If your well has been damaged by fire, contact a local licensed and bonded well constructor or pump installer to determine the extent of the damage and what must be done to either repair or decommission the well.
 - Flush all water using fixtures by running the tap for 5 minutes (or longer if service connection is long).
- ☐ Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke or soot. Before you dispose of items, make sure you inventory them as part of fire insurance claim. Take lots of photos.
- ☐ Discard medicines, cleaners, cosmetics and toiletries that could have been damaged by heat, smoke and lingering chemical residues.
- ☐ Dispose of hazardous materials. Cleaning products, paint, batteries and damaged fuel containers need to be disposed of properly to avoid risk.

Action: Going home – Cleaning up Checklist



If your home was spared but was exposed to extreme heat and smoke, United policyholders (UP) offers specialized guidance on insurance claim issues related to [proper cleaning, inspecting for damage](#), restoring healthy [indoor air quality](#) and repairing obvious as well as hidden damage.

Follow public health guidance on clean up.

- ☐ Wear protective clothing:
 - Use a two-strap dust particulate mask with nose clip and coveralls for the best minimal protection.
 - Wear leather gloves to protect hands from sharp objects while removing debris.
 - Wear rubber gloves when working with outhouse remnants, plumbing fixtures, and sewer piping. They can contain high levels of bacteria.
- ☐ Determine if your home's air quality is safe to move back into. Heavy smoke, nearby flames and extreme heat can impact a home's air quality and create health hazards that you may not be able to see or smell.
 - Be cautious about moving back in.
 - Qualified health and environmental safety experts can help you determine whether it is safe to move back into your home.
 - See UP Insurance guideline about communicating with insurer and request they cover costs.
- ☐ Create inventory of items, both inside and outside that have been damaged by fire, smoke, chemicals, soot, ash, water or fire retardant.
- ☐ Photograph damage to your property for insurance purposes. There are applications available to time stamp photos, which is beneficial for insurance claims.
- ☐ Don't throw away anything that has been damaged until the inventory is made by the insurance adjustor.
- ☐ Contact your insurance company early and work with adjusters. See United policy holders" Roadmap to Recovery" resources for tips. <https://www.uphelp.org/>

What's in Your Fridge Checklist

Food safety after a PSPS



A power outage of 2 hours or less is usually not considered hazardous to food stored under safe conditions when outage begins. University of California, Davis offers suggestions on food safety. For more detail see "Guidelines for Food Safety During Short Term Power outages Consumer Fact Sheet"

<https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/7264.pdf>.

- ☐ Power outage and "perishable" foods
 - Less than 2 hours generally OK
 - Unopened full freezer 2 days
 - Unopened refrigerator 4 hours
 - Temperature danger zone 40° to 140°F
- ☐ Partially cooked meat and poultry are safety risk.
- ☐ Cooked foods – serve as soon as possible. Do not keep leftovers from more than 2 hours.
- ☐ Uncut fresh fruits and vegetables generally not a concern. Consider cut food "perishable."

Guidelines for Food Safety During Short-Term Power Outages
Consumer Fact Sheet

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All Californians now and then experience random, unplanned power outages. These power outages are commonly known as blackouts.

Certain foods are a safety concern during a blackout. Moist, perishable foods need special handling. Bacteria can grow quickly when these foods are kept in the temperature danger zone (40° to 140°F, or 4° to 60°C).

A power outage of 2 hours or less is not considered hazardous to food that is stored under safe conditions when the outage begins. For blackouts of more than 2 hours, please consult publications that specifically deal with longer power outages (see "For More Information," below).

FROZEN FOODS
Keep the freezer door closed. A full freezer will stay at freezing temperatures for about 2 days. Short power outages should not affect the safety of frozen foods. Make sure the freezer turns on when the power is restored.

REFRIGERATED FOODS
Return cold, perishable foods that might be at room temperature to the refrigerator as quickly as possible when the power goes out. Keep the refrigerator door closed as much as possible during the outage.

In general, cold foods kept in a refrigerator should be safe during power outages of less than 4 hours. Make sure the refrigerator turns on when the power is restored.

FOODS IN PREPARATION DURING A POWER OUTAGE
When the power goes out, make sure you turn off heat-producing appliances like electric stoves. This will prevent fires if the appliances are unattended when the power is restored.

Partially cooked meat and poultry can be a food safety risk during a power outage. If you are using an electric cooking appliance during an outage and the meat is not fully cooked, you have two options.

1. Continue cooking on an outdoor grill or camp stove. Cook until the meat and poultry reaches a safe internal temperature (see the table below).

Cook leftovers to an internal temperature of at least 165°F (74°C). Always use a thermometer to measure the temperature.

OR

2. Throw away the partially cooked meat or poultry.

Partially cooked combination foods (e.g., casseroles) should be cooled quickly on ice or in an ice and water bath. When power is restored, heat the food to at least 165°F (74°C). If this is not possible and the power outage is longer than 1 hour, throw the food items away. This is especially important if the ingredients were raw before they were combined.

Completely cooked foods. Serve completely cooked foods as soon as possible. Do not place warm leftovers in the refrigerator when the power is out. Instead, if possible, chill leftover foods using ice or an ice and water bath. Place these foods in the refrigerator after power is restored. Leftovers kept in the danger zone (40° to 140°F, or 4° to 60°C) for longer than 2 hours should be thrown away.

Cooking Temperatures
Recommended by the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

Temperature	°F	°C	Product
145	63	beef, lamb, and veal steaks and roasts, medium rare	
160	71	beef, lamb, and veal steaks and roasts, medium	
160	71	ground meats (beef, pork, veal, and lamb)	
165	74	ground turkey and chicken, stuffing and casseroles, leftovers	
170	77	chicken and turkey breasts	
180	82	chicken and turkey (whole bird, legs, thighs and wings)	

To contact the Hotline, see "For More Information," on next page.

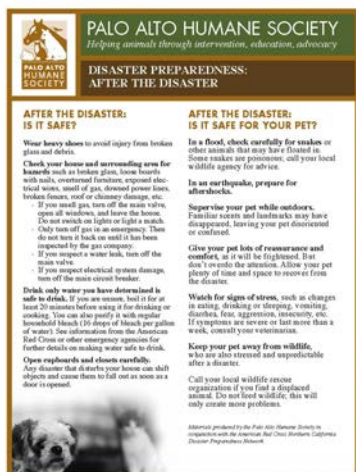
University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Publication 7264

Action: Your Pets' Return Home After a Wildfire Checklist?



For more information about your pets and evacuation see Module 4.

- ☐ Check your house and surrounding area for hazards. Wear heavy shoes to avoid injury. Do not let your pet out until everything is cleared.
- ☐ Supervise your pet while outdoors. Familiar scents and landmarks may have disappeared, leaving your pet disoriented or confused.
- ☐ Drink only water you have determined is safe to drink. If unsure boil for at least 20 minutes before using for your pet's drinking (or yours). You can also purify with regular household bleach -16 drops of bleach per gallon.
- ☐ Inside house open closets and cupboards carefully to make sure contents have not shifted.
- ☐ Keep pets away from wildlife who are also stressed and unpredictable after a disaster. Call your local wildlife rescue organization if you find a displaced animal. Do not feed wildlife; this will only create more problems.
- ☐ Give your pet lots of reassurance and comforts, as it will be frightened. But don't overdo the attention. Allow your pet plenty of time and space to recover from the disaster.
- ☐ Watch for signs of stress – changes in eating, drinking or sleeping, vomiting, diarrhea, fear, aggression, insecurity etc. If symptoms are severe or last more than a week, consult your vet.



More information on returning home with animals is available at the Palo Alto Humane Society.

<https://www.paloaltohumane.org/education-programs/disaster-preparedness/>



It's Still Smoky Out Checklist.

Wildfire smoke affects health in many ways. If you see or smell smoke in the immediate area, limit or avoid outdoor activity, including exercise. This particularly applies to young children and older adults, people with breathing or heart issues, such as asthma, and pregnant individuals.

The greatest hazard comes from breathing fine particles in the air, which can reduce lung function, worsen asthma and other existing heart and lung conditions, and cause coughing, wheezing and difficulty breathing.

For the latest recommendations see <http://www.acphd.org/air-quality.aspx>

Stay Indoors

- ☐ Stay indoors with windows and doors closed, where air quality is better.
- ☐ Go to a library or mall (check if they are open).
- ☐ Visit an air-cooling center.

If you must work outdoors see CAL/ OSHA for tips on protecting workers exposed to smoke from wildfires <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/wildfire/worker-protection-from-wildfire-smoke.html>

Protect indoors air

- ☐ Keep indoor air cool. (Tip: If you have an electronic filter on your furnace or air conditioning, set system to re-circulate to prevent drawing in smoky air.)
- ☐ Set car vents on re-circulate to prevent drawing in smoky outside air.
- ☐ Close and seal windows and doors.
- ☐ Avoid adding toxins to the air. (Tip: Avoid hair spray, paint, or frying foods see <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/indoor-air-pollution-cooking>).

Protect your health

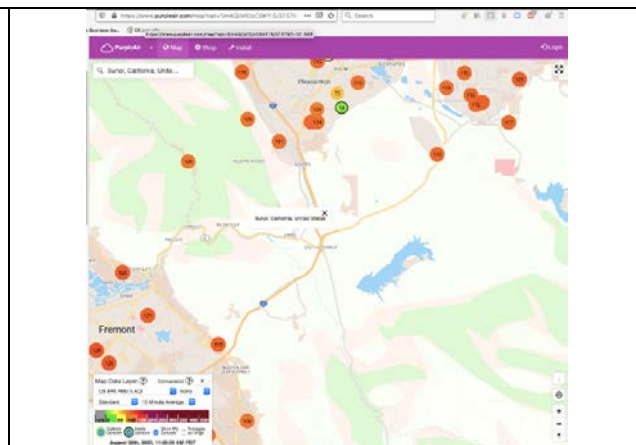
- ☐ Stay hydrated by drinking water.
- ☐ Use an air purifier with a HEPA filter.
- ☐ Limit or avoid outdoor recreational and sports activities. Or lower the intensity of your workout.
- ☐ If possible, leave the affected area for the duration heavy smoke.
- ☐ If you must go outside, consider an N95 mask.

Stay informed

- ☐ Track fire conditions (see Module 1 – Situational Awareness).

Monitor the air quality on a regular basis.

When the air quality PM2.5 reading is above 150, it is recommended to stop outdoor activities. If you can, wait for a time when the air quality has improved. "PM 2.5" refers to the fine particulate matter 2.5 micrometers, or smaller, that can be inhaled into the deepest part of the lungs.



<https://www.airnow.gov/>

Air Now is the Environmental Protection Agency website that allows you to enter your zip code for air quality in your area. You also can see recent trends, as well as a forecast for the next few days.

Tip: Pay attention to the time the air quality was posted. It can be up to 59 minutes old (or more). A lot could have changed

<https://www.purpleair.com/map?opt=1/mAQI/a10/cC0#1/8.6/-30>

Purple Air is a commercial company. Their website shows the location of sensors belonging to their subscribers around the world. You can enter your zip code for sensors near you. There are a few sensors in the Sunol area (Palomares and Castlewood). Look at the wider area and not just one sensor.

Tip: Be sure to view only outdoor sensors. Click off the "inside sensors" in the box in the lower left corner.

Concerned about your animals?

American Veterinary Medical Association has tips for signs to watch for and how to protect your pets and livestock from smoke.

<https://www.avma.org/resources/pet-owners/emergencycare/wildfire-smoke-and-animals>





What to Expect to Find

Group Exercise

Discuss what you and your family would do in the following scenarios. What traps would you have to watch out for?

Scenario 1. Going home you find official personnel or a notice that says the area is not safe What do you do?

Scenario 2. Going home you find your way blocked by a downed tree branch What do you do?

Scenario 3 – Going home you find your way blocked by a downed line. Whether it is a power line or communication line – you are not sure What do you do?

Scenario 4 . You get home only to find a down tree has smashed your second car What do you do?

Scenario 5. You get home only to find your wood pile is smoldering What do you do?

Scenario 6. You get home only to find a tree blocking your front door What do you do?

Scenario 7. You get home only to find you have no electricity What do you do?

Scenario 8. You get home unsure if you should go in? What do you do?

Scenario 9. You get in your home and you aren't sure if there was smoke or heat damage What do you do?

Scenario 10. You get in your home and everyone is upset (even your pets) What do you do?

Hints:

- Fire officials need to determine when it is safe for you to return to your home. Continue to listen to news updates for information about the fire. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Before you move branches and other debris in the road or against your house, check for down power lines and other hazardous
- Not sure if the downed line is for power or communication. If unsure don't touch. Call 911 to report. Also report to PG&E. If you can safely drive around the line proceed on home.
- Call your insurer before you clean up or move any damaged insured items (homes, cars, etc.)
- For several hours after your return keep a "fire watch" for smoke, sparks or smoldering materials.
- Be ready to re-evacuate if necessary.
- If you suspect damage have PG&E inspect your equipment before turning back on your power.
- Take your time returning home. Inspect outside of your home before you enter.
- Talk to experts about inspecting for damage and proper cleaning. Follow public health guidance.
- Everyone needs lots of reassurance and comforts when they return home after a fire.

Recap - Going Home!

What to expect after an evacuation.

Key concepts

Going home

Don't be in a hurry to get back home.

Make sure everything is safe each step of the way.

Fire officials will determine when it is safe for you to return to your home. This will be done as soon as possible considering safety and accessibility. Continue to listen to news updates for information about the fire. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.

Be ready to re-evacuate if necessary.

Outside and inside your home

Check the outside of home before you enter. Visually check for hazardous from downed powerlines, hazardous trees and hazardous materials. Check for the smell of gas. Turn off electrical power until you have completed your inspection of inside the house. Use a battery powered flashlight to inspect your home.

Keep a "fire watch." Look for smoke or sparks around and through out the house and on rooftops.

Cleaning up, health issues, your pets & continuing smoke from wildfires

Follow public health guidance on clean up. United policyholders (UP) offers specialized guidance on insurance claim issues. Discard food, medicines, cleaners, cosmetics and toiletries that could have be damaged by heat, smoke and lingering chemical residues

Supervise your pet while outdoors. Familiar scents and landmarks may have disappeared, leaving your pet disoriented or confused.

When it remains smoky out, revisit the resources to stay safe from the smoke from nearby wildfires. Monitor the air quality before going outside.