

# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Amador-El Dorado-Sacramento Unit

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### Preparing for Evacuation Are You Ready to Go?

**Camino** – "Across the western United States fire season is clearly upon us and it is a very bad one to say the least. We wake to the smell of smoke every morning, see the ash falling from the sky and look out our windows to see the drift smoke from the catastrophic Rim Fire surrounding us in a dense brown haze. Locally we have had our share of small wildfires and in a 9 day span we have had 2 wildland fires that have destroyed homes and changed the lives of those affected forever" states CAL FIRE Unit Chief Kelly Keenan of the Amador-El Dorado-Sacramento Unit.

So what can we do? First and foremost we all must be prepared to evacuate in the event of a wildland fire. Hundreds of residents were forced to evacuate when not one but two wildfires occurred Saturday afternoon. The first fire broke out just before 3 pm in Georgetown where 80 homes and businesses were immediately threatened by the fire and under mandatory evacuation orders and an additional 224 were under voluntary evacuation orders from the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department. Approximately 2 hours later a second wildland fire broke out on Slug Gulch Road in Omo Ranch where several residents evacuated on their own due to the wildfires' threat to the neighborhood" said Battalion Chief Bob Strazzo, Incident Commander of the Slug Fire. "Taking the initiative to leave before you are ordered to leave is the best plan you can have. We all know that in a matter of minutes lives are turned upside down when evacuation orders are given by the local law enforcement agency. Those who are prepared do well but those who have not prepared have a far more difficult time" advises Chief Strazzo.

Unit Chief Keenan adds "as emergency responders, we tell people to be prepared to be to evacuate in the event of a wildfire as this is a fact of life living in the foothills and anyone who hasn't prepared themselves needs to do so right away. We prepare for the worst case, we train constantly and when the call comes we respond immediately but we can't be everywhere all the time. If a wildfire is approaching it is best to leave early ahead of a formal evacuation. Waiting until the last minute can cost you your life as roads may be crowded or blocked by vehicles and/or with fire overrunning everyone. Take charge and leave well ahead of the fire front."

#### **Key components of a Wildfire Action Plan are:**

- A preplanned meeting place outside of the area of the incident.

- Have multiple escape routes from your home that you are familiar driving during both the day and night.
- Have an evacuation plan and emergency supply kits for yourself *and* your animals. We know many people will not leave home without their companion animals so plan for them!
- Maintain an out-of-the area point of contact for your families for your communications plan.
- Be prepared, more than anything make sure your plans are in place now and don't forget to update information and practice, practice, practice!

“Depending on the type of disaster (wildfire, floods/mudslides, snow storm, hazardous materials incident, etc.) and time of year, your needs will change. If you have an infant or elderly family member or disabled individual that resides with you, can you evacuate them safely? Can their specific needs be met at an evacuation center? Remember disaster preparedness begins and ends with you,” adds Chief Keenan.

You can find more information on CAL FIRE's Ready-Set-Go program at [www.readyforwildfire.org](http://www.readyforwildfire.org), FEMA at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov), and the Humane Society at [www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal\\_rescue/tips/disaster\\_preparedness\\_pets](http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal_rescue/tips/disaster_preparedness_pets). If you would like to receive information by mail, please call 530-644-2345.

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