

Lake Wildwood Association

Emergency Evacuation Protocol

This document is intended to give general guidelines to the Association in the event that an evacuation of residents is needed. It is primarily designed for wildfire incidents but can be used with other emergencies such as upstream dam failures or any other evacuation scenario if managers at the time feel it could be useful.

The entities mentioned specifically in this protocol are Security, Public Works and Administration. Other departments and/or volunteer groups can become involved depending on availability and needs on a case by case basis.

Authority to evacuate: A decision and order to formally evacuate must only be made by county officials. Such an order will usually come from the Sheriff's Department through the Office of Emergency Services (OES). In rapidly evolving incidents an order could also come from a patrol Sheriff's Deputy.

Depending on how much lead time officials are able to give, an evacuation order could be immediate and cover the entire community or it may include only parts of the community and include more time to prepare.

It should be assumed that County officials will only give a general direction for an evacuation route and that they will not give specific routes within the community.

The responsibility of the Lake Wildwood entities is to assist the Sheriff's Department with an evacuation order and to take other reasonable steps to protect the residents and preserve property.

The operational chain of command for the Association would be: General Manager, Director of Administration and Communications, Public Works Director, Stonegate Protection Site Supervisor and then the on duty Security Patrol Officer.

Staffing: Both Security and Public Works employees will be asked to respond from an off duty status to assist. Security Gate Officers should contact all off duty Security and Public Works personnel to determine availability and response time.

Communications: In the very early stages of an emergency, official information from county officials may come from a field command post. This could be as simple as a sheriff's patrol car parked at a specific location. As an emergency grows the county will open the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC is located at the Rood Center, 950 Maidu Avenue, Nevada City CA 95959.

In the early stages of an event the Security Patrol Officer will contact the field command post if one is established to obtain preliminary information.

It is also possible that preliminary information will be received by Gate Officers by telephone from County Officials. In this event the Gate Officer will carefully record the information in the daily log and then immediately pass the information on to all Association staff that are involved in the incident. The Gate Officer who receives the first call will be tasked with the duties of contacting the chain of command and PW phone list.

It is intended that a member of the association, the General Manager or designee, will physically go to the field command post and/or the EOC when active. Preliminary permissions will be needed for our representative to arrive at this location. This person will then relay official information and instructions back to Association staff via the chain of command.

In the event of an evacuation, the primary communications method to notify specific residents will be the Code Red System. The association may also deliver information by way of an email blast if authorized through the association chain of command.

Gate phones are likely to become overwhelmed with calls and actually answering and responding to the calls could become impossible. Gate Officers are asked to shift their priority to Patrol and Public Works communications by radio and cell phone calls with association officials. This specific task can best be accomplished in the security office where the phone line is not normally used for regular incoming calls. This would be a good assignment for the first called in security employee.

If conditions allow the Association should establish an Association Command Post. The normal preferred location is the Security Management Office at the Main Gate.

We should not follow suggestions or rely on information from social media or other non-official sources. We should not post information on social media with the exception of linking official sites like County OES, Cal Fire and PG&E.

Evacuation routes and directions: No one fixed evacuation route can be designated because individual situations can vary. The Association has established three (3) pre-established evacuation routes that should cover most situations. This information can be deployed to field staff rapidly so that routes can be established. See "Emergency Route Signs" for details.

Association staff should act on the best information that is available at the time. Once a direction or evacuation route becomes apparent, association staff will ensure that appropriate gates are open and temporary emergency route signs are placed.

Security Patrol and Public Works Field Tasks: Specific Tasks include opening emergency gates, placing portable emergency route signs, clearing roadways of debris or other obstructions, notifying residents in certain locations directly, directing traffic and physically assisting residents when necessary. Security and Public Works staff will perform these tasks interchangeably as needed.

Gate Evacuation Tasks: The primary tasks for the gates will remain access control and communications. In the absence of a “do not enter” order by the county, we would follow standard procedures and allow residents and guests to enter the community. If a “do not enter” order is issued then we would shut down the gates and admit no one except emergency responders.

If someone refuses to cooperate and drives around a gate or otherwise enters the community against a “do not enter” order, we should log the incident, obtain a description of the car and possible destination address and notify the Sheriff’s Office.

Gate officers will be asked to call in off duty employees if appropriate. Gate officers are expected to keep reasonable activity logs of activities during the event.

Often the first called in employee would staff the phones at one of the gates or in the security office similar to a dispatcher position.

As stated earlier the gate officer’s primary communications responsibility is with field units by radio and by phone with Administration and County officials.

Emergency Gates: There are currently four (4) designated emergency evacuation gates in the community. These are the Main Gate, the North Gate, an emergency gate at the corner of Lake Wildwood Drive and Fair Oaks Drive, and the gate at the NID road at 14367 Sun Forest Drive. The regular gates are available for egress at any time. The other two would need to be unlocked once they became a desirable exit. These gates would be unlocked only once an authorized decision was made and an egress direction was determined.

There are several other gates throughout the community. These are not recommended routes but they can be used in an emergency if the circumstances require. Association employees should not “recommend” these routes unless their use is consistent with an authorized evacuation order.

Emergency Route Signs: Emergency Route signs on traffic barricades have been prepared and are stored at various locations throughout the community. Each sign will be set up showing three different directions of travel as needed. Once an evacuation route is chosen, the signs will be deployed to the pre-determined locations in the route instructions.

Clearing Debris and Obstructions: This will be a task specific to Public Works due to the need for specialized skills and equipment. All involved staff will be alerted for roadway problems that could impede traffic and communicate that information promptly to Public Works staff.

Notifying Residents: While the primary method of notifying residents of an emergency will be the Code Red system and other electronic media, it may become necessary to notify some residents directly. Security patrol staff are equipped with portable public address systems (bullhorns) and can use these to notify residents as appropriate.

The county has begun a system involving a unique siren device. This is a law enforcement style siren that provides a “high-low” sound often used by law enforcement in Europe. This style is no longer used in California and it is believed that this unusual sound can become known as an evacuation warning sound. It would be mounted on Sheriff’s cars and association Security cars. This system is still in the development stage and this protocol will be updated when appropriate.

If necessary Security and Public Woks staff can make door to door notifications. Staff can also assist persons needing physical assistance when possible.

Traffic Control: Directing traffic will usually be a consideration only once the previous tasks are accomplished. Based on apparent needs Security and Public Works staff can be assigned to direct traffic within the community. Normally association staff would not be authorized to direct traffic on public roadways outside the community unless their assistance was specifically requested by a public agency like the Sheriff’s Office or CHP.

Repopulation Process: Depending on the conditions after an event, residents may not be allowed back into the community for some time. If there was fire damage, sewer problems, power problems and other safety related issues, authorities will not allow repopulation until the community is inspected for safety.

It is best to have a personal plan for what you and your family will do if you have to spend days or weeks away from your home.

Final Considerations: This protocol is designed to be only a general guideline to assist Association staff in the event of an emergency evacuation. Managers and staff must be prepared to adapt to actual conditions and make possibly significant changes to the specifics of the plan if needed.