

Oregon Evacuations: Are You Prepared?

If you had just a few moments to evacuate from your home, what would you take?

Wildfires are one of Oregon's top natural disasters because of their frequency and potential to cause damage to life and property. However, evacuations can be ordered for many different scenarios, and these rules and suggestions work the same. Oregon's evacuation levels are:

Level 1: Be Ready. Pack your valuables and emergency supply kit. Check on your neighbors and assist as needed.

Level 2: Get Set. If you have special needs or livestock, consider evacuating now. Locate and secure your pets. Listen to news reports and emergency officials; leave sooner rather than later.

Level 3: Go! Leave immediately. Danger to life is imminent. If you choose not to go, know that emergency responders may not be able to respond to your calls for help later on.



Be it a wildfire, flood, hazardous material spill, or civil emergency in Oregon, you should understand and follow these evacuation recommendations. Keep in mind that in large and fast-moving disasters you may receive no notifications.

Following are the best recommendations for what to consider evacuating with (your family members or neighbors who need assistance are considered integral and not mentioned). Much depends on how much time you have to evacuate; you may not have time for all (or any) of these things. You should prioritize the list and make a plan now, and practice it. For example, consider who should grab what – divide and conquer – and where you and your family members will meet, if separated.

- The first thing you should grab is your disaster supplies kit, which may already have many of the items below in it. Go to <https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit> to see how to build a disaster supplies kit.
- Water. The recommendation is 3 gallons per person, per day. For short and small evacuations you may not be out of your home long enough to get thirsty, but for large-scale disasters it could be hours, or longer, before you and your family find shelter and assistance.
- Personal identification for all family members including driver's licenses, birth certificates, marriage certificates, passports, and social security cards. Replacing these things takes a lot of frustrating time.
- Credit cards and cash. When power is out, cash in small denominations may be the only way to get supplies like a case of water, etc., and buying things to live on (including hotel rooms) while the fate of your home is decided may be necessary.
- Insurance documents. Claims are more easily filed when you have these documents handy. Also include purchase or registration documents and deeds for things like homes, campers and boats. Another helpful tip about insurance: take pictures of all of your valuable possessions and store them on something like an external hard drive that can be grabbed and evacuated with.
- Health records. This may be important if you have special needs or serious conditions. Your doctor's office may also be affected by the disaster and unable to access information should you or family members need treatment.

- Prescription medications for family members and pets, as well as eye glasses and contact lenses. Again, this may be a frustratingly time-consuming thing to replace during a disaster.
- Over the counter medications, such as headache or upset stomach medicine, and a first aid kit.
- Phone lists of important numbers for when your cell phone dies and you can't get it charged, assuming you can borrow a phone or find a landline.
- Be sure everyone has sturdy shoes on, not sandals, as they leave. Consider that you may need to move quickly and may encounter debris.
- Cell phone, laptop, and chargers. For many of us, our precious family photos are stored on our computers, and photos are one of the things many people regret losing the most in a disaster. If you keep all your important information on an external hard drive, which is recommended, grab it, too.
- Maps of your neighborhood, work place, and city/region with evacuation routes and family meeting areas marked. In a disaster common landmarks may be destroyed and orienting yourself difficult.
- Don't leave your pets behind. Grab leashes, carriers, food, and water for them, and make sure they are wearing identification should they become lost.
- Food, especially things that don't need preparation (like granola bars), and baby bottles and formula, if needed.
- Flashlights, portable radios for listening to news, and batteries.
- Irreplaceable family keepsakes.
- A change of clothing, extra socks and undergarments, and hat and sunglasses. Also consider hygiene items, like toilet paper, wet wipes and diapers.