

Sleepy Hollow Evacuation Drill

In 2017 Sleepy Hollow conducted its first evacuation drill. All residents of the north western quadrant of Sleepy Hollow received a call from Alert Marin telling them that this was an evacuation drill and they should assemble at the Sleepy Homes Association Community Center. Well over 200 residents arrived, registered, and the stayed for a Safety Fair. This was by far the highest participation rate of any evacuation drill ever held in Marin County. At the Safety Fair there were informational tables staffed by the Ross Valley Fire Department, Marin Office of Emergency Services, Fire Safe Marin, Red Cross, Marin Humane Society, PG&E, and other disaster related agencies. A popular feature was the fire simulation table that showed the progress of a theoretical fire spreading through the topography and homes of Sleepy Hollow. In 2018 a similar drill was held for the northeast quadrant and in 2019 the southeast quadrant evacuated to Drake High School. The 2020 drill had to be cancelled due to COVID.

This year, during the weekend of October 2-3, the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District with the support of the Sleepy Hollow Homes Association will conduct a different type of evacuation drill. With COVID still a concern, residents will not be asked to leave their homes. Instead, residents will be asked to take a photo of themselves and their family participating in an evacuation related activity. This could include: reviewing the Fire Safe Marin Evacuation Checklist (<https://firesafemarin.org/prepare-yourself/evacuation-guide/evacuation-checklist/>), preparing a Go Bag (<https://firesafemarin.org/prepare-yourself/evacuation-guide/evacuation-go-kit/>), signing up for Alert Marin (<https://www.marinsheriff.org/services/emergency-services/alert-marin>), reviewing the family communications plan (https://firesafemarin.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Family_Comm_Plan_508_20150820.pdf), etc. The photo should then be sent to your local block captain. Block captains will be reaching out to you about this drill. If you do not know who is your block captain, please contact Sharon Adams (sadams131@comcast.net). All families who send a photo demonstrating family participation will be entered into a drawing. 10 family names will be drawn and each will receive a check for \$100. Evacuation drills are not designed to test traffic flow because it is impossible to duplicate the traffic volume of a real event. We all know the roads will be crowded. Instead, evacuation drills are designed to help you prepare so that if you do need to evacuate, you can get out of the evacuation zone quickly.

It is understandable that the most common wildfire concern of all Marin residents is evacuation. If Sleepy Hollow residents are well prepared, we should all be able to evacuate safely. In fact the Sleepy Hollow road system is safer than many of the roadways in neighboring San Anselmo and Fairfax. All residents should be signed up for Alert Marin and know that an Evacuation Warning means to get prepared to evacuate and an Evacuation Order means to leave immediately. With drought conditions and a prolonged fire season, we could have a wildfire at almost any time. However, a large catastrophic wildfire requiring large scale evacuations like we saw in Paradise will only occur when we have the high winds and dry fuel associated with Red Flag Warning weather. When under a Red Flag Warning, all residents should be monitoring radio and television and check that their NOAA weather radio is turned on with fresh batteries so that they will receive warnings if there is a power failure. Have your Go Bags packed and your pets ready to leave. Make sure you can open your garage door if the power goes out. Park your car facing forward with a full tank of gas. The whole family should be out of the house within about 15 minutes. If you live on the hillsides, get down to the lowest part of the

valley, Butterfield Road. Heat and flames naturally travel up and towards the ridge tops. We are fortunate that Butterfield Road, though only two lanes, is relatively wide by Ross Valley standards and is likely to be the safest area in Sleepy Hollow. Under no circumstances should you attempt to exit using dirt fire roads which are not designed for car traffic and lead into areas of high fuel content.

Although it is our recommendation that all residents exit via Butterfield Road with the exception of some residents that might have a more direct route via The Alameda, under extraordinary circumstances there are also two potential areas of refuge in Sleepy Hollow. An area of refuge is a large open space free of flammable vegetation where you can safely wait out a wildfire while staying in your car. The open areas at San Domenico and Hidden Valley Schools qualify as areas of refuge and are so marked on the new Fire Clear evacuation maps which will be distributed to all residents later this year.

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