



Emergency Preparedness Forum THIRD WALNUT CREEK MUTUAL

Preparing Together for Recovery and Resilience

**August 14, 2023 Third Mutual Board Meeting
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Standard California Statewide Evacuation Terminology

Recognizing there was no statewide common terminology for evacuation orders and that disasters striking our state often cross multiple city and county jurisdiction lines, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services in 2020 instituted common evacuation terminology that is now universal across all California.

Standard terminology offers clear and consistent alert protocols that save the lives of first responders and the public while promoting firefighting capacity and triumph.

The need for statewide terminology became strikingly clear during the devastating wildfires of 2017 and 2018 — especially the Camp Fire when only 7000 out of 52,000 Paradise residents received alerts ordering them to evacuate immediately.

I want to emphasize the distinction between two of these statewide evacuation terms that are utterly essential to your safety and well-being as a Third Mutual resident: do you know the difference between an evacuation warning and an evacuation order and the personal ramifications for you and your household?

Evacuation Warning:

Means an imminent or potential threat to life exists. If you cannot self-evacuate, this is the only time to contact a family member or friend to come and take you out of Rossmoor. You likely have 4 hours or less to evacuate your home before a mandatory evacuation order for your evacuation zone follows. Always assume when you receive a warning alert that a mandatory evacuation order will soon follow.

Evacuation Order:

Means an immediate threat exists to your life and property — the explicit threat will reach your Rossmoor door step within two hours or less! This is a lawful and mandatory order to evacuate immediately — ideally within 15 minutes. Your zone or area is now closed to all public access meaning no one can enter your zone or area being evacuated except first responders. All other traffic is outward only! Let me repeat: no one can enter your Rossmoor evacuation zone to carry you out — no one!

Having now defined the difference between an evacuation warning and alert, please keep in mind you can self-evacuate anytime you feel unsafe. Public safety officials strongly encourage you to evacuate early if possible even before a warning alert is issued — early resident evacuations lessen roadway congestion, aid first responder rescue efforts and boost firefighting capacity in the impacted areas.

When a Red Flag Warning day is declared because weather conditions are combining to greatly raise wildfire risks in or near Rossmoor (high temperature, strong winds, low humidity and marked drought conditions) remain highly vigilant, pay careful attention to alerts, click on all links within the alerts for specific instructions and be prepared to leave your manor promptly.