Wildfire

Communications Toolkit

Updated 2026

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Introduction

This Wildfire Communications Toolkit provides partners, agencies, community organizations and local governments with ready-to-use outreach materials to help Oregonians prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfires. This condensed toolkit supports statewide efforts to keep people safe during wildfire season.

Purpose of This Toolkit

This toolkit offers key messages, FAQs, sample news releases, social media templates, and guidance to help agencies communicate clearly and consistently before, during, and after wildfire events. Materials can be customized to local needs while maintaining consistent statewide messaging.

Key Messages

- Prevent new fires—use fire safely and follow local restrictions.
- Stay informed about wildfire activity, smoke conditions, and evacuation levels.
- Prepare your home by clearing flammable debris and creating defensible space.
- Follow evacuation guidance immediately when issued.
- Have an emergency plan and kit ready for your household.
- Sign up for emergency alerts in your county and make sure WEA is enabled on your phone.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why is wildfire preparedness important?

Wildfires can spread quickly, threaten homes and communities, and create hazardous smoke conditions. Preparing ahead reduces risk and helps families respond safely.

What are Oregon's evacuation levels?

Level 1: Be Ready. Level 2: Be Set. Level 3: Go. Follow all evacuation instructions from local officials.

How can I reduce wildfire risk around my home?

Clear leaves, dry brush, wood piles, and other debris at least 30 feet from your home. Keep roofs and gutters free of debris. Create defensible space.

How do I stay informed during a wildfire?

Sign up for emergency alerts at ORAlert.gov and ensure Wireless Emergency Alerts are enabled on your mobile device. Monitor weather and fire updates through trusted sources such as local emergency managers, county sheriffs' offices, the Oregon State Fire Marshal, and federal land management agencies. Check road conditions at TripCheck.com or by calling 511. View real-time hazard updates, maps, and fire information through OEM's Wildfire Dashboard. Follow your county's office of emergency management and OEM on social media.

What should I include in an emergency kit?

Water, nonperishable food, medications, important documents, clothing, flashlights, radios, chargers, and supplies for pets. Visit Wildfire.Oregon.gov for more tips and checklists

Draft News Release Templates

General Safety

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[Agency/City Name] Provides Wildfire Safety Guidance for Residents

[City, OR] — [Agency/City Name] and the Oregon Department of Emergency Management urge residents to take simple steps to stay alert, take precautions to reduce wildfire risk, and be ready to act quickly should evacuation levels change.

Wildfire Safety and Preparedness

- Avoid activities that could spark a fire, such as using machinery that produces sparks or parking vehicles on dry grass.
- Create defensible space.
- Secure loose items outdoors and be mindful of wind-driven embers.
- Be aware of smoke conditions that could impact health and visibility.
- Follow all local fire restrictions and closures.
- If you see smoke or fire, report it immediately to 911.

Evacuation Readiness
Evacuations are currently happening in many communities around the state, and this emphasizes the importance of being ready at any time. Pack now to avoid a panicked rush at the last second.

Pack Your Go-bags
A go-bag contains essential items you may need to take with you in a hurry. Each household member (human and animal) should have an easy-to-carry, grab and go, emergency bag. Read more about wildfire preparation here.

Understand Evacuation Levels

1. Be Ready – Prepare to evacuate.
2. Be Set – Be ready to leave at a moment's notice.
3. GO NOW – Leave immediately; danger is imminent.

Stay Informed

- Sign up for emergency alerts at ORAlert.gov and ensure Wireless Emergency Alerts are enabled on your mobile device.
- Monitor weather and fire updates through trusted sources such as local emergency managers, county sheriffs' offices, the Oregon State Fire Marshal, and federal land management agencies.
- Check road conditions at TripCheck.com or by calling 511.
- View real-time hazard updates, maps, and fire information through OEM's Wildfire Dashboard.
- Follow your county's office of emergency management and OEM on social media.

Evacuations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[Agency/City Name] Issues Level [1, 2, or 3] Evacuation Notice

[City, Ore.] — [Agency/City Name] reports a wildfire burning near [location/name of fire], and residents in the area should be aware that evacuation orders may be issued. Monitor official emergency information sources and local media for updates. The fire is threatening the surrounding area.

[Insert details about the wildfire, fire behavior, affected areas, response actions, etc.]

Individuals who need extra time to evacuate or who have medical conditions—especially respiratory issues that may be worsened by smoke—should consider leaving now. Residents are encouraged to prepare pets and livestock for transport or move them out of the area in advance. Be ready to leave immediately if conditions worsen.

A Level [#] evacuation means "[READY / SET / GO NOW]" for all people in the affected area. Follow all instructions from emergency officials promptly.

Returning After Evacuation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[Agency/City Name] Lifts Level [1, 2, or 3] Evacuation Notice

[City, Ore.] — [Agency/City Name] advises that conditions have improved around the [location/name of fire], and it is now safe for residents in the affected area to return home. Fire

crews have reduced the immediate threat, and officials have determined that reentry can begin.

[Insert details about containment progress, safety assessments, lifted road closures, or utility restoration.]

Residents returning to the area should remain aware of ongoing fire activity and smoke conditions, as crews may continue working nearby. Please drive carefully and watch for emergency personnel and equipment.

Before reentering your property, check for hazards such as embers, damaged structures, or downed power lines. If you see any dangerous conditions, report them to local authorities. Thank you for your cooperation during the evacuation. Continued vigilance will help keep the community safe as response and recovery operations proceed.

Damage Assessment Being Conducted Right of Entry

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[Agency/City Name] Begins Damage Assessments; Right of Entry Form Required for Cleanup

[City, Ore.] — [Agency/City Name] has begun conducting damage assessments in areas affected by the [location/name of fire]. Assessment teams are evaluating structural damage, environmental impacts, and safety concerns to determine which properties qualify for county-led cleanup.

To receive county-supported cleanup services, property owners must complete a Right of Entry form [link to form] authorizing approved government contractors to access their property. This access allows crews to safely carry out essential post-fire work, which may include damage evaluations, ecosystem analysis, safety assessments, air and water-quality monitoring, and the removal of fire-impacted debris, ash, burned vehicles, and household hazardous waste.

What the Right of Entry form does:

✓ Allows authorized crews to access your property for cleanup or demolition
✓ Limits access to the specific tasks listed in the form (such as debris removal)
✗ Does not transfer ownership of your land or structures
✗ Does not waive your rights to insurance claims, compensation, or legal recourse

Property owners may submit completed forms by email to [insert email] or drop them off at any county office.

Residents are encouraged to complete the form as soon as possible to avoid delays in the cleanup process. Thank you for your cooperation as crews work to ensure safe and timely recovery in the impacted area.

Social Media Templates

We are constantly adding to our graphics and toolkits, so check regularly. Also, the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organizations has compiled more than 1,200 urgent written messages about a variety of hazards. The messages are in 26-32 languages and you can use them free of charge to create social media or website content, emergency alerts, educational fliers, etc.

Wildfire Social Media Captions:

- Wildfire Preparedness Tips
  Wildfire season is here. Clear debris, stay informed, and be prepared to evacuate if needed. #ORWildfire #WildfireSafety
- Know Your Evacuation Levels
  Level 1: Be Ready. Level 2: Be Set. Level 3: Go. Follow guidance from emergency officials. #ORWildfire
- Stay Smoke Safe
  Check local air quality and limit outdoor activity when smoke levels are high. #SmokeSafety

Social Cards and Graphics Guidance

- Use simple icons such as fire symbols, evacuation arrows, air quality indicators, or emergency alerts.
- Keep messages short and easy to read.
- Use alt text for increased accessibility.
- Add your agency logo when publishing local versions.

OEM Consultation Contact

Public Information Office
Oregon Department of Emergency Management
Email: oem_publicinfo@oem.oregon.gov
Duty Line: 503-934-3310 (do not text this number)