

6 Simple Tricks To Survive An Urban Wildfire

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Truly horrific fires occurred over the last decades and centuries.

Right now, the situation in California is grabbing a great deal of attention because so many people believed it would never happen this quickly and while other areas of our nation are underwater from hurricanes.

Our environment continues to change, so you can expect more massive fires in areas where they may not have happened before. That's why you need to be ready to escape from massive fire no matter where you live.

If you are prepping on a budget, you might not afford expensive options. But there are things you can do to protect your assets in case of a huge fire like those that California is facing right now, and be ready to leave your home in your search for safety.

Keep reading for the tips that might change your life in case of an urban fire!

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1. Protect Documents and Digital Media with Fire Retardant Packages

When it comes to safeguarding important documents, many people immediately think of using a safe. But safes are not the beginning and ending story when it comes to fireproofing. In fact, the vast majority of "fireproof" safes on the market cannot withstand a fire for more than an hour or two at most.

So if you leave the safe behind while evacuating a massive fire, everything inside might be destroyed upon returning to the site. Rather than invest your money in a large fireproof safe, buy one or more small fireproof boxes that you can pick up quickly and put in your vehicle. You'll have a better chance of moving them to a place of safety without losing the benefits of a fireproof container.

If you are looking for the lightest weight, and most budget-friendly option, choose fire retardant pouches or envelopes. They are usually lined with fiberglass and will not catch fire unless the surrounding temperature reaches 1000 degrees Fahrenheit.

Before you select a pouch, check the information from the manufacturer about the temperatures that it can withstand, as well as if the pouch is waterproof. A fire retardant pouch is still like a safe in the sense that if the temperatures get too high, the items inside the safe or pouch may still be destroyed by high temperatures even if the flames never touch them.

Fireproof pouches are still very useful to put in a bug out bag or anywhere in your vehicle where you might want to keep important documents that you will need in the event of an evacuation.

Aside from paper documents you can also store cash, USB drives, an emergency smartphone for accessing important files, and other small devices that may be of use to you during the evacuation and afterwards.

Digitizing as many of your documents as possible and storing them on portable drives will also be of immense benefit. Digitize photos, scan books, or anything else made from paper that you don't want to lose in a fire.



When combined with EMP proof bags kept inside the fireproof pouch, you will add the ability to protect your electronic devices and media from this problem as well as fires and floods.

2. Always Have a Bug Out Bag Ready and in Your Vehicle

Even if you live in a place where you don't think you would have to evacuate from a fire, it is still absolutely necessary to have a [bug out bag packed and ready to go](#) in your vehicle.

Packing a bug out bag in preparation for evacuating a massive fire is not so different from any other situation. You will still need tools and materials on hand that you can use to:

- purify water
- obtain food
- control your air quality
- manage medical needs
- defend yourself
- send and receive information and communicate

At the beginning your tools may be as simple as a mirror, a magnifying glass, a bandana, water cleaning straws, a sewing kit, a knife, a flash light, and a solar powered battery charger.

If you are on prescription drugs, have at least a month's fresh supply ready to use in your bug-out bag. If you use herbs or essential oils for medicinal purposes you should also have those already prepared and in your bug-out bag.

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Finally, insofar as the most minimal preparations, have at least one day's worth of water and food in the pack itself plus a change of clothes, wet wipes for cleaning, and a plastic water bottle. Include edible electrolyte solution (such as Pedialyte), protein powder, and daily vitamins.

Should you find yourself in a situation where you cannot hunt or obtain food some other way; these

light weight, inexpensive items can get you through for some time.

It will also help to keep at least 5 days worth of food and water in your vehicle at all times - MREs or other similar pre-packed meals, or store away canned and dry goods that can withstand being in a vehicle for long periods of time without spoiling.

If you do not have room for dozens of plastic bottles filled with water (keep a minimum of four for each person, though to get started), there are collapsible versions on the market geared specifically for preppers.

Choose the clearest bottles that you can find, so that you can set them in the sun if necessary, and use them for UV [water purification](#).

3. Make Sure You Can Access Live Traffic Updates

A fire of immense size - like California fires - can change direction very quickly, meaning that a road you thought would be open may actually be in flames while you are on the move.

You should always watch the fire itself, the smoke from it, and the wind directions, but you still need live traffic updates for your area. These updates will tell you if the road several miles ahead becomes closed off, as well as the possibility of roads that are still open and safe for you to take.

Usually, it is foolhardy to use your smartphone or other distracting electronic equipment while you are driving. But live satellite maps and other views of the region would show you exactly where a massive fire is heading, and it can save you from getting cut off from a vital road way or another path to safety.

Look for apps that can be used for this purpose. Choose a safe time of day to practice with them so that you can integrate them more easily while you are evacuating.

Also, have at least one backup cellular and data sim from a different provider, and at least one unlocked WIFI phone on hand. You should always know how to install the SIMs or operate the phone without one.

4. Do Not Delay Evacuation

Large fires are similar to hurricanes and other environmental disasters in the sense that the sooner you leave the area the better.

Leaving early gives you a better chance to reach a safe location, and it will also help you avoid all of the traffic and other problems associated with large numbers of people trying to evacuate at the same time.

While you may be tempted to wait until an official order comes through to evacuate, it may be better to leave sooner. Ideally, you should be packed and ready to go as far as needed before a fire even threatens your area.

5. Be Able to Reach, and Thrive in at Least 4 Safe Locations

In these difficult times you might not put even a few dollars away each time you get paid. But it will be even worse if you have no money to travel with and a fire is due to hit your area. One of the best things that you can do for yourself right now prioritize setting aside some travel money. You should have at least enough money to reach four pre-designated safe areas both nearby and at a distance.

Large-scale fires can quickly travel over hundreds of miles, so be prepared to leave the state that you live in, and remain in a distant location for some time. You can use anything from prepaid debit cards that you continue to add money to, or simply set cash aside in a safe place.

As many people have found in Texas and other areas hit by natural disasters, it can take months to years before the insurance companies pay out on the claims, and don't assume that they'll pay any faster just because you lost everything in a large scale fire. So, when you evacuate, be prepared to begin a new life wherever you wind up.

Here are some options that you can try to work with so that you can get back on your feet as quickly as possible while you are waiting for things to resolve in the area where the fire hits.

- Discuss with friends and family the possibility that your home will be destroyed, and find out who can give you shelter in a time of need. Offer reciprocal shelter in case they are also looking at fires or other natural disasters that can strike their area.
- Whatever your job or means of support is, either begin liquidating your assets, or look for some other way to make money. If you have a hobby or any viable skills that aren't currently being used at a job, think about starting a sideline business.
- Once you know of friends or family that can take you in a time of need, begin studying the employment, schools, housing, and other aspects of the community. The more you learn about each area, the easier it will be to fit in once you arrive.

If you can't stay with anyone, then look for alternative forms of shelter in a safe location. Depending on your credit rating, you might get an apartment or some other form of permanent shelter. You can also try long-term stay hotels or other forms of housing where credit checks and job checks are not necessary.

Make sure that you can afford to live in these places until you secure a job or other means of support. Ideally, you will have a sideline income in place before a fire hits that you can rely on no matter where you go.

If you have children, make sure that you know where they are at in their studies, and they can start over again as quickly and easily as possible. Prepare digital versions of their textbooks or anything else that they might need for study, including age and grade appropriate websites where they can obtain study materials.

In addition, once you have your four areas picked out, use social networking and other resources to help your children meet other children in the area. Sometimes having a friend online can make it easier to fit in once your child is physically in the new school area.

Worst comes to worst, your child will have a broader network of friends, which can be useful in helping your child feel comfortable with people from other areas.

6. Disperse Valuables Before a Fire Hits

If you only had one hour to pick all of the things of value in your home to bring along, you might be surprised at how many things you would miss once it's too late to save them. Aside from things that you really don't care about and don't mind selling off, there are keepsakes and other valuables that cannot be replaced, nor can they be judged by monetary value.

Find a way to secure these keepsakes, in a place where it would be highly unlikely for large-scale fires to develop. You can rent a storage shed in another state, or if you have enough land, try to bury your valuables deep underground (note, this is distinctly different from living safely underground in the presence of a massive fire).

Building a fireproof underground shelter that will last for years can be difficult and time-consuming. Look at different building plans, and choose the best materials before starting the building.

Going through all of your valuables can be difficult and challenging. Once you are done with the process, however, evacuation will be much easier, since they will already be in a safe place. Unlike others who will be dealing with the emotional burden of losing so many valuables, you'll already be past that point, and better able to focus on starting over again.

When you are facing a large-scale fire, don't give up on yourself, or your capacity to manage the situation. Make sure that you are ready to evacuate, and to pick up your life as quickly as possible no matter where you wind up.

That's what being a survivor is all about! Are you able to do it?



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