



FAQs for the City of Richmond's Identified Very High Fire Severity Zones PRE-PLANNING/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

West County Questions with Input from Contra Costa County	
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
<p>1. What is West County's plan for pre-evacuation assistance in the event of a fire or other disaster that can be planned for?</p>	<p>Contra Costa OES: The County emphasizes outreach, communication, education and encouraging individuals to register to receive alerts and warnings, and to plan for themselves and their community. We have seen that this type of pre-evacuation planning is one of the best forms of assistance we can offer, and that it works in our County. Our County EOC AFN coordinators, McCrary, Vitug-Hom and Hackett may provide further insight into assistance offered in the form of pre-planning with our AFN community. In addition, our planning partners come from many different types of agencies, organizations and jurisdictions and thus, often we find ourselves trying to best integrate CBO framework with Government structure which comes with lots of jargon.</p> <p>City of Richmond: In the City of Richmond, evacuation preparedness steps are outlined in the Wildfire Preparedness & Evacuation Guide (available at https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/wildfire). And, similar to the County, residents are strongly encouraged to register for alerts and warnings via Contra Costa's Community Warning System (CWS) and the City's alert platform, Nixle, in addition to following us on social media platforms (Nextdoor, Facebook, Twitter). The City partners with the County to ensure seamless communications and coordination for emergency planning and readiness.</p> <p>County CWS registration: www.cwsalerts.com NIXLE: On smartphone, text your zip code to "888-777" or visit www.nixle.com Nextdoor: Visit nextdoor.com and register to receive messages Facebook: Search for "Richmond Fire Department, CA" and like us. Twitter: Follow @RFDCAonline</p>

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2. Is there a preplanning process that the City is undertaking with respect to fire safety and evacuation?	City of Richmond: The City’s Evacuation Planning Working Group is engaged in operationalizing our Emergency Support Function (ESF) #16-Evacuation in consideration of our identified local hazards including earthquakes, hazardous materials releases, fire, and more. The working group is comprised of City staff from Fire, Police, Public Works, Transportation, Risk Management, Community Services, Planning & Building and Information Technology.
3. Is this a priority for the city? What role do resources play in this planning effort?	City of Richmond: The City’s Office of Emergency Services focuses on providing comprehensive emergency planning for a multitude of potential disasters. This is an ongoing, continuous process as we incorporate lessons learned from neighboring communities to integrate with evolving systems and protocols.
4. Who maintains a list of these individuals (evacuees), and how will they be contacted?	Contra Costa OES: Pertaining to Disabled/Functional Needs (AFN), we follow the guidance of our State and local DAFN coordinators who strongly recommend against listing individuals on a registry for disabled people. Lists are problematic for many reasons; including that they are inherently incomplete, misleading and they are difficult to maintain and to use. Instead, we work with partner agencies and non-profit groups before and during an incident to build relationships with our AFN community through outreach, education and planning. We work closely with our AFN community in the ways they have said are most effective and empowering for them, planning ahead so that they do not need to be rescued during an emergency. In addition, this can give our community a false sense of security and it shifts the responsibility/focus from individual preparedness to agency and readiness starts with each of us as individuals leading our own charge while we collaborate with a wide range of partners. City of Richmond: We mirror the County’s position regarding lists. We partner with AFN community representatives to communicate emergency readiness actions and recommendations.

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5. Will the City conduct a drill for the area?	City of Richmond: It is our goal to conduct community drills incorporating our residents, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) neighborhood teams, and our Neighborhood Watch volunteers. At this point, due to COVID-19, it is anticipated that our first drill will be conducted virtually in the Spring of 2021.
6. How can residents provide feedback on the Zone Haven maps and areas of high concern?	City of Richmond: The City appreciates all efforts by citizens to share feedback and areas of concern. We would be very grateful for residents to assess their specific neighborhoods and provide specific ingress and egress information with details regarding physical traffic obstacles and hazards.

Evacuation Plans	
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
7. Please explain the fire risk to the ridge and surrounding areas.	In 2019, Richmond Fire Prevention compiled the City’s Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), identifying the fire risk areas. Specifically, Pt. Richmond, Pt. Pinole and Wildcat Canyon/Sobrante Ridge areas. To review the CWPP, please visit this link: http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/51634/Draft-Richmond-CWPP-web-
8. Does the City of Richmond have a specific evacuation plan for our area? If so, what are the key components to evacuation and what does it entail?	The City’s Emergency Operations Plan has an emergency support function covering evacuation (ESF 16). This ESF outlines evacuation planning, processes and procedures for the City of Richmond. The key components are: decision to evacuate or shelter-in-place, identification of geographic areas to evacuate, notification, preparation to move, movement and en route support, access control, support for populations with disabilities and others with access and functional needs; reception at evacuation centers/mass care sites; and return and re-entry.

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<p>9. How will residents and the general public be notified of evacuations?</p>	<p>Residents should be aware of weather conditions affecting their area as a first indication of the potential for high fire activity. The National Weather Service issues “red flag” warnings when weather events may result in extreme fire behavior within 24 hours or fire conditions are ongoing. When red flag warnings are issued for our area, we send an advisory message to those who have opted to receive them via Nixle, in addition to sharing the information on Nextdoor and Facebook.</p> <p>When an evacuation warning is issued, the Contra Costa Community Warning System (CWS) is used to call telephones (with landline connections) and registered phone numbers within the targeted geography. And, the City will also send NIXLE “alerts” to all opt-in smartphones and emails and social media platforms. An evacuation warning indicates a potential threat to life and/or property. Those who require additional time to evacuate and those with pets and livestock should consider leaving when these warnings are issued.</p> <p>An evacuation order indicates an immediate threat to life. This is a lawful order to leave now. The area is lawfully closed to public access. When an evacuation order is issued, both the County’s CWS (to targeted geography) and the City’s social media platforms (Nixle, Nextdoor, Facebook, Twitter) will push out the message (to all registered devices). Additionally, law enforcement may go door to door or patrol neighborhoods with loud speakers, depending on the threat.</p> <p>Shelter-in-place orders. Go indoors. Shut and lock doors and windows. Prepare to self-sustain until further notice and/or contacted by emergency personnel for additional direction. The County’s CWS system and the City’s social media platforms will be used to push out this message.</p>

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	<p>To register to receive alerts and advisories, visit: County CWS registration: www.cwsalerts.com NIXLE: On smartphone, text your zip code to “888-777” or visit www.nixle.com Nextdoor: Visit nextdoor.com and register to receive messages Facebook: Search for “Richmond Fire Department, CA” and like us Twitter: visit www.twitter.com to sign up, follow @RFDCAonline</p>
<p>10. Are there alternate plans in place to notify the public in the event of power failure? What are those plans/</p>	<p>In addition to utilizing communications devices such as cellphones, landlines, and emails, alternate plans include law enforcement knocking door to door when fire is encroaching announcing an evacuation is mandatory.</p> <p>Because emergencies are dynamic and conditions may change rapidly, the City will utilize multiple forms of communication. Residents should prepare for a variety of emergencies by procuring things like generators, battery operated AM/FM radios or NOAA weather radios, or traditional landlines based upon their individual circumstances and needs.</p> <p>As far as notification of a PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) event, PG&E generates phone calls to the specific impact area. If a resident is a medical baseline customer and does not answer their phone after several phone call attempts (48 hours, 24 hours, 12 hours prior to PSPS), PG&E sends their crews to knock on doors to determine why the resident has not answered their phone. In addition, if the medical baseline customer relies on electric, life-sustaining medical devices, PG&E will transport the customer to a Community Resource Center to charge their medical device.</p> <p>To register for PG&E’s Medical Baseline Program, visit: https://pge.com/medicalbaseline</p>

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Evacuation Plans	
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
11. What is Zonehaven? Is there an evacuation map for our area?	Zonehaven is an evacuation planning on-line tool which assists fire and law enforcement in systematically evacuating target areas.
12. What is the process for installing Zonehaven? Who enacts the program and what is the coverage area?	Contra Costa County Fire is overseeing this process which will be available to all cities within Contra Costa County via a grant. For more information, please visit: https://www.cccfpd.org/
13. How long will it take for Zone Haven to be operational for our area?	Contra Costa County Fire is overseeing this process.
14. Does the City have an alternate mapping plan of evacuation routes in lieu of Zone Haven?	Our fire prevention, fire operations and law enforcement staff have identified potential areas that may need to be evacuated due to wildfire and discussed strategies and tactics needed to implement the plan.
15. Is there an evacuation route map specified for each neighborhood council that can be shared with the public?	This is determined by law enforcement and is dependent upon the specific emergency being addressed.
16. How will the first responders work with surrounding jurisdictions to coordinate evacuation, and help residents quickly leave the area?	The California Emergency Services Act establishes statewide emergency standards in the event of natural, manmade, or state-of-war emergencies that put in peril the life, property, and resources of California citizens. This Act carries over from the state to the local level promoting coordination and collaboration between agencies.

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Fire Evacuation	
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
17. We understand an evacuation plan is underway. How often will there be fire drills in the Very High Fire Severity Zone area of 94803?	See Evacuation Plans Q2. The evacuation planning working group The Evacuation Planning Working Group will continually examine the plan and determine the need for future drills following the Spring 2021 drill.
18. Will Richmond compile a list of disabled/housebound individuals? Is that even an option? How will that list be used to help evacuate those people? Would there be a way to coordinate with PG&E’s program?	The City does not maintain a list of these individuals for the reasons mentioned previously (see Q.4). We work with partner agencies, including PG&E, before and during an emergency.
19. Where will Richmond and other 94803 residents be able to go in the event of evacuation? De Anza High School? Pinole High School? Where?	This depends upon the magnitude of the emergency. If the incident affects an estimated one-to four-households, the American Red Cross will be engaged to assist and provide hotel vouchers for displaced families. If the incident is large scale, a “refuge area” away from the incident will be identified where families can go temporarily until a mass care shelter is ready to receive displaced families. The site would be dependent upon the specific circumstances of the emergency.

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Richmond Fire Prevention	
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
<p>20. How active is the Fire Department (FD) in fire prevention and vegetation management? Fire abatement appears very prevalent in Orinda, with recent proposal funding approved for West Contra Costa. Our area of Richmond and unincorporated El Sobrante fall in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). Why is it that fire abatement is not occurring here as well?</p>	<p>The Fire Department has an active fire prevention and vegetation management program in the City’s Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ). Refer to City ordinance 192-95, available on our website, https://ci.richmond.ca.us/wildfire).</p> <p>The Fire Department sends annual notices regarding abatement requirements to affected property owners, in addition to conducting visual inspections. Where needed, fire abatement occurs throughout Richmond and El Sobrante. Each year the City of Richmond sends teams from the Public Works Department to abate vegetation of City-owned property. We welcome feedback from our residents to address questions and concerns. Additionally, we rely on each other to ensure we have safe communities. By collectively maintaining the prescribed defensible around your homes, we can improve the community's life safety and well-being. The link below will provide you important information on how you can keep your community safe.</p> <p>https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/get-ready/defensible-space/</p>
<p>21. Some cities have an ordinance for highly flammable plants such as juniper, bamboo, acacia and Italian cypress.</p> <p>https://www.marinij.com/2019/01/23/san-rafael-rolls-out-wildfire-prevention-proposal/</p> <p>Would you propose a similar ordinance for VHFHSZ in Richmond to the City</p>	<p>Currently, we do not disallow specific plants or trees, but we do provide education on fire-resistant landscaping in our annual mailing and extensive information in our Wildfire Preparedness and Evacuation Guide, available at https://ci.richmond.ca.us/wildfire.</p> <p>Refer to question 8 on page 17:</p> <p>My property has junipers and bamboo on it. Are there any special requirements for removal? <i>No, but it is highly recommended that they be removed at least 30 feet away from any structure. Several attributes contribute to them being a fire hazard. They are dense plants and often have a lot more plant material, or potential fire fuel with volatile oils (juniper) and hollow internodes that trap heat (bamboo) that make them easier to ignite</i></p>

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Richmond Fire Prevention	
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
<p>Council, please?</p>	<p><i>other similar-sized shrubs.</i></p> <p>If you would like to speak with the Fire Marshal regarding requests to ban certain plants, please contact Fire Marshal Eric Govan at (510) 307-8046.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>FIRE HAZARDOUS PLANTS</p> <p>Certain shrubs and trees, like junipers, cypress, pampas/jubata grass, bamboo, acacia, arborvitae, black sage, and many conifer trees are very flammable and they should be removed and replaced with fire resistant varieties.</p>  </div>
<p>22. Is anyone doing environmental assessments on how to mitigate the risk of fire spread throughout the valley?</p>	<p>The Fire Marshal’s office is willing to meet with the residents in the VHFHSZ to receive their feedback and input regarding potential updates to the City’s VHFHSZ ordinance. Please contact Fire Marshal Eric Govan at 510-307-8046.</p>
<p>23. Who is watching for possible wildfires during the high fire season, especially at night)? Webcams? Drones?</p>	<p>The Fire Department does not currently deploy webcams or drone surveillance. However, Richmond fire crews regularly survey their districts for potential fire threats. When conditions warrant, such as “Red Flag,” crews will patrol the area until the conditions cease.</p>

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Richmond Fire Prevention	
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<p>24. There is a homeless camp in a wooded area by the fire trail that connects San Pablo Dam Road (by Walgreens) to Hillcrest Road (by the Sikh Temple) with a history of serious fires; in 2007 the fire was put out by planes due to steep ground. The homeless often have physical and mental issues and fail to put out the fires they make; and their surrounding area is covered with dead and live vegetation. The area is at the junction of Richmond, San Pablo, and unincorporated El Sobrante.</p>	<p>Cooperation between Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCCFPD) and the Richmond Fire Department is continuous. The area you are referencing is in unincorporated El Sobrante and the vegetation management will occur through CCCFPD.</p>
<p>25. Is there any cooperation between the related 3 fire agencies for fire prevention? Who is responsible for fire prevention in this area which could cause a wildfire in Wildcat Canyon? What actions are being taken?</p>	<p>Each agency is responsible for their own vegetation management issues and handles their process differently. However, the City we has mirrored the County’s requirements to help facilitate a “same page” approach so that neighbors who live across the street from one another are required to follow very similar guidelines and requirements.</p> <p>Wildcat Canyon belongs to East Bay Regional Parks (EBRP) and they have their own preventative measures that they follow. We do not have knowledge of what actions EBRP is completing. In the event of an incident in Wildcat Canyon, we would establish a unified command that would include all stakeholders depending on the severity of the incident and what resources were required to mitigate the incident.</p>

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Richmond Fire Hydrants	
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
26. May we request for a map of fire hydrants, so we know the nearest fire hydrant to our house??	In residential areas, there shall be one fire hydrant installed at each street intersection with intermediate fire hydrants located so that said fire hydrants are spaced not over three hundred feet (300') apart. The fire department does not have a map to provide the public. Please contact EBMUD to check on available maps, phone (510) 510-287-1008 or email nbo@ebmud.com
27. FD is responsible for checking that fire hydrants have adequate flow pressure. How often is this done?	Fire crews are responsible for inspecting the hydrants in their districts. The Fire Prevention Division schedule calls for the inspections to take place during the spring months, though crews will often inspect hydrants more often. Crews will inspect the condition of the hydrant, look for leaks, and ensure caps are present and not seized. The fire crews will flow water to remove any sediment that can harm the fire apparatus, remove rust and lubricate the treads and seals.
28. How often does the FD check the fire hydrants regularly to make sure they are not covered by vegetation? There should be a 3” space around a fire hydrant, but in our neighborhoods some fire hydrants are within less than 1” of grown vegetation.	See Q27. NFPA Fire Code, 18.5.7.1: A 36 in. (914 mm) clear space shall be maintained around the circumference of fire hydrants except as otherwise required or approved. If you notice an area around a hydrant that does not conform to this standard, please contact the Fire Department or EBMUD.
29. The reservoir for May Valley is the Verde Reservoir, on top of the hill near El Sobrante Ave that's above Painted Pony and divides May Valley from Pinole. This closed reservoir holds	Verde Reservoir’s capacity coupled with EBMUD’s ability to convey water from alternate sources ensures water will be available for firefighting efforts in residential areas. In rural areas, where there is no water supply, water tenders are brought in to supply fire crews.

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Richmond Fire Hydrants	
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
<p>about 1.5 million gallons of water, and refills automatically when it gets low. This is also our source of drinking water in May Valley and parts of El Sobrante.</p>	
<p>30. In case of a power outage (which often happens simultaneously with a wildfire) is there at least one backup generator to refill the Verde Reservoir?</p>	<p>Verde Reservoir is gravity-fed to the residential community. There is a pumping station that refills it with a back-up generator that will activate if a power outage occurs.</p> <p>For more information, contact East Bay MUD at 1 (866) 40-EBMUD.</p>

Collaboration/Resources	
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
<p>31. What agencies does Richmond Fire and Richmond Police collaborate with in the event of an emergency?</p>	<p>When incidents escalate, the City of Richmond utilizes mutual aid engaging resources from nearby jurisdictions to supplement needed resources. Should additional resources be needed, a mission request is directed to the County to fulfill. If the County is unable to fulfill the request, the County pushes the request to the State OES Coastal Region and further up to the State of California for needed resources.</p>
<p>32. How do Richmond and the County coordinate with ILRSCC during a disaster, and will that be adequate given their vast service territory?</p>	<p>Contra Costa OES: I can’t speak to ILRC’s partnership with PG&E, or what those groups are offering to do this year. The County partners with a much broader spectrum of AFN and community partners than just the ILRC. Examples include our EOC AFN coordinators (copied on this email), the Developmental Disabilities Council, the Access and Functional Needs Steering Committee, the Senior Mobility Action Council and the Contra Costa Crisis Center, as well as CERT programs and neighborhood groups, and the cities that are responsible for emergency management within their respective jurisdictions.</p>

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33. How do Richmond PD and Richmond Fire Coordinate in a fire emergency? (Roles, Responsibilities)	The fire incident commander communicates and coordinates tactical response with the police department and other responding agencies at the incident command post. The police department coordinates inner and outer security at the fire scene, will establish ingress and egress routes, will provide security as needed at other sites (medical stations, shelters, staging areas, etc.) and will conduct evacuations at the direction of the incident commander.
34. Will paratransit be available to evacuate AFN individuals before their zone is issued an order to ensure a fast and safe exit given their transportation may be slower/larger?	Contra Costa OES: Please refer to the answer to Q1 regarding pre-evacuation with the AFN community, and the response to Q4 explaining why the County does not keep a list of disabled individuals who may require paratransit assistance. There may be occasions where paratransit is used before an evacuation, but would depend entirely upon the incident and the jurisdictions and agencies responding and managing the incident, of which the County may or may not be one. There are many comprehensive transportation planning efforts occurring in our county. The Emergency Support Function ESF #1 Transportation workgroup is meeting monthly. Our department of conservation and development is spearheading a transportation advisory committee effort related to a transportation strategic plan. City of Richmond: The City’s Transportation Project Manager is in communication with local transportation services that can be called upon to provide transportation.
35. Is there an operational plan set up to provide support for residents after evacuation?	It is the City’s responsibility to provide initial support to community members impacted by catastrophic emergencies. For displaced residents, we partner with County Office of Emergency Services, the American Red Cross, the State of California, and the federal government to provide post-disaster support to residents based upon the scale of the event.

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<p>36. Where will they be sheltered? For the COVID-19 hotel voucher program, you qualify only if you are in an area that has been ordered to evacuate. That's a State policy that needs to be changed, but in the meantime, how will the County provide for these individuals?</p>	<p>Contra Costa OES: Sheltering of County residents in an evacuation is a function of the County Employment and Human Services Department, which Mike Roetzer may be able to elaborate on. EHSD is supported in their efforts by the American Red Cross, and County Health Services, and I know that these groups work with the State AFN Office to establish and maintain best practices in sheltering AFN individuals. I am not sure which agency in Richmond manages this part of an incident.</p> <p>City of Richmond: The American Red Cross is a key partner and would assist regarding issuing hotel vouchers.</p>

RESOURCES

Community Warning System

<https://cwsalerts.com/>

Nixle Emergency Alerts

<https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/nixle>

ILRSCC

The nonprofit, Independent Living Resources of Solano and Contra Costa Counties, has been designated by the State to support such individuals to prepare and respond to PSPS and disasters, but my understanding from working in another county is that it is not easy to identify, locate and contact folks in need of assistance (PG&E's CARE and medical baseline lists are a good start, but not always complete), so ILR offers this form to request assistance. It'd be great to share so neighbors can make sure neighbors are linked into the resources offered, including backup batteries for powered wheelchair users:

<https://www.ilrsc.org/pge-public-safety-power-shutoff-support/>

City of Richmond Office of Emergency Services

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<https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/oes>