

# April 26, 2021 LeeCARES Net Training: Two Minute Warning

Presented by Jason Korb, KI5ABB

You hear a loud knock at your door, ***Fire department...you have two minutes to leave your house!*** In the November 2019 issue of *Reader's Digest*, several homeowners recount hearing ***those very words*** during the devastation of the July 2018 fire that ravaged houses in a suburb of Redding, California, in which more than 38,000 were forced to evacuate their homes. If you had only two minutes to leave your home and property, what would you take with you?

## People and animals first

Your first concern is for the people in your household, and then your animals. Your animals can be domesticated pets, work animals, or livestock. Plan a way for people and animals to escape quickly. Consider age and disabilities, and how long it will take to evacuate people who might need extra assistance.

## A grab-and-go bag is essential

Stored in a closet right by your front door is your *grab-and-go bag*, which contains all the personal and family items you had planned for an evacuation just like this, long ahead of time. You have stored away bandages, water, toilet paper, over-the-counter medicine, lighter, headlamp, batteries, clothing, ham radio, and other things you and your family need. The convenience of such a bag cannot be overstated, since all your essentials can be picked up in that bag and taken with you in seconds. Remember to rotate out expired medicines and perishables every six or so months.

## Other important items to take along

Here are some things to think about:

- Keys to your house and vehicle
- Warm clothing and jacket
- Laptop with important documents and passwords
- Cash, credit cards, other forms of payment
- If you have the time and luxury, toys and games for the little ones, mementos (such as photographs, jewelry, and sentimental keepsakes), snacks to tie you over for a while.

## Maintain a communication method

Taking your smartphone with you goes without saying; it is going to be your primary lifeline to the rest of the world. In a widespread disaster, however, cell towers become easily overloaded, so you need to have a backup plan, which should include ham radio. Be sure to take a handheld ham radio with you as you evacuate your property. And if you have already stashed one in your grab-and-go bag, that is one less thing to think about taking with you.

## You will probably have a lot more than two minutes

In a widespread disaster, such as the California wildfire just mentioned, you and your family will most likely have known about the quickly moving flames, how close they were to your place, and the ensuing general evacuation order, long before the two-minute warning is sounded.

What frequencies should you tune to during an incident, especially if cell towers become damaged or otherwise unavailable? Here are some suggested ones, roughly in order:

Of course, our local repeaters would be our primary frequencies to monitor. 147.22, 147.24, and 146.54

The ***2-meter National Calling Frequency***, which is **146.520 MHz** simplex, and part of the *Wilderness Protocol* (for the 70 cm band, it is **446.000 MHz** simplex)

During weather events, having a way to listen to the NOAA weather stations is always helpful. It is also a good idea to have an FM radio tuned to our local radio station **96.3FM KGID**. As a side note, we should consider including them in our emergency plan to get information out to the public.

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If you have a scanner, then local police, sheriff, fire, and EMS (emergency medical services) frequencies should be included in your monitoring plan. And if possible, add the CB frequencies and FRS frequencies to listen for possible distress calls.

If you have not already collected the things you need for your evacuation, those warnings alone should give you a chance to re-adjust your priorities and start gathering your needed items. And if this training topic will do any good at all, it will help you get a start on that list of items today, plenty of time before any such disaster has occurred.

We are fortunate to live in an area where this is not a big concern, but stranger things have happened, so it is best to be prepared. This is also good food for thought to allow you to respond faster when called upon.