



City of Malibu News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 1, 2020

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NOTE DATE CORRECTION: Seminar: The City of Malibu's New Evacuation Zones takes place on Thursday, September 3 (not Wednesday, September 2), 2020, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

City of Malibu Promotes Community-Wide Preparedness with Virtual Events, Trainings and Drills Throughout September for National Preparedness Month

(Malibu CA) – With Southern California’s wildfire season already bringing small fires, power outages and heatwaves to Malibu and some of the largest fires in California history to other parts of the state, the City of Malibu invites all community members to join in the City’s many virtual preparedness trainings, meetings and drills throughout September in honor of National Preparedness Month.

“As extreme fire conditions and mega-fires have become the new normal in California, it is more important than ever for the entire community of Malibu to be prepared for the next catastrophic wildfire,” said Mayor Mikke Pierson. “Ever since Woolsey, Malibu has been significantly ramping up its wildfire preparedness efforts. The pandemic has not slowed down fire season, or our preparations, and we are offering virtual events and resources to help you get your family and your neighborhood ready for the next big fire. Now is the time to make your emergency plans, harden your home and build up your emergency supplies.”

MALIBU’S 2020 NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH VIRTUAL EVENTS

Due to public health protocols in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all of Malibu’s National Preparedness Month events will held via video conferencing. All of the events are free and open to all, and are designed to allow for questions and follow-up with participants. In each week of September, the City will focus on a different disaster preparedness theme. The weekly themes are: Malibu’s New Emergency Survival Guide (September 1-5), Disaster Planning (September 6 – 12), Earthquake (September 13 – 19), Wildfire (September 20-27) and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) (September 27-30). All events and social media tips will follow these weekly themes. To register, or for more information about any of the events, visit www.MalibuCity.org/2020NationalPreparednessMonthEvents.

American Red Cross Sheltering During COVID-19

Tuesday, September 1, 2020, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

American Red Cross will present how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting its shelter operation plans and what to expect from a shelter if evacuations occur and a shelter is opened. American Red Cross operates shelter during disasters, evacuations and other extreme situations.

Seminar: The City of Malibu's New Evacuation Zones

Thursday, September 3, 2020, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

This seminar, moderated by Los Angeles County Fire Department Battalion Chief Drew Smith and Malibu Fire Safety Liaison Jerry Vandermeulen, will discuss the City’s new Evacuations Zones. The Evacuation Zones are part of the

Mass Evacuation Plan that the City Council adopted February 24, 2020, following a recommendation from the Malibu Disaster Council. The Mass Evacuation Plan, an update to the City's Emergency Operations Plan, was created by the working group convened after the 2018 Woolsey Fire to improve communication, coordination and response on wildfire evacuations in Malibu.

Disaster Notification System Test

Thursday, September 3, 2020, 4:00 PM

The City will conduct a citywide test of the Disaster Notification System. The Disaster Notification System is only used in case of large-scale emergencies that threat lives and property, or evacuations. The City acquired a database with all cell phone accounts with a 90265 address, so that subscriptions are not necessary. If you do not receive a test message, please contact the Public Safety Office so that your contact information can be checked.

SKaplan@malibucity.org.

Disaster Plans and Emergency Kits Class

Thursday, September 10, 2020, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

This class will cover how residents can create their own disaster plans and emergency supply kits or improve existing ones. The class will provide guidance on how to ensure your kit has everything needed for the entire family, including seniors, people with disabilities, access and functional needs, and pets.

Earthquake Preparedness and Home Hazards Class

Thursday, September 17, 2020, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

This course will help residents ensure that their home is as safe as possible in an earthquake. Malibu is uniquely situated to be impacted by both local and distant earthquakes, so preparing now could lessen the impacts of earthquakes when they strike.

The Community Fire Season Briefing

Tuesday, September 22, 2020, 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

This briefing will provide information about the current outlook for the upcoming peak fire season. Los Angeles County Fire Department Assistant Fire Chief Drew Smith, a Fire Behavior Analyst, will provide information on local fuel moisture, expected weather patterns, and what that means for Malibu.

Seminar: The City of Malibu's New Evacuation Zones

Wednesday, September 23, 2020. 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

This seminar, moderated by Los Angeles County Fire Department Battalion Chief Drew Smith and Malibu Fire Safety Liaison Jerry Vandermeulen, will discuss the City's new Evacuations Zones. The Evacuation Zones are part of the Mass Evacuation Plan that the City Council adopted February 24, 2020, following a recommendation from the Malibu Disaster Council. The Mass Evacuation Plan, an update to the City's Emergency Operations Plan, was created by the public agency working group convened after the Woolsey Fire to improve communication, coordination and response on wildfire evacuations in Malibu.

Home Ignition Zone Seminar

Thursday, September 24, 2020, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

This seminar will be taught by Fire Safety Liaison Jerry Vandermeulen and will guide residents on how they can harden their homes against the millions of burning embers that can fly miles out ahead of a major fire, and cause house ignitions during a wind-driven wildfire like the Woolsey Fire. When these burning embers land in receptive fuels or become lodged in something easily ignited on or near a house, such as dry debris, landscaping and vegetation, the home can catch fire. This seminar will help homeowners substantially reduce the ember threat.

Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) Presentation

Mon, September 28, 2020, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

This program will feature a Southern California Edison (SCE) presentation about SCE's Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS). The presentation will provide residents with updated information about what to expect in the event of a PSPS and how best to prepare for PSPS or any other widespread power outage.

WHAT THE CITY IS DOING TO PREPARE FOR THE 2020 WILDFIRE SEASON

All of the events and messaging during National Preparedness Month are a part of the City's comprehensive efforts to promote community-wide disaster preparedness and work to prepare, and help residents prepare, for the 2020 Wildfire Season. Among the many steps the City is taking, the City and the Los Angeles County Fire Department are closely monitoring fire and weather conditions, and the Fire Department is deploying additional resources in the Malibu area. The City continues to send out emergency and weather alerts and post announcements on social media and the website when fire conditions are forecast or if a fire occurs that could threaten Malibu or could be a major draw on resources available to fight a fire in Malibu.

The City Manager and Public Safety Manager meet weekly with the Fire Department and Sheriff's Department to discuss current and forecasted fire conditions, community concerns, deployment levels in response to wildfire threat factors such as hot, dry, windy weather, fuel moisture levels and Santa Ana winds. They also discuss the levels of firefighters, companies, vehicles, water dropping aircraft and other firefighting resources that are currently available or may be deployed at other ongoing fires.

The Fire Safety Liaison is monitoring current fire conditions, including weather and fuel moisture levels, and reports them to the City Manager and Public Safety Manager. The fuel moisture levels are based on the volume of water that certain local indicator plant species are holding and are checked continuously by the L.A. County Fire Department. Together with heat, wind and humidity, fuel moisture levels are an important factor in wildfire conditions. When fuel moisture levels are very low, the vegetation is much more flammable, and can contribute to a brush fire growing large and dangerous to lives and homes.

The Fire Safety Liaison continues to offer free home wildfire assessment services. He will visually inspect your home and offer a checklist of recommended steps to harden your home against flying embers, a major cause of house ignitions during wind-driven wildfires like the Woolsey Fire. To schedule an appointment, email FireSafety@malibucity.org or call 310-456-2489, ext. 387.

City staff participated in a virtual exercise with regional response partners on Thursday, August 6 to enhance coordination of wildfire communications and response and will participate in virtual Emergency Operations Center (EOC) exercises to prepare to respond effectively from remote locations if needed during the pandemic.

The City has created a free Emergency Survival Guide, based on Los Angeles County's Ready, Set, Go guide and customized for Malibu, available for free for Malibu residents to download or request a printed book. To request a printed guidebook, contact Sarah Kaplan, Public Safety Specialist, at skaplan@malibucity.org or 310-456-2489, ext. 368. To download an electronic version of the guide, visit www.Malibucity.org/SurvivalGuide.

The City is sending postcards to every home in Malibu to make sure residents know what Wildfire Evacuation Zone they belong to. The Evacuation Zones were created this year as part of the work the City has done together with the Fire and Sheriff's Department, Caltrans, California Highway Patrol and other partner agencies to improve wildfire evacuations.

The City has a Zero Power Plan to be able to communicate emergency information during widespread power outages that are caused by PSPS or high winds. During the Woolsey Fire, cellphone, internet, power, and landline phone infrastructure was damaged by the fire, causing a virtual citywide communications blackout that hindered emergency communications to the public and among agencies, hindered evacuations and made the fire even more dangerous.

The Zero Power Plan includes setting up Emergency Information Stations at locations across the City where printed information can be posted; access to Changeable Message Signs; and an agreement with KBUU 99.1 FM, Malibu's local radio station, to broadcast emergency messages from the City; putting emergency information on a phone hotline; City fleet vehicles outfitted with loudspeakers and flashing light bars that staff and CERT Team volunteers can use to assist with evacuations when communications are down; and more.

The City has also recently purchased back-up generators for key traffic signals along PCH in Malibu to allow the signals to continue functioning during an extended power outage. Currently, backup batteries on traffic signals only last for several hours. When there is a serious threat of a fire, or during a wildfire, disabled traffic signals pose an additional hazard when residents need to be able to travel or evacuate safely.

To learn more about what the City of Malibu is doing to prepare for wildfires, visit:
www.MalibuCity.org/2020WildfireSeason.

For more information about any of the City's 2020 National Preparedness Month events, or to get help with your emergency preparedness efforts, contact the Public Safety Office at 310-456-2489, ext. 368 or email SKaplan@MalibuCity.org.

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