



WILDLAND FIRE EVACUATION

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office is the lead agency for evacuation of citizens in unincorporated areas during natural or human made disasters, to include Wildland Fire. Due to the nature of wildland fire, and the varied fuel and topography of the county in concert with weather stimuli, it is impossible for the Sheriff's Office to determine pre-scripted evacuation routes.

Instead, the Sheriff's Office relies upon incident specific based philosophies for management, an array of message notification systems, training and proactive relationships with all types and levels of response agencies we may utilize, and community awareness, education, home hardening, and mitigation efforts to inform incident specific decisions.

Citizens should become familiar with the varied wildland fire educational materials available, have awareness of their individual circumstances and be prepared to make educated decisions on their own regarding when and how to evacuate and not be reliant on official notice. There are a few factors that should always be weighed when considering personal evacuation to include:

- Remember that wildland fires are unpredictable, and their movement and speed vary upon numerous everchanging influences.
- Historical catastrophic wildland fires on the front range include weather, wind driven events. These fires generally traveled in the direction of the wind irrespective of terrain or topography.
- Established and extreme fire events will generally travel about 2+ miles per hour and generate spot fires up to 2 miles ahead of it.
- Despite most efforts, the fire will continue on this path until the wind stops or changes direction, and due to the wind, it is unlikely aircraft will be able to aid suppression efforts.

While the intent of the Sheriff's office is to coordinate resources of every cooperating response agency, including local Fire Protection Districts and other county and state resources during an evacuation event, there simply are not enough personnel available to ensure everyone is personally guided out of the area. The time it takes to locate, anticipate direction, and determine areas to evacuate may be greater than the time you need to evacuate. ***If you are wondering if you should evacuate, you should!*** If it will take you longer, or you need assistance to evacuate, leave sooner.

Prepare yourself and your family for possible evacuations by enlisting in "[Lookout Alert](#)" to receive emergency notifications. Have a family plan on where to meet if evacuated. Have a "[Go Bag](#)" ready for each member of the family and known location for important documents. Have plans for pets. There are great reference materials to assist at [Ready.gov](#); [Rotary Wildfire Ready](#); and [Jefferson County Emergency Management](#). Citizens must understand the various routes leading away from their residence so they evacuate in a direction away from the hazard. Be your own hero, prepare and mitigate, have a plan, and make sound decisions for yourself.

REGGIE MARINELLI, SHERIFF