



PRESS RELEASE

Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team
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PRESERVING WATER FOR THE FIRE FIGHT

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LAKE TAHOE, Calif./Nev. – Water purveyors around Lake Tahoe are reporting an alarming trend; residents leaving irrigation, garden hoses, and sprinklers on roofs actively running as they follow evacuation orders. Not only is this not helpful in protecting homes from wildfire, but it can be detrimental for firefighters who rely on a water supply with adequate water flow to fight fire in extremely dangerous conditions.

As a result, Lake Tahoe Public Utility Districts and water purveyors are experiencing drawdowns in their water supply since evacuation warnings and orders went into effect. Many neighborhood water tanks are being drawn down and wells and water pump stations are operating at maximum capacity, even in evacuated areas that should be empty of residents. This misuse of water can leave water supplies dangerously low when firefighters need fast access to water from fire hydrants to protect homes.

Residents are also calling local fire districts to ask if they should spray down roofs, and vegetation before evacuating. This is not effective, as the roof will dry very quickly, as will the vegetation, which doesn't protect the home itself. Wide-scale activation of sprinklers and garden hoses dramatically reduces water pressure in the entire community. Firefighters apply water judiciously, where it makes a difference, and they need all the available water and water pressure during a fire. Evacuation preparedness efforts are better spent on removing combustible material away from homes.

“Hardening homes to ember intrusion is one of the most effective preparedness efforts residents can take to protect their homes in a wildfire,” said North Tahoe Fire Chief Steve Leighton “We ask that you turn off any outdoor irrigation, roof sprinklers or hoses before you evacuate to ensure our firefighters have ample water and enough water pressure to safely fight the fire. Clear roofs of pine needles and leaf litter, remove combustible decorations, furniture and cushions from decks, and clear away any other combustible material to help prevent homes from catching fire.”

Ember vulnerabilities cause nearly 90% of homes to burn in a wildfire, whereas the flame front or surface fires are responsible for only around 10% of homes lost to wildfire. Maintaining defensible space and having separation between flammable fuels, along with hardening homes to ember intrusion are the best preparations residents can take prior to evacuating homes.

In the event that you have to evacuate, use this [Wildfire Evacuation Checklist](#) for guidance. Practice the plan with your family, pets, and neighbors. Muscle memory will help in times of real emergency.

Visit TahoeLivingWithFire.com and follow @tahoelwf on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for more wildfire preparedness and prevention information. For the latest information on the Caldor Fire, follow @calfireaeu on social media, and visit <https://linktr.ee/IMT6>.

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About the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team – The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT) consists of representatives of Tahoe Basin fire agencies, CAL FIRE, Nevada Division of Forestry and related state agencies, University of California and Nevada Cooperative Extensions, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the USDA Forest Service, conservation districts from both states, the California Tahoe Conservancy and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. Our Mission is to protect lives, property, and the environment within the Lake Tahoe Basin from wildfire by implementing prioritized fuels reduction projects and engaging the public in becoming a Fire Adapted Community.