CERT WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE – PART B THE APPROACHING WILDFIRE!

In this unit you will:

- Learn how to Pre-plan for evacuation: Now that you understand more about Wildland Fires, find out what should be done as the fire threatens your neighborhood.
- Understand the Evacuation Notification Procedure: Often there is a false expectation by the public when it comes to evacuation during a Wildland Fire.
- Learn what last minute preparations to take, and the appropriate timing in evacuation: Now is the time to put your plan into action.
- **Become familiar with what steps to take if you are trapped:** Learn how to protect yourself if you are unable to evacuate.
- Learn About Other Options: Become familiar with methods of pre-treating your home in advance of the fire, and taking some last steps at removing some of the fuels around your home.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants should be able to:

- ∠ Describe the steps on how to pre-plan for evacuation
- Understand the additional preparations to take inside and outside a home when a wildland fire approaches.
- ∠ Identify the steps to take if they are trapped
- Explain other procedures that may be available to assist in "pretreating" their neighborhood ahead of an approaching fire.

SCOPE

The scope of this unit will include:

- Introduction to "The Approaching Wildfire."

- ∠ Last minute preparations and when to evacuate
- Other options
- ∠ Unit Summary

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME

80 Minutes

TRAINING METHODS

Due to the complex nature of the subject of Wildland/Urban Interface fires, it is vitally important that the instructors of this module be very familiar with the following topics:

- ? Wildland Fire Behavior
- ? Vegetation types in the area
- ? Fire History of the area
- ? Local Vegetation Management practices (including restrictions)
- ? Knowledge of local politics as they relate to fire services, water, etc.

It is therefore highly recommended that a Fire Service professional, knowledgeable in the above topics, instruct this module!

In the previous section, the students learned how a Wildfire is different from an interior building fire. They also learned how a Wildfire spreads and how prevention efforts can make their neighborhood safe from a fire.

Now, the Instructor will present an overview of just what steps should be taken when the student is aware of a Wildfire in their vicinity. The instructor will also explain many of the misconceptions held by the public in just how an evacuation order is delivered and by whom.

Next, the Instructor will present information on additional steps to be taken in and around the home, accomplishing some last minute tasks in

preparation of an advancing fire.

The Instructor will then review CERT strategies learned in assisting their community in effecting an orderly evacuation, providing information to the student on steps to take if they cannot evacuate.

Next the Instructor will discuss some of the other options that may be available to the CERT member prior to evacuation, such as applying water, foam or gels to the structure.

Finally, the Instructor will summarize the information reviewed, and explain the importance of a safe, orderly and *timely* evacuation as the best and safest method to survive a Wildfire.

RESOURCES REQUIRED	 ∠ Community Emergency Response Team Instructor Guide ∠ Community Emergency Response Team Participant Manual ∠ Visuals B.1 through B.36
EQUIPMENT REQUIRED	In addition to the equipment listed at the front of this Instructor Guide, you will need the following equipment for this unit: A computer with PowerPoint software A computer projector and screen CERT WUI Part B program

Note to Instructor:

This module was created as a generic template for use in Southern California. However, there are many slides in the Powerpoint presentation that should be tailored to a local setting.

Before presenting this module, please review the following slides and customize as you see fit to make this class meaningful to your audience:

Visual 2b.6; 2b.19; 2b.20; 2b.28; 2b.30.

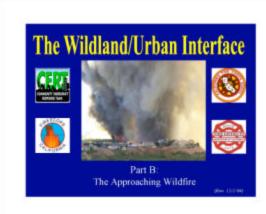
Notes A suggested time plan for this unit is as follows:

Introduction and Unit Overview	15 minutes
Analysis of Wildland Fire Environment	15 minutes
Reducing Risk by being Prepared	
CERT Members and Special Considerations	
Unit Summary	

Total Time: 80 minutes

The Approaching Wildfire

Visual B.1



In Part A we learned about how a Wildfire starts, spreads and behaves so erratically. In Part B we will learn the steps to be taken once you, as a CERT Member, become aware of a Wildland/Urban Interface fire in your vicinity.

Visual B.2





Students will learn:

- How to pre-plan for evacuation
- Evacuation notification procedures
- Last minute preparations & when to evacuate
- What to do when trapped
- Other options

We begin by reviewing the steps needed to "preplan," or create a plan before the need, for your neighborhood or community. This is not an elaborate process. Next we will dispel some myths about how the Evacuation Notification Procedure works and let you know some realistic expectations. We will then move to the subject of

what can be done to your property at the last minute, before you evacuate. A subject that is **Pre-Planning Evacuation**

often asked, "what should I do if I can't get out" will be discussed and you will be provided with this important information. In the last segment, we will review why it is so dangerous to refuse to evacuate and try to stay and defend your home without assistance.

Visual B.3



As we said earlier, the first step toward being prepared is to have a plan. In this case, you need some information as to what your plan will be if the order is given to evacuate (or you feel threatened). There are a few bits of information you will need:

Visual B.4





• Pre-plan your evacuation routes

Pre-Planning Evacuation

There may be pre-established evacuation routes in your area. Find out from your local fire agency if these are in use. If not, where will you likely evacuate to in the event of a major wildfire? A local school, golf course or park? A regional shopping mall? Again, ask your local emergency service agencies for assistance in getting this information. You will need this information to properly identify what routes to take in leaving your neighborhood safely.

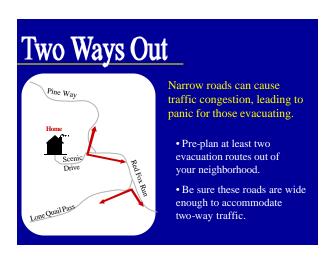
Instructor's Notes (for Visual B.4)

Prior to the class, find out if there are published evacuation routes for this area. If so, have them printed out as handouts and distribute now. If not, be prepared for the question of "why these routes are not established." A common reason is that a wildfire in this area may approach from more than one direction, and its approach will dictate the evacuation route.

Also, mention to the students that there are other local resources that may help in ordinary and special needs evacuations. Neighborhood Watch Teams, Citizen Notification Systems (such as "Reverse 9-1-1") and even some of the fire resources may also assist the Law Enforcement agencies with evacuations.

The Approaching Wildfire

Visual B.5



When planning your route, calculate at least two ways out. Remember that stalled vehicles, early arrival of the fire, fallen power lines or trees can block your way! Think about this fact: Most people who leave during an evacuation order flee on roadways they normally drive. That is, the way they usually travel to reach the school, park or other designated evacuation center. Is this the

safest route when you take into consideration width of roadways, absence of vegetation, likelihood of congestion? You may want to plan and take an alternate route.

Instructor's Notes (for Visual B.5)

Remind the class the importance of following the orders of those directing traffic. There is a reason they don't want you taking certain streets. The Law Enforcement Officer may be trying to keep a lane or roadway open for fire equipment now moving into your area! Or they may just be trying to keep you out of harms way.

Pre-Planning Evacuations

Visual B.6



Now that you know the route to take, answer the question: "What am I taking with me?" Family members are the given (aren't they?). But what important possessions will you want to take?

Make a list of these items, and if you aren't going to be the only one collecting them, jot down their normal location on the list, too. (ie: Allergy medicine, 2nd shelf of medicine cabinet in kid's bathroom).

Don't forget the important, hard to replace documents and things you will need to get life back together.

Your next category is those items that are either expensive, un-insurable or possible just of sentimental value.

If you are taking pets, remember they will need supplies to survive, too.

Now put these supplies into a "Go Kit" so that you don't have to think about the list when it is time to go!

Instructor's Notes (for Visual B.6)

Provide a list of suggested supplies for the student's Emergency Supply Kit. You can find a sample list on the FEMA website, or many local fire agencies will provide excellent lists.

Pre-Planning Evacuations

Visual B.7

Neighborhood "Networks"

Emergency resources will be limited; build a network of neighbors to rely on!

- Develop a neighborhood phone tree
 - This will help expedite evacuation orders.
- Make evacuation plans with those who have special needs in your neighborhood

In a fire in the WUI, there may be dozens or even hundreds of homes in need of protection by the emergency services agencies. Because of this, there will probably not be enough to have a fire truck at every home and a police office on every corner. The fact is, your best bet will be to have a "network of neighbors" in place. This is an ideal situation to the CERT program. As you have learned in other modules, developing a phone tree and a logistical plan of what the needs of the neighborhood are is the key to success.

Remember that your plan should include methods to contact your team *if there is no phone service!* In large scale emergencies, often both the phone service and cell phones are rendered useless. An ideal situation is to have an amateur radio operator on your team who can employ other methods of contact.

Make sure your plans include those in your area that have special needs. An important element to include here would also be the alternative plans, for instance what to do with juveniles whose parents are at work but have no means of evacuation. Where will they be reunited with their family? What are the expectations of the parents? Get those items known and discussed as part of your neighborhood plan.

Pre-Planning Evacuations

Visual B.8



Who will remove them and how? Where will they go? Is there an organized evacuation center like there is for humans? What will I need in the way of documentation to get my animals back? Will there be medical attention available should my animals need it? How can I make sure that Trigger gets her medication 3 times a day? These are questions you should know the answer to before the need arises. Take the time to ask your animal rescue organization these questions.

Instructor's Notes

(for Visual B.8)

Your area has an identified Animal Rescue Coordinator. Often it is the Humane Society or the Animal Regulation Department. Find out who it is in your area, and provide your students with the contact numbers.

**NOTE: Often these rescue organizations are available to come to your training and make a short presentation. This may be an ideal opportunity for your class.

Evacuation Procedures

Visual B.9





Many people believe that firefighters will come knocking at your door when it is time to evacuate. This popular misconception is fostered by Hollywood images. The truth is, law enforcement is charged with the task of effecting an evacuation. The do this in conjunction with the fire agencies, transportation agencies and the local Red Cross.

Visual B.10

Evacuation Notification



- Fire Service Officials call for evacuations
- Law Enforcement carries out evacuation orders
 - Patrol cars
 - Helicopters
 - Door to door
- Depending on location and speed of approaching fire, evacuation orders may not reach everyone.
- Neighborhood phone trees can help expedite evacuation orders

In a Wildfire, the fire agencies will notify law enforcement of the need to evacuate a certain area or region. The L.E. agency will then carry out the order *after it has established* the location of an Evacuation Center. This happens quickly and often the center has been pre-established.

Evacuation Procedures

Red Cross people and others will open the centers, but the evacuees may beat them to the location.

Sometimes, particularly during the sleeping hours, there may not be adequate time to notify everyone to evacuate.

Visual B.11

Evacuation Notification

- CERT members may be called upon to activate their local area's evacuation plan.
- Working in pairs, team members should assist area residents in an orderly evacuation.



• Stay tuned to local radio stations for messages from the County's Emergency Alert System (EAS).

It is imperative that the CERT program utilize established phone trees to ensure that the evacuation order is widespread. *REMEMBER:* Not all CERT teams will be notified by the authorities to activate or evacuate!

Given enough time, have the CERT members work in pairs to assist in evacuation.

Instructor's Notes

(for Visual B.11)

Most areas will utilize the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to disseminate evacuation instructions. All areas have at least one radio station identified that will broadcast 24 hours per day.

Prior to class assess what local radio station(s) have been identified to broadcast EAS information. Contact your local Preparedness Office to find out.

The Approaching Wildfire

Visual B.12



As stated earlier, you may not receive an official notice to evacuate before the fire endangers your property or your life. You may end up reliant upon your own knowledge and training in deciding if it is time to evacuate. In this next segment, we will look at what you can do now to enhance your survivability.

Visual B.13



"If time permits." Be very careful in determining how much time remains before you have to leave. It is extremely

hard to determine when the fire will hit your neighborhood. Error on the conservative side. If in doubt, EVACUTATE!

The Approaching Wildfire

Is your neighborhood being threatened? Is it just drift smoke from a fire 20 or so miles away? Sometimes it is hard to tell. Tune into your local EAS radio station to see if there is an update on the fire.

Here's the scenario: A neighbor calls you in a panic, asking if we should evacuate. The neighbor reports that there is a large fire to the east. Come to think of it, for the last 20 minutes or so you have heard a few sirens. What do you do? You go out back, to a high point and sure enough, there is a large, dark column of smoke. Because you have pre-planned your neighborhood with your CERT team, you know that the fire is on the other side of the ridge, about 5 miles away. You notice now that the wind is blowing steadily from the east, probably about 10 miles per hour. It has been very dry for the last two days. The fire could certainly travel on it's course and enter into your neighborhood. You have your portable battery operated EAS radio with you, and tune it to the EAS broadcast station. No mention of any evacuation orders, and no updates.

This may be a good time activate your phone tree, and then begin on your personal preparedness check-list.

Visual B.14

Evacuation Before you go...

IF THERE'S TIME, PREPARE YOUR HOME:

- · Close all windows and doors
- Shut off air conditioning & heating units
- Close fireplace doors & damper, if possible
- Move furniture & draperies/curtains away from windows
- Move combustibles & fire wood away from home's exterior
- Shut off the gas meter or propane tank.
- Turn all the lights on in your home

You may choose to add more tasks to your list, but here are a few suggestions.

The Approaching Wildfire

Visual B.15

Evacuation Before you go...



- Back your car into the garage & turn off the engine.
- Leave keys in the ignition.
- Keep garage door(s) closed until you are ready to leave.
- Disconnect electric garage door(s) from the motor.

GATES:

- · Disconnect motor on automatic gates
- · Leave manual gates open & unlocked

Don't forget to prepare HOW you are going to evacuate! Make sure your vehicle is in a safe area to load (ie: your garage).

Visual B.16

Evacuation Before you go...

IF THERE'S TIME, PREPARE YOUR HOME:

- Fill trash cans and buckets with water, leave around exterior of house
- Soak rags, towels and small rugs in water to help extinguish small embers
- · Attach garden hoses to spigots outside
- Place a ladder against the house, opposite from where fire is approaching
- As you are preparing to leave, stay tuned to radio and TV stations for updated instructions & information

These are excellent suggestions, *If you have enough time!* It would be more important to let these tasks go undone and get your family and possessions out of harms way if

you have very little time. Remember, while you are performing any of these tasks, keep an eye on the fire! It may be moving faster than you think!

The Approaching Wildfire

Visual B.17

Prepare your home...

IF THERE'S TIME:

Use a fire-resistive material (like plywood) to cover up a home's vulnerable areas:

- · Eave vents
- Sub-floor vents
- · Roof vents
- Windows



Here are a few more suggestions to further eliminate the possibility of an ember entering your home and destroying it.

Visual B.18

Prepare your home...

ONLY if you are TRAINED & EQUIPPED:

- Limb-up and/or drop trees.
- Remove combustible fencing to prevent fire from reaching buildings.
- Placing a sprinkler on your roof does not work in all cases. Take the steps below instead!
- Apply "special treatments" (like gel or foam) to buildings right before you evacuate.



Advanced training is needed!

Consult with your local fire authority to see if they support this training.

There are other things you can do to make it more difficult for the fire to destroy the buildings on your property. However, these take a little labor, tools and time to accomplish. Because of the tools needed, specialized training is also needed. Please contact your local fire agency to find out what they suggest and if there are classes to learn these tasks.

The Approaching Wildfire

Instructor's Notes

(for Visual B.18)

Many fire agencies do not support teaching these tasks. Find out before the class if this training is suggested by the FD.

Additionally, the subject of "placing sprinklers on the roof" has purposefully been left off. Do not endorse the use of this method, as it is not reliable and may take resources from the firefighting effort. Alternatives may be the application of foams or gels.

Visual B.19



Evacuate large animals early!

- If you have horses, be sure you own trailers for them.
- Know how to drive a truck with trailer.
- Trailer-train your horses.



It takes a lot of time to locate a trailer, hitch it up and then load large animals. Any prep work you do (such as set up a separate phone tree for large animal evacuation for your neighborhood) will decrease the amount of time it takes to evacuate!

The Approaching Wildfire

Visual B.20



Either you have received the official evacuation notice, or you feel threatened and need to go. These are the steps to take:

Visual B.21

Get Going! Evacuate EARLY... the earlier the better. Review your "special needs" plan Does a neighbor need your assistance? Do you have your pets ready to go? Close your garage door behind you Leave all access gates open Drive safely and cautiously Keep headlights on and windows rolled up

At this time, look at the "special needs" plan for your neighborhood. Has it been implemented, or do you need to get it going before you leave? Take these tasks to heart, and get out safely!

The Approaching Wildfire

Instructor's Notes

(for Visual B.21)

Underscore the safety aspects of evacuation for your students. Remind them to drive safely, windows up and headlights on. Tune the car radio to the EAS station for changing information.

In the midst of a large fire, it will seem like night. Remind them that EVERYONE'S visibility is reduced, and they will be competing with all other evacuees for space on the roadways at the same time the emergency services are attempting to get into their neighborhood! Slow down and watch out are the keys.

Visual B.22



These are just a few of the hazards you will encounter while evacuating! Be careful!

The Approaching Wildfire

Instructor's Notes

(for Visual B.22)

The act of evacuation is one of the most dangerous at a Wildland Fire. Whether it be panicked drivers, too many vehicles for the roadway, or someone who stayed too long, many deaths occur while evacuating.

As an example, in the Oakland Hills fire in 1991, 22 of the 25 deaths reported were as a result of an evacuation. In the Fire Siege of 2003 in Southern California, all but one of the persons who perished were in the process of evacuation, on roads or driveways they traveled daily.

Visual B.23



This act of leaving your surroundings is vital to your survival, but should be carried out with great caution!

Instructor's Notes

(for Visual B.23)

Some key factors in not being able to evacuate:

Impassable roads
Visibility reduced to just a few feet
Excessive heat and smoke

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The Approaching Wildfire

Visual B.24

Evacuation TRAPPED!

IF YOU CAN NOT EVACUATE:

At home:

- Stay inside your home; it's safer than being outside or in a vehicle.
- Close all exterior doors (including garage door *after* putting the car inside).
- Stay calm, initiate contact with your out-of-state relative.
- Call your local emergency number (i.e., 911) and inform the dispatcher that you can't evacuate.

Some people may make the decision to evacuate too late. In that case, it is a better bet to return to your home to take these steps toward survival.

Visual B.25

Evacuation TRAPPED!

IF YOU CAN NOT EVACUATE:

At home:

- Fill sinks and bathtubs with water
- Shelter in rooms opposite the approaching fire
- Stay away from perimeter walls
- Close all interior doors, leaving them unlocked
- Stay as calm as you can, keep your family together
- Fire-fronts can take 5 to 15 minutes or longer to pass

It will seem like an eternity, waiting for the worst of the fire to pass. If you are in the interior of your home, periodically spot check other rooms in your home to make sure the fire hasn't gotten inside somehow. When it is safe, look at the

exterior of your home to see if any extinguishment is necessary.

The Approaching Wildfire

Visual B.26



It is nearly impossible to survive the fire if you are outside. It will get very hot inside your home, and the sounds of the fire will be terrifying. Do not venture outside until you are sure it is safe to do so.

Visual B.27

Evacuation TRAPPED!

In your car:

- Try to drive to an area clear of vegetation, away from wires and trees
- · Close all windows and keep doors unlocked
- Turn on A/C in "re-circulation" or "max" mode
- Lie on the floor
- Cover yourself with a wool or cotton blanket or jacket

Should you become unable to escape the fire and the only shelter is in your car, follow these steps. *And remember:* Your vehicle requires oxygen to remain running. In heavy smoke, it may be starved for oxygen and quit.

The Approaching Wildfire

Visual B.28



This will be a terrifying event, being trapped in your car. It will get very hot, sometimes melting the plastic knobs, etc. in your car. Protect your respiratory system by getting as low as you can and cover your exposed body to protect from burns. Only leave your car if the interior actually catches fire and you see flames!

Visual B.29



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If you have had to stay at the house, after the fire passes take a quick inspection tour of your property. Concentrate on the home first, then other buildings and then your yard. Extinguish any embers you might find.

The Approaching Wildfire

Visual B.30

After the fire passes

- •Check the roof and decks immediately. Extinguish all sparks and embers.
- •Check inside the attic for hidden burning embers.
- •Check the yard for burning woodpiles, trees, fences or other materials.
- •Keep the doors and windows closed.
- •Continue rechecking the home and yard for at least 12 hours. •Update your family contact on

vour status.



The next important thing you must do is check on the most susceptible portions of your property. Often, a home is saved only to burn down 2 hours later when an ember blows into the attic.

Instructor's Notes

(for Visual B.30)

Stress the importance to your students of making contact with your "family contact" to update them on your condition. If the family is relying on the evacuation centers to relay information, it may not be accurate information or may be many hours old.

Your home telephone service, electrical service and other utilities will probably be out for days or weeks. You can rely on your cell phone ONLY if the companies equipment has survived. Realize the fact that you may not have contact with the outside world!

CERT Training: In

Other Options

Visual B.31



Depending on where you might live, there may be other options available to you. In this section we will review some of these options.

Visual B.32

"Shelter in Place"

•In some areas, there are pre-established "safe zones" in which residents can safely gather until the emergency subsides.

•In other areas, your neighborhood may be designed to enable you to stay in your home due to the construction type and the absence of highly combustible vegetation. *Contact your local FD to find out!*

Some communities will establish and promote "safe zones," or areas which can hold many people and vehicles, but not be susceptible to destruction from wildfire. These areas are generally large open parks, athletic fields or golf courses.

Other areas have been designed as "shelter-in-place" communities, those with fire resistive qualities built in. The

Other Options

idea here is that you will be much safer for you to shelter in you home, rather than attempt to evacuate.

Instructor's Notes (for Visual B.32)

Prior to the class, check with the fire agency covering the area to find out if they have any "shelter-in-place" communities. If they have, point this out to your students and suggest that they tour these communities to see the difference between a typical neighborhood and the "shelter-in-place" concepts.

Should there be no such areas, there are many pictures of these communities available through the web. Check the sites in your area that are affiliated with the Firewise Organization.

Visual B.33

Stay and Defend?

- Each year, professionally trained firefighters are killed while fighting wildfires.
- Citizens also perish during these events.
- If you are considering staying behind, and your local fire agency supports this, advanced training is a must!



Other Options

Instructor's Notes

(for Visual B.33)

This is a *highly controversial* subject. Only include this slide if your local fire agency approves of the discussion.

Should you include this topic, stress these points:

- ? It is very dangerous to refuse to evacuate.
- ? Professional, trained Wildland Firefighters die each year in these fires.
- ? To survive, you must be *trained and equipped* for this type of fire.

Visual B.34

Stay and Defend?

- Make an informed decision based on:
 - Your training
 - Your physical abilities
 - The known fire conditions
 - Past fire history in the area, and
 - The advice of your local emergency services
- Dress appropriately:
 - Long sleeves, pants (cotton or wool) and closed shoes. NO SYNTHETIC MATERIALS!
- Keep a level head try to remain calm.

It will always be much safer if you evacuate early in the event. There is no guarantee, even with training and equipment, that you will save your home and property. However, there IS a greater chance that you will sustain an injury or worse if you stay behind.

In Summary

Visual B.35

Summary

An approaching wildfire presents an extremely dangerous situation

- Have realistic expectations of the capabilities of firefighters and law enforcement
- Design a plan for evacuation; develop a "neighborhood network"
- Practice your evacuation plan in advance and know how to prepare your home before you leave
- Make educated decisions on when to evacuate and how to utilize other options available.

In summary, we have discussed the expectations the public has regarding evacuations. You now have the correct information. We've discussed the Evacuation Plan, and a need for a "neighborhood network."

The best plan doesn't work unless it is known by all and practiced.

We also know how dangerous it is to refuse an evacuation order. If you stay behind, you are risking your life.

Visual B.36



In conclusion, this is a perfect fit for the CERT team. It is more likely we will experience a WUI fire in the future. Practice these plans, and survive!