

NFH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE FRAMEWORK FOR EMERGENCY PLANNING (FEP)



Emergencies are location-specific (hurricane areas, fire areas, tornado areas, flood areas, etc.) Determine which disasters are most likely for your Tract area and focus your EPP around those emergencies. Don't plan for a hurricane if there has never been a hurricane in your area.



Involving the USFS in the development of your Tract EPP will help you develop a plan that is likely to take fewer reiterations to be accepted by the USFS. A plan developed in a vacuum without USFS involvement or a good understanding of USFS regulations will not be accepted.



When the plan is finalized, it needs to be distributed to all cabin owners in your area, the USFS, County emergency services, and all fire and emergency medical agencies that are likely to be responding to emergencies at your Tract. It is advisable to distribute the EPP in a meeting to ensure that the entity that you are giving the EPP to has the opportunity to ask questions and familiarize themselves with the Tract. A meeting also provides you with the opportunity to point out specific aspects of the plan that you want to be sure they understand.

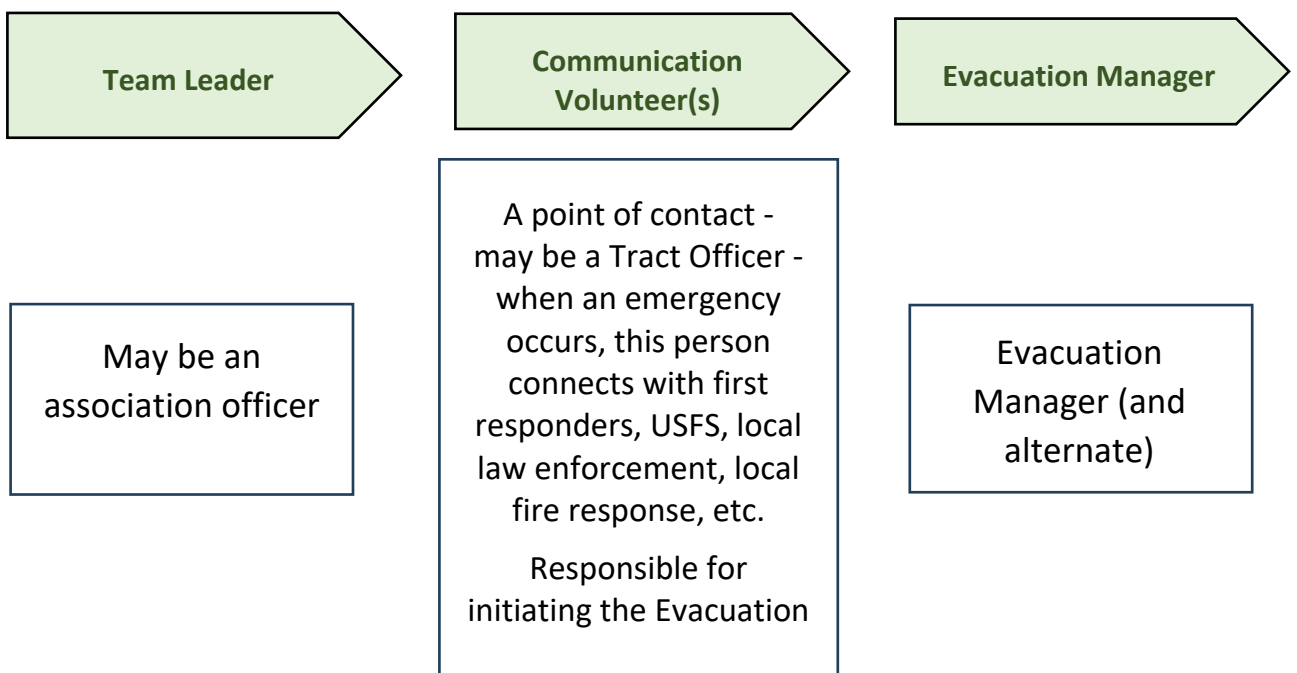
Things to consider in forming your plan:

1. Size of the tract (i.e., number of cabins and size of the area over which the cabins are distributed)
2. Communication services (i.e., phone/internet service, no phone/internet service)
3. Communication "trees" (i.e., pre-determined lines of communication, limited to only a few "branches")
4. Ingress/egress route(s) – more than one way to access the tract? One-way or two-way traffic? Easy access for emergency vehicles? Create an emergency evacuation plan that directs all traffic in the same direction.
5. Who is present on any given day? (i.e., is it obvious if a cabin is occupied on a given day? Or will it require time and effort to determine who is present?)
6. How will those at the cabin tract realize there is a pending emergency? What is the warning system and how is that warning communicated through the tract?
7. Is there an effective tract organization?

Components of an EPP



Part One: Establish an Emergency Team





Part Two: Develop a Site Plan

1. A **MAP** with locations and cabin numbers for all cabins in tract.
2. Photos!!!
 - **LOTS** and **CABINS** from several angles
 - Cabin and outbuilding contents for **INSURANCE**
 - **TRACT** showing vegetation, roads, docs, water systems and other infrastructure
 - Floor plan of cabins for rebuilding
3. **ADDITIONAL** information on the Site Plan to **ASSIST** first responders would include:
 - Location of propane tanks.
 - Location of fuel storage (e.g., gasoline cans).
 - Location of energy storage batteries for solar systems.
 - Muster (meeting) point for use in evacuations.
 - Traffic pattern for evacuation (i.e., direction of one-way evacuation traffic if the access road is a single lane).
 - Location of locked gates.
 - Location of water tanks and hydrants.
 - Check with the District Office to see if they have a tract map that shows the location of each cabin.



Tip: Use Google Maps or other satellite imagery to identify your cabin tract. Canvas your tract members to see if anyone has experience making maps from Google Maps or other software. Often GIS coordinates can be imported into the maps, allowing you to give precise locations of propane tanks and other items listed above (or your local FS District Office may have staff with Geographic Information System (GIS) or other mapping software experience.) Check to see if they can assist. This may include using Global Positioning System (GPS) units to get precise locations of propane tanks, cabin tract roads, driveways, cabin locations, etc., all of which can then be added to the Site Plan.

Part Three: Communication Plan



Note: Every communication plan will be unique based on the needs of the Tract, means of communication available (phone/cell phone, internet, or in person communication, etc.), and size of the Tract (i.e., number of cabins and relative distance between cabins.)



The Purpose of this plan is to direct communication to and from local emergency services and to direct communication among the cabin owners.



Communications is 3-way: has to be sent, received & acknowledged



Time is of the essence: initiate communications as soon as possible



Determine the channels of communication - is there cell phone or internet service? Door to door contact necessary?

The Communication Plan should include:

- Contact information for owners of each cabin in the tract.
- Contact information for local emergency services/law enforcement/local Forest Service District Office, and others as needed depending on the type of emergency.
- Clear pathway of communicating with every cabin/cabin owner. An example is a “phone tree” where the Contact Person(s) identified in the Chain of Command, above, is/are contacted and initiates the Communication Plan. That person(s) would call three or four people on the cabin owner list. Those three or four people will call three or four other cabin owners, and so on until all cabin owners have been contacted. The list of who calls whom has to be determined a priori and distributed to every cabin in the tract. Each person making a call should write down who they called, who they talked to, and confirm that the person they talked to understood the message and agreed to immediately call the next “branch” of the phone tree.



The Communication Plan should have a provision of how to carry out the plan if there is a break in the communication “tree” (i.e., if a person with responsibility for communicating to others is not available).



The actual communication should be brief, but with sufficient detail to clearly communicate the risk.

Communicate the following information:

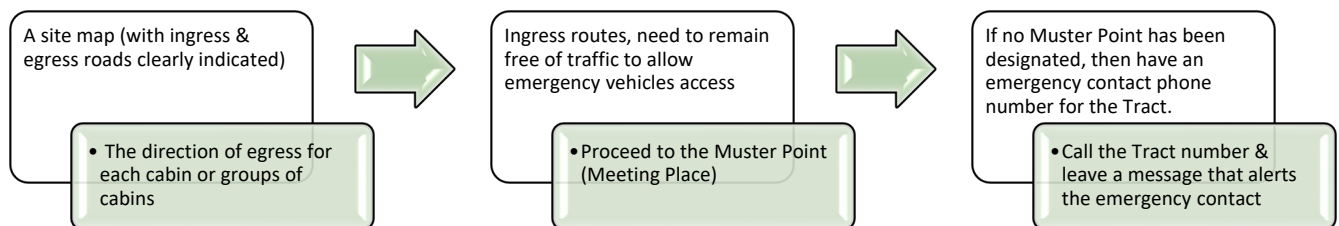
- Type of emergency (e.g., fire, flood, tornado, hurricane, etc.) and who has declared the emergency (i.e., the “authority”).
- Urgency (i.e., is it imminent, is it likely to occur within hours, days, etc.).
- Whether a Tract Evacuation Plan is being implemented and followed.
- Reminder to the person receiving the communication to complete their part of the Communication Plan, and to follow the Evacuation Plan, if necessary.
- Confirmation that the message has been received and understood. Ask if there are any questions or if the recipient needs assistance.

Part Four: Evacuation Plan



Note: The following provides some of the components that are common to most evacuation plans; however, every evacuation plan will be unique based on the road network in the Cabin Tract, and size of the Tract (i.e., number of cabins and relative distance between cabins.) An Evacuation Plan should be implemented when there is imminent threat to lives, structures, or ingress/egress routes and that risk is greater if individuals remain at the Tract than if they leave the tract.

An Evacuation Plan should include the following:





Example of a message: “the Jones family from Cabin #4 of the Big River Tract, consisting of 6 people and 2 dogs, successfully evacuated the WhoDat National Forest at 8 PM on July 6. There are no other people or pets remaining at Cabin #4”. This can be important if the emergency contact can let the first responders know which cabins have been evacuated which will allow first responders focus on ascertaining if anyone is at cabins that have not yet reported that they have evacuated.



Designate a Tract member to serve as an Evacuation Manager, and an Alternate, in the event the designee is not present at the time an evacuation is necessary.



The Evacuation Manager will be responsible for initiating the Evacuation Plan and the Communication Plan (if it hasn’t already been initiated prior to the need to evacuate) and act as the point of contact at the Muster Point for evacuees and first responders.

Standard evacuation procedures should include:

- Turn off propane lines.
- Turn off the water supply line.
- Shut down power.
- Remove furniture and other items from the deck if high winds or fire are the potential emergency.
- Check your list of what to take with you. You may want to assign members of your cabin family responsibility for specific items.
- Have an emergency go-bag with containers of water, emergency foods, first aid kit, toilet paper, blankets, warm clothing and/or rain gear. Be sure to grab necessary medications. If you have pets, be sure to accommodate their needs. If the emergency route gets blocked by fallen trees or landslides, you may have to spend the night in the vehicle during inclement weather. A shovel, axe, flashlights (and extra batteries), and hand tools may also be appropriate.
- An emergency or evacuation is not a picnic; therefore, appropriate footwear and clothing should be donned before leaving the cabin. In most instances, long-sleeved shirts/blouses, long pants, hiking boots or sturdy shoes, hat, and work gloves would be considered a minimum. Other protective or warm clothing as appropriate for the current conditions and nighttime conditions should be included.

Other Information:

Designated Meeting Place – Muster Point



Note: Evacuations are stressful and often confusing. A Muster Point is a location that is a safe distance from the site of the emergency, but not so far that people evacuating have multiple route choices before reaching the Muster Point.

The purpose of the Muster Point is to get a head count and list of those from each cabin that have successfully evacuated the Tract and where they are headed after leaving the Muster Point. This is important information to first responders; if they don't know that everyone is evacuated, then they have to spend time and risk their lives to ensure no one remains at the cabins. It may also help when other family members can't get in touch with those that were involved in the evacuation, but they know to contact the Tract Leader or Evacuation Manager who can then check the list of those that successfully evacuated and let the family know where the evacuees are headed.

- A Muster Point should be an area where people and vehicles can congregate, check in with the Evacuation Manager, help others in need of assistance, and take a moment to determine the next step in their evacuation process.
- The Muster Point should be included on a map and given to the emergency agencies, such as USFS, County Emergency Management, Sheriff's Office, etc. This will give the first responders a location where they can get information prior to entering the cabin tract.
- The Evacuation Manager should have multiple copies of the Tract Site Map to make available to the first responders.

Essential Contact Details



Note: This section of the EPP should be duplicated and kept accessible at each cabin. The purpose of this section of the EPP is to allow cabin owners to contact the agencies in the event of an emergency, as well as giving authorities a means of contacting the individual cabin owners.

- Include emergency numbers of all agencies and emergency services available in the County in which the Tract is located.
- Include phone numbers, email addresses, and the City/State of residence for all Cabin Owners and their Cabin Number.
- The Evacuation Manager should keep multiple copies of the contact list to provide authorities that arrive at the Muster Point.



Post-Disaster Planning

Part One: Debris Management and Removal

1. Debris removal may be the first task required to access the Tract. It is imperative that USFS be involved in this process as cultural sites, hazardous material removal/disposal, and a variety of other issues for which the USFS has regulations with respect to “how to, when to, and where to” need to be followed.
2. When preparing your EPP, meet with the USFS to discuss and get some preliminary information as to the process to be followed for debris management and removal, and include that process as part of the EPP.

Part Two: Response Plan (Post-Emergency Plan)

1. After the emergency has passed and debris has been removed, the decisions to rebuild and revegetate have to be made. The USFS will have input on both these decisions. However, having a plan for revegetation that reduces risk of future fires or damage from windblown trees falling on cabins can start with the cabin owner and then work with the USFS to determine how that plan fits within their regulations. Species to be used in revegetation need to be approved by the USFS. Exotic species of plants are not likely to be approved, so make a list of plants that currently occur on your lot or Tract and use that as a starting point.
2. The decision to rebuild may be yours, but beyond that, USFS approval will be required. Meeting with the USFS as a Tract, rather than as individuals will allow everyone to hear and understand the regulations that will direct the rebuild effort, after which each cabin owner should expect to be involved in 1-on-1 meetings with the USFS to discuss their particular rebuild plans.
3. County building codes are likely to be in play, and don't be surprised if complying with a County building code results in non-compliance with USFS regulations and vice versa.
4. The Response Plan should be a road map for how to go about rebuilding and revegetating, rather than what you will rebuild or what specific plants will be seeded/planted. Meet with USFS and your County to learn what is expected of you and document these expectations in a step-by-step process.

 *It is advisable that the contact information be updated annually and disseminated to the all the recipients of the EPP. Tract leadership changes, new cabin owners may now be Tract members and former cabin owners may be gone. Any changes in Tract infrastructure should be noted on revised Site Maps and documented with a brief explanation/description.*

Sample EPP (Appendix) *click workbook link below***[El Dorado County Fire Safe Council Fire Preparedness Workbook](#)**

Note: As previously mentioned, this document is meant to serve as a guide to individual cabin owners and tracts as they develop their own Emergency Preparedness Plans. As an example, the County of El Dorado and the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council have developed some new procedures and resources as a result of lessons learned from the recent Caldor Fire. One of them is a very good Wildfire Preparedness Handbook which is attached below as an addendum, for reference. You will see the frequent use of local emergency alert and evacuation systems, which means a tract would need to research the existing resources for their county, forest and state when developing their EPP.

Sample of suggested categories to explore to determine your local resources:

- County Alert Systems: does your county operate a website or other system that provides emergency alerts and evacuation procedures?
- Are there wildfire alert apps for your county or region?
- Are there wildfire alert webcams and/or highway traffic webcams in your area?
- Are there links to other resources, e.g. incident maps, websites and social media pages for the main firefighting jurisdictions in your area, county, region, and forest?
- The USFS may use multiple main radio frequencies for fire, medical and law enforcement. Your county OES communications director could potentially provide those frequencies.
- A community may want to consider setting up an emergency radio network.
- Ham radios can be used when cell service is unavailable.