



# *EVACUATION*

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**LIFE SAFETY** is always the highest priority for emergency responders. Sometimes rapid mitigation of the problems is the best course of action however there are times when moving people out of harms way is required.

**In the emergency services world, there are three basic concepts:**

**EVACUATION** - when we ask people to withdraw from an area on their own.

**SHELTER IN PLACE** - when we ask people to stay where they are.

**RESCUE** - when we need to help people withdraw.

# EVACUATION

**A simple example of an evacuation is a fire alarm system in a building. There is smoke or heat that triggers the alarm system, and we hope everybody exits the building so when the fire department arrives on scene, they can concentrate on firefighting.**

# **SHELTER IN PLACE**

**A few examples are:**

**A toxic smoke plume from a fire has settled into a neighborhood and it would be safer to keep everybody in their homes with their windows closed and air handling systems turned off.**

**or**

**The police are conducting a manhunt in a neighborhood and for your safety that'd like you to stay inside.**

# RESCUE

**An example of rescue is when a person is trapped or disabled and needs help from others to evacuate, typically first responders.**



**DIFFERENT PLANS ARE NEEDED FOR DIFFERENT SITUATIONS**



# **When do we ask people to evacuate?**

*When moving people saves lives.*

- **Structural Fire**
- **Active Shooter**
- **Flood / Dam Failure**
- **Hurricane**
- **Volcanic Ash**
- **Utility System Failure**
- **Approaching Wildland Fire**
- **Hazmat Spill or Leak**
- **Bomb Threat**
- **Civil Unrest**
- **Avalanche / Land Slide**
- **Radioactive Release**

# What's the plan?

Unfortunately, one plan does not fit all situations.

There are many variables to consider:

- What are we evacuating from?
- What direction is the event / threat moving?
- How fast do we need people to move?
- Where do we want the people to go?
- How are we telling them what to do?
- How long will they be kept out?
- How will we tell them its OK to return.



**The natural obstacles like rivers and lakes can't be changed. Our existing road infrastructure is set.**

**To successfully evacuate people,  
we hopefully will have the time to prioritize  
who needs to go first.**

**When asked to go, GO.  
If you think you should go, GO.**

## Other factors:

### Human Behavior

The *boy who cried wolf syndrome*, it's probably another false alarm.

I don't understand, tell me why?

I'm staying – you can't tell me what to do.

Fear – unable to think / move.

### Tourist Town

People don't know where to go, need more detailed instructions.

### Communications

IPAWS (reverse 911) having Flathead OES alert targeted area.

Radio Messages.

Websites – Facebook – other social media.

Group text – neighborhood calling tree.

# **READY – SET – GO**

**A program originally established for wildfire is now part of**

**FEMA's**

**Ready.gov**

**The basic concepts are:**

**READY** – Make plans, prepare based on your threats.

**SET** - Be on high alert, work your plan(s).

**GO** - Don't wait, GO NOW, Follow Instructions.

*There is a lot of information on the internet that can help you prepare.*

**Who should be**

**READY**

**to go:**

**Those in proximity to a know hazard.**

**Everyone during Fire Season.**

**Everyone when Weather Forecasts predict  
extreme conditions.**

# **Notification of those who should be SET**

**to go will be made by:**

**The IPAWS system.**

**Radio Messages.**

**City & County web sites.**

**Your own observations.**

**If you need extra time or think you should,**

**Don't wait - GO now.**

**Notification of those in immediate danger,**

**the GO order may be made by:**

**Buildings alarm system**

**Door to door**

**IPAWS System**

**Loudspeakers**

**Anytime you think you should go, GO!**

# **MAKE PLANS**

*(home, work, school, church, theater, any where you go regularly)*

**Build a home evacuation plan**

**Firewise – harden your home**

**Develop a shelter in place procedure**

**Learn how you will get emergency alerts & warnings**

**Plan multiple evacuation routes**

**Develop a family communications plan**

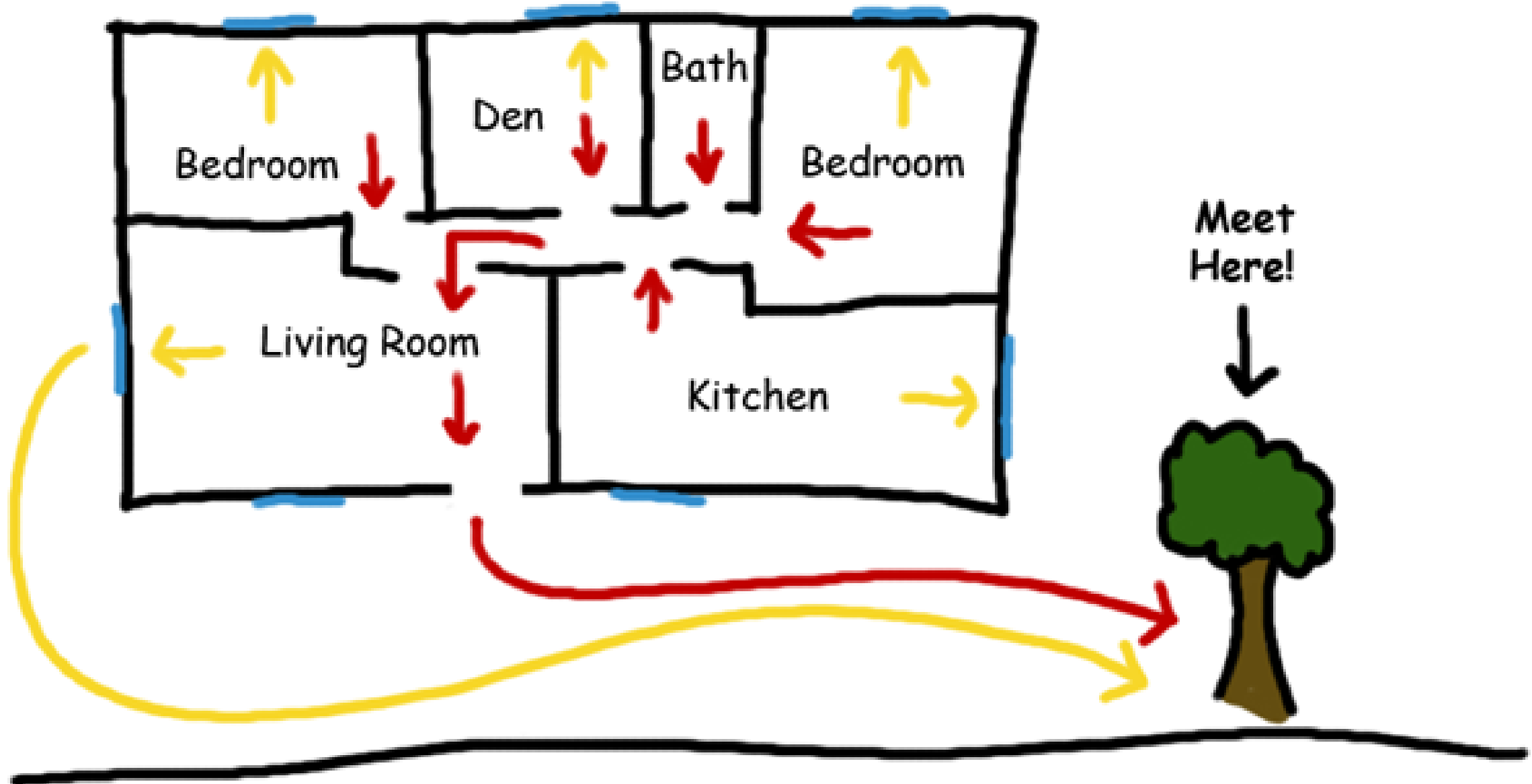
**Collect important papers**



**Document your belongings**

**Collaborate with you neighbors**

**Build your basic GO-BAG aka BUG-OUT-BAG**

**Build and develop your own emergency checklists**



- Window 
- Primary Escape Path 
- Secondary Escape Path 



# **WHAT ARE YOUR THREATS? WHERE DO YOU LIVE / WORK?**

**We all face the possibility of a structure fire.  
Many of us have gas in our home, propane or natural gas.**

**SORRY, everybody in the Whitefish area is in the WUI.**

**Are you within a 1/2 mile of the BNSF rail line?**

**Schools, theaters, large crowds face man made threats.**

***Eat this elephant one bite at a time, start with your biggest threat***

# **STRUCTURE FIRE**

## **PREVENTION**

**Do you have smoke and CO detectors?**

**Do you have a home sprinkler system?**

**Do you have your chimney cleaned & inspected yearly?**

## **PLANNING**

**Do you have a go-box of important papers?**

**Do you have multiple escape routes from the home?**

**Do you have a planned meeting place outside the home?**

# **WILDLAND FIRE**

## **PREVENTION**

**Have you hardened your home against an ember shower?**

**Have you worked on your defensible space yearly?**

**Is your house number properly displayed?**

## **PLANNING**

**Have you worked with your whole neighborhood (Firewise)?**

**As a family have you built all your checklists?**

**Do you know multiple ways to escape the area?**

# ACTIVE SHOOTER

## RUN – HIDE - FIGHT

- **Know the exits - when entering a school, theater, house of worship, auditorium do you check for the nearest two exits?**
- **Find places to hide, keep hands empty and visible to L/E.**
- **Learn first-aid to help others, Law Enforcement's first task is to stop the treat.**
- **Follow Law Enforcement Instructions.**

# **EVACUATION CONSIDERATIONS**

**First Responders will work together using the  
Incident Command System**

**The Incident Commander or Unified Commanders  
will establish the areas to evacuate and  
which areas will be placed in SET status  
and establish trigger points**

# **EVACUATION CONSIDERATIONS**

**Phased approach, highest threat area GOes first.**

**Do not evacuate too many at once, notify areas to be SET.**

**Establish trigger points - when to move from SET to GO.**

**Areas may lose power.**

**Cell phones may not work.**

**Entry and reentry will not be allowed.**

**Routes in will be for 1<sup>st</sup> Responders ONLY**

# WILDLAND FIRE







*A wooden house, a small pile of pine needles and glowing embers ...*

## **EMBERS BURN HOUSES DOWN NOT TREES**





# HARDEN YOUR HOME

**Embers cause the majority of wildfire home ignitions.**

**The embers find their way into structures or a nearby receptive fuel beds.**

**Home to home ignitions are mostly wind driven.**







**Note the trees are scorched from the structure fires**



# HARDEN YOUR HOME

## What you can do:

1. Look where pine needles accumulate, embers will too.
2. Cover all vent openings with 1/8-inch metal mesh.
3. Keep your gutter and roof clear of debris.
4. Keep flammables away from the structure (welcome mats, etc.)
5. Keep lawn mowed, yard cleared of dead trees and branches.
6. Clean under decks, remove lattice work which is kindling.
7. Caulk gaps and joints in siding, eaves, soffits, blocking, etc.
8. Replace vinyl windows, until you do, plant nothing underneath.
9. Create a 5-foot noncombustible zone around the structure.

# DEFENDABLE SPACE

**SORRY, this is a never-ending chore.**

**Start at your structure and work out.**

**Each year start back at the structure and work out again,  
hopefully a little further each year.**

**Fire moves either up hill or is wind driven.**

**Pay attention to your normal winds and  
the down hill side of your structure.**

**Sheds should be at least 30 feet from the home.**



**Keep your roof clear of leaves, needles and other debris.**



**Keep burnable materials from under and around all structures.**



**Keep your woodpile 30 feet from structures.**

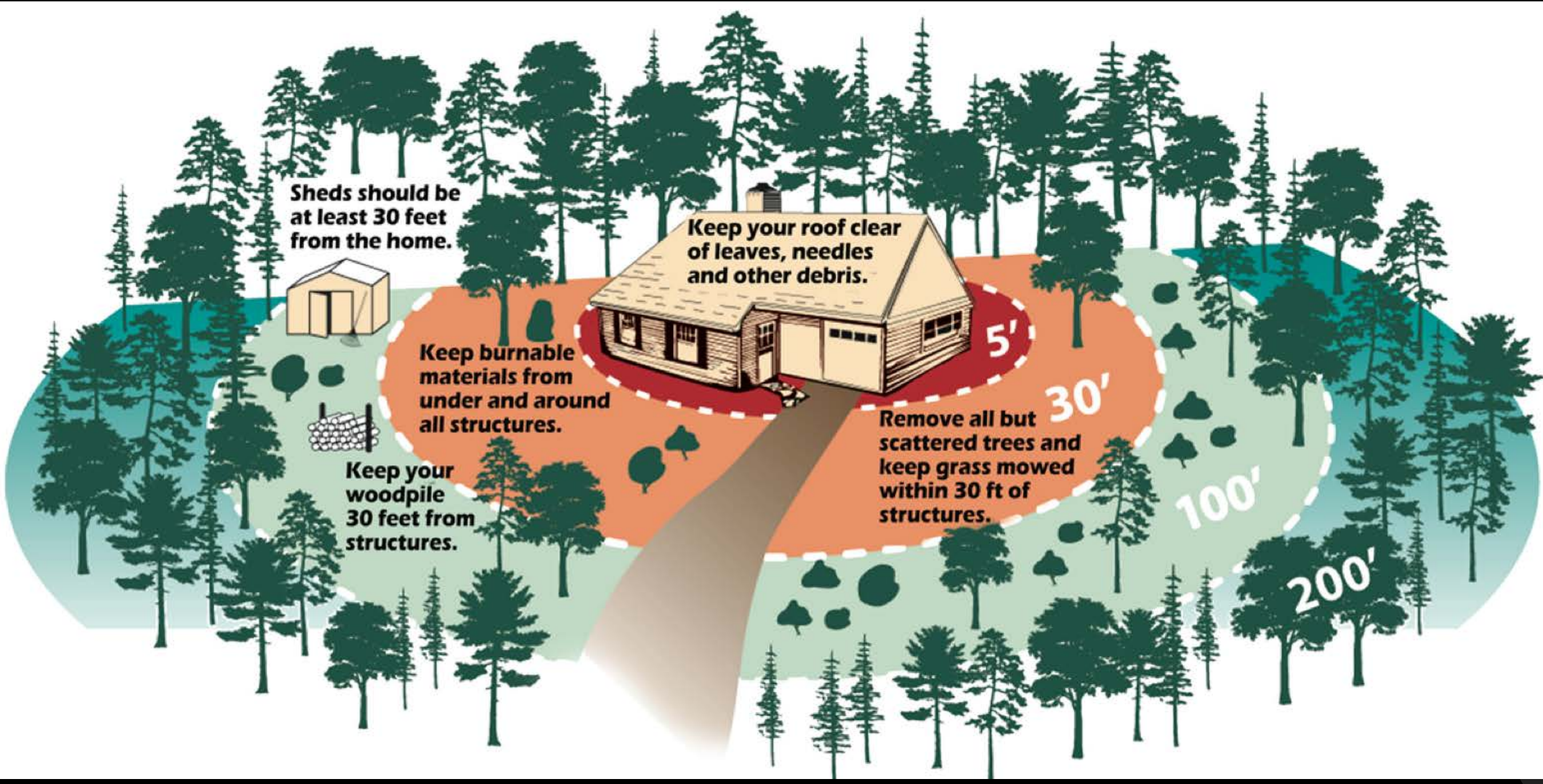
**Remove all but scattered trees and keep grass mowed within 30 ft of structures.**

5'

30'

100'

200'



## Some other defensible space thoughts:

- In many areas one home's defensible space overlaps another's.
- Communities also need to work together to keep roadways clear so escape routes are not cut off and firefighters can enter the area.
- Know who needs help in your neighborhood.
- Street signs and house numbers are important, mutual-aid firefighters will not know the area.
- Consider a neighborhood assessment, email [jpage@cityofwhitefish.org](mailto:jpage@cityofwhitefish.org) to schedule.
- Form a Firewise Community.



# REPORTING SMOKE SIGHTINGS:

- Give your location. If safe, wait for first responders to arrive.
- What direction are you looking?
- Aspect, which side of the hill is it on, North, South, East, or West?
- What position on the slope, bottom, mid-slope, top?
- Any known values at risk, homes, power lines, etc.?





**GETTING  
TO A FIRE  
WHEN IT'S  
SMALL IS  
KEY**



**SO, THEY  
DON'T  
GROW  
BEYOND  
OUR  
ABILITY TO  
FIGHT**





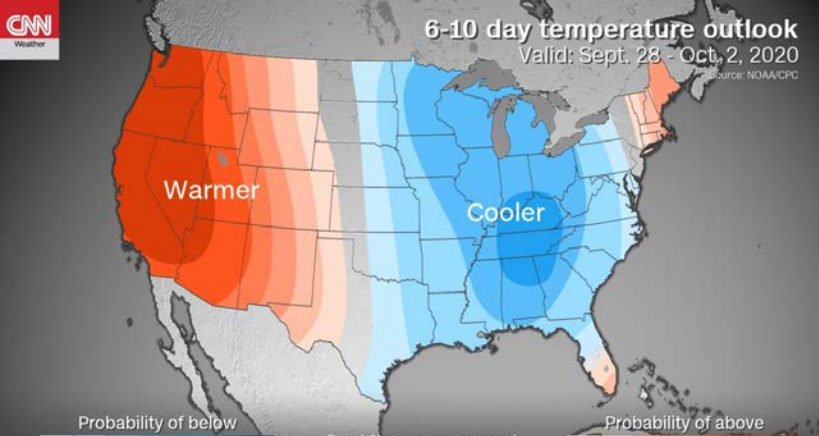


# PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY



**But Saint Peter I prayed for help?**

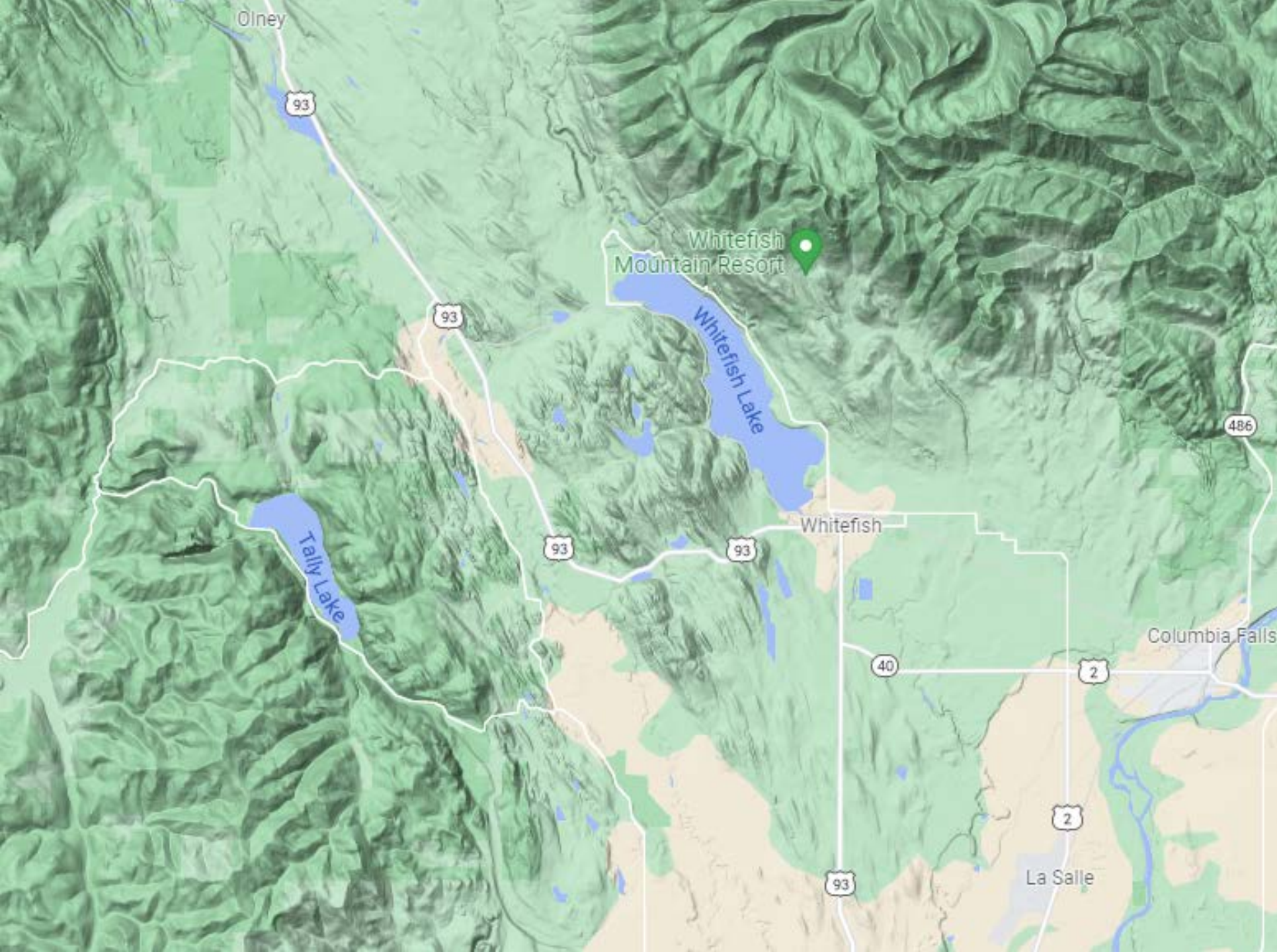
**I sent you a weather forecast,  
then I sent you a boat,  
and finally, I sent you a helicopter,  
what more should I have done?**



**It has been hot and dry for days.  
They've been predicting high winds all week.  
They issued a Red Flag warning yesterday.  
We're having afternoon thunderstorms.**

**I hope you're already READY,  
now it's time to get SET,  
and listen for GO!**





**The City of  
Whitefish is in  
the WUI.**

**A large fire  
west of the  
City could rain  
an ember  
shower on  
the City.**

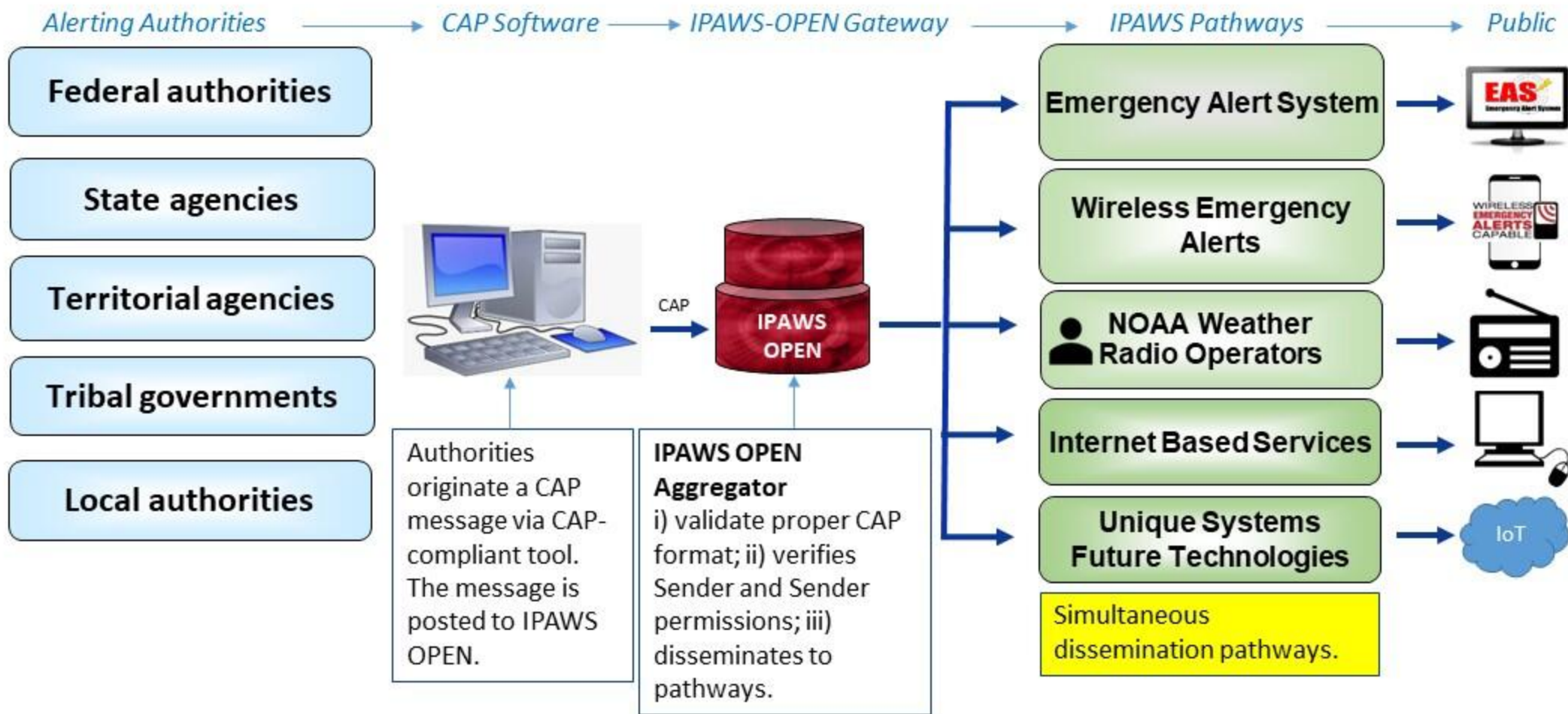
**Most likely  
with some  
warning.**



**IPAWS (Integrated Public Alert & Warning System) is FEMA's national system for LOCAL alerting the public through cell phones. Police or Fire Departments can request an IPAWS alert through Flathead OES for specific areas.**



# IPAWS Architecture



# **IPAWS ISSUES**

**Some people have turned off IPAWS on their phones.**

**Many people do not wake up to their phone alerts.**

**Not everybody has a cell phone.**

# **EVACUATION PLANNING**

**Do it as a family – get each member's input.  
What's important to one person may not be to the next.**

**Not everybody may be home when the time comes.**

**Post your lists where everybody in the household knows,  
in an emergency people will forget things.**

## **PLANNING - PEOPLE**

**\_\_\_ Are there family members who would need assistance in the case of an evacuation?**

**\_\_\_ Assistance physically moving**

**\_\_\_ Needed life support equipment**

**\_\_\_ Do you have a plan where to meet if somebody is not home?  
Do not count on having cell phone service, have a back-up plan.**

**\_\_\_ Have you identified a single contact person outside of the area all family members know to contact if separated?**

**\_\_\_ Is there a neighbor that needs assistance?**



## **PLANNING – PETS / ANIMALS**

- \_\_\_ Are there pets or small animals you'd need to evacuate?**
- \_\_\_ Do you have enough cages and other pet carries for all your animals?**
- \_\_\_ How long is it going to take you to catch all your animals?**
- \_\_\_ Are there large animals you'll need to evacuate?**
- \_\_\_ Do you have a trailer big enough to haul all your animals?**
- \_\_\_ Do you have a vehicle capable of towing your trailers?**
- \_\_\_ Is there somebody who can help? Remember they may not be allowed to enter or reenter the area if an evacuation has started.**
- \_\_\_ Do you have neighbors who might help if you're not home?**

# PLANNING – PRESCRIPTIONS

- \_\_\_ **Have a 7-day supply of each family member's medication ready for your go bag.**
- \_\_\_ **Have a 7-day supply of your pet's medications.**
- \_\_\_ **Immunization records**
- \_\_\_ **Crucial Medical Records, if needed you may not be seeing your doctor.**
- \_\_\_ **Have a plan to keep meds fresh, recycle / rotate as needed.**
- \_\_\_ **Have a list of prescription numbers and pharmacy phone numbers.**
- \_\_\_ **Pet microchip numbers**

# PLANNING – IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

- \_\_\_ **Have a metal fire / waterproof lock box with important papers ready to grab.**
- \_\_\_ **Consider storing some documents off site, like in a security deposit box.**
- \_\_\_ **Have electronic PDF copies of important papers stored in the cloud.**

- **Family IDs**
- **Financial Documents**
- **Property Documents**
- **Other Important Papers**

# **PLANNING – Family IDs**

- \_\_\_ Driver's Licenses**
- \_\_\_ Passports**
- \_\_\_ Birth certificates**
- \_\_\_ Marriage & divorce papers**
- \_\_\_ Adoption papers**
- \_\_\_ Social Security cards**
- \_\_\_ Medical Insurance Cards**
- \_\_\_ Child custody agreements**
- \_\_\_ Citizenship documents**
- \_\_\_ Current photos of family members**

# **PLANNING – Financial Documents**

- \_\_\_ Tax Information**
- \_\_\_ Bank Account Information**
- \_\_\_ Credit Card Information**
- \_\_\_ Investment documents**
- \_\_\_ Business documents**
- \_\_\_ Bill and loan numbers**

## **PLANNING – Property Documents**

- \_\_\_ Vehicle titles & registrations**
- \_\_\_ Mortgage papers**
- \_\_\_ Insurance papers**
- \_\_\_ Inventory and photos of home contents**

## **PLANNING – Other Important Papers**

- \_\_\_ Will**
- \_\_\_ Living will / medical directives**
- \_\_\_ Power of Attorney**
- \_\_\_ Trust Documents**

# **PERSONAL GO BAGS (aka BUGOUT BAGS)**

*Best to have a backpack for each family member that you review and update yearly.*

- Prescriptions (see list above)**
- Extra socks and underwear**
- Flashlight, batteries separate**
- three dust masks**
- cell phone charger**
- copy of evacuation plan with contact information**
- three bottles of water, have extra water in the car**
- Food, non-perishable**
- List of phone numbers for when cell phone battery dies**
- Change of clothes**
- Spare eyeglasses / contact lenses**
- Pack of wet wipes**
- First Aid kit**
- Extra car keys**

# GO BAGS – other considerations

\_\_\_ Diapers

\_\_\_ Formula

\_\_\_ Comfort items, like a game or teddy bear

\_\_\_ Pet food / water

\_\_\_ Pet bowls

\_\_\_ Leashes



# **READY YOUR CAR**

**Pack your car with your go bags**

**Add extra water (3-gallons per person)**

**Full fuel tank.**

**Back your car in the driveway, not in your garage.**

**All door and windows closed.**

**Carry your car keys with you.**

# **READY THE INSIDE OF YOUR HOUSE**

**Shut off your air conditioner / air handlers**

**Remove flammable window coverings / curtains**

**Shut all windows and doors - keep them unlocked**

**Move flammable furniture away from windows**

**Turn off pilot lights**

**Leave your lights on**

# READY OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSE

**Move outdoor furniture, door mats, etc. inside the garage.**

**Move barbeque grills and small propane tanks inside the garage.**

**Shut off gas meters and / or large propane tanks.**

**Move wood piles away from the house.**

**Place your ladder up against your house.**

**Connect water hose to outside spigots.**

**Fill water buckets and place around the house.**

**DO NOT leave sprinklers or water running.**

**Turn outside lights on.**

**Seal attic and ground vents.**

**Check on neighbors.**

# **IF CAUGHT IN AN EMBER SHOWER**

**Protect against heat and burns by wearing:**

**Long pants**

**Long sleeve shirt**

**Heavy shoes or boots**

**Dry bandana**

**Goggles or glasses**

**Preferably 100% cotton**

**IT'S WAY PAST TIME TO GO!**

# **IT WILL BE ANNOUNCED WHEN IT'S TIME TO RETURN**

**Attend community meetings.  
When time allows 1<sup>st</sup> Responders  
will update evacuees.**

**Listen for radio reports  
Monitor websites**

# **HOPEFULLY NEVER NEEDED**

**If there is a long-term evacuation  
the Red Cross helps set up shelters**

**There will be areas established for animals**

**QUESTIONS?**

**Chief Joe Page**

**[jpage@cityofwhitefish.org](mailto:jpage@cityofwhitefish.org)**