



Sample Communications Templates for **Wildfires**

As you adapt wildfire templates for use in your city or county, keep these best practices in mind





Wildfires can spread quickly. From the time a wildfire is reported to the time a resident receives an evacuation order, a fire can expand by miles. When sending critical wildfire alerts to your community, pre-built templates save time, property and lives.

Below are a number of wildfire template examples you can use to build alerts for your community.

As you adapt wildfire templates for use in your city or county, keep these best practices in mind:

- Strive for clear, concise language, so your community reads your alerts, understands them and takes action from them.
- As a general practice, your alerts should contain these essential elements:
 - **The alert source** — Who is sending the alert.
 - **The threat** — A description of the danger to people or property.
 - **The threat location** — The location or boundaries of the critical event.
 - **Guidance or instructions** — The actions you want your audience to take.
 - **Expiration time** — Let your audience know when the alert expires.
- Practice your template use with limited and full tests throughout the year. Testing highlights gaps and areas for improvement in your communications plan, strengthening wildfire alerts and other emergency alerts you send.

Tips for using alerting templates:

The examples below are for text and email. You can easily adapt text examples to voice alerts.

Change [ALL CAPS IN BRACKETS] to information for your situation.

Use ALL CAPS to highlight key words in your alert.

Try to focus on one topic for your alert. There may be reasons to combine topics or include additional information, such as an alert allowing residents to return and instructing how to report damage. In general, focused, single-topic alerts improve readability.

Include website addresses or community bulletin board numbers for additional information.

Understand the limitations and expectations of your delivery channels. Not all modes are the same. Twitter, SMS text and the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) all have different allowable character counts. Know the values before you send critical alerts.

It's highly recommended to know the expectation of your recipients. Does your community expect more frequent, short updates or longer details in a single pass? Your routine testing should have a feedback option to gather local expectations.



Communications before a wildfire

Alerts sent before a wildfire consist of precautionary alerts, reminders, restrictions and similar messages.



SMS Examples

A wildfire alert has been issued for the county until [DATE]. Please use extreme caution with any outdoor ignition sources. More info at [WEBSITE ADDRESS]. Alert expires [DATE].

High Wildfire Danger Alert. Use of fireworks prohibited. Open fires restricted except at designated sites. More info at [WEBSITE ADDRESS]. Alert expires at [DATE].

High Fire Danger. Open fire restrictions and fireworks prohibition has been extended. More info at [WEBSITE ADDRESS]. Alert expires at [DATE].

Water restriction advisory. Please limit water use. Limiting water use ensures water pressure is available in case of a wildfire. Thank you. More info at [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

This is a TEST of the [AGENCY NAME] emergency alerts for the upcoming wildfire season for [JURISDICTION NAME]. Text to enroll by sending [KEYWORD] to 99411. Forward to others. More info at [WEBSITE ADDRESS].



Email Examples

SUBJECT: FIRE WEATHER WATCH for [JURISDICTION NAME]

FROM: [AGENCY NAME]

The National Weather Service issued a fire weather watch for our area.

A fire weather watch means upcoming weather conditions could result in a high potential for development of a wildfire.

Please use extreme caution with any outdoor ignition sources.

More information at [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

Thank you,



Email Examples (continued)

SUBJECT: [JURISDICTION NAME] WILDFIRE ALERTS

FROM: [AGENCY NAME]

Wildfire season for our county begins on [DATE].

Each season brings the risk of erratic wildfire behavior that can destroy lives and property. Now is the time to prepare your home and ensure your evacuation and safety plans are up to date.

You can subscribe to emergency text alerts by texting [TEXT KEYWORD] to 99411.

Forward this alert to others you know in our community.

More information at [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

Thank you,

SUBJECT: BURN BAN in affect for [JURISDICTION NAME]

FROM: [AGENCY NAME]

[AGENCY NAME] has implemented a BURN BAN applying to land clearing fires and residential debris fires. The BURN BAN goes into effect at [DATE/TIME].

Recreational fires are still permitted as well as the use of charcoal briquettes, gas and propane barbeques in designated areas.

Recreational fires must:

[LIST DIRECTIVES and INSTRUCTIONS FOR RECREATIONAL FIRES].

For more information, please visit: [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

Thank you,

Communications during a wildfire

Alerts sent during a wildfire include evacuation orders, closed road orders, shelter information, utility outages and other critical wildfire alerts.



SMS Examples

[ROAD NAME] at [LOCATION] is blocked due to a brush fire. Detour is in place at [ROAD NAME] and [ROAD NAME]. Expires [DATE]:

FIRE UPDATE. Absolutely NO entry into evacuated areas while evacuations are being enforced. Please cooperate with first responders.

EVACUATE NOW! MANDATORY evacuations for [LOCATION] due to wildfire at [LOCATION]. Evacuation shelter at [SHELTER ADDRESS]. More info at [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

Crews on scene at major wildfire at [LOCATION]. Stay clear of area. More info to follow. [WEBSITE ADDRESS]

Rapidly moving brush fire at [LOCATION]. Mandatory evacuation for North of [ROAD NAME], South of [ROAD NAME], East of [ROAD NAME] & West of [ROAD NAME]. Red Cross setting up support at [SHELTER NAME/LOCATION]. More info [WEBSITE ADDRESS].



Email Examples

SUBJECT: BE READY to EVACUATE — Residents of [JURISDICTION NAME]

FROM: [AGENCY NAME]

Residents, businesses and others along [ROAD NAMES, GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES and LANDMARKS]. Please BE READY to EVACUATE. This includes the areas and communities of [AREA and COMMUNITY NAMES].

People in these areas may be asked to evacuate quickly if the wildfire at [LOCATION NAME] worsens.

Please monitor the [AGENCY NAME] website at [WEBSITE ADDRESS] as well as local media outlets for updates. For those in these areas, now is the time for preparing and precautionary movement of those with special needs, mobile property and large animals.

The quickest route to safety is [EVACUATION ROUTE]. Shelters are in place at [EMERGENCY SHELTER NAMES AND ADDRESSES].

Additional information at [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

Thank you,



Email Examples (continued)

SUBJECT: NO ENTRANCE TO EVACUATED AREAS — Residents of [JURISDICTION NAME]

FROM: [AGENCY NAME]

An evacuation order is in affect for residents, businesses and others along [ROAD NAMES, GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES and LANDMARKS]:

NO ENTRANCE IS ALLOWED TO EVACUATED AREAS.

PLEASE COOPERATE WITH FIRST RESPONDERS.

Monitor updates at the [AGENCY NAME] website at [WEBSITE ADDRESS]. Shelters are in place at [EMERGENCY SHELTER NAMES AND ADDRESSES].

Additional information at [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

Thank you,

SUBJECT: WILDFIRE AT [AREA NAME] — Residents of [JURISDICTION NAME]

FROM: [AGENCY NAME]

Crews are on the scene at a major wildfire at [LOCATION].

Please say clear of the area. There is risk of the fire spreading.

Monitor updates at the [AGENCY NAME] website at [WEBSITE ADDRESS] as well as our social media page and local media outlets.

Thank you,

Communications after a wildfire

Your post-wildfire alerts include instructions for returning home and reporting damage, as well as utility restoration guidance and other directives.



SMS Examples

Residents and businesses may return to [LOCATION] area. Documentation of residency will be required. [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

Residents and businesses are allowed back with proper documentation. Others please stay away. Cooperate with first responders [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

For residents returning to [LOCATION] area. Please report damage or threats to structures, roadways, utilities, etc. [REPORTING INSTRUCTIONS]. Also report at [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

For residents returning to [LOCATION] area: [POWER COMPANY NAME] estimates power restoration on [DATE]. [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

[ROAD NAME] at [LOCATION] is blocked due to fallen debris from wildfire. Detour is in place at [ROAD NAME] and [ROAD NAME]. Expires [DATE]:



Email Examples

SUBJECT: Wildfire Affected Areas — Returning Residents / Businesses Only

FROM: [AGENCY NAME]

Residents and businesses returning to the area affected by wildfires will only be admitted with proper documentation.

For those outside the area, we understand the desire to see the impact the recent wildfires have caused. We ask you to stay away from the area. No admittance will be allowed without proper documentation.

Thank you for your cooperation.



Email Examples (continued)

SUBJECT: Report wildfire impacts — Returning Residents / Businesses Only

FROM: [AGENCY NAME]

For residents and businesses returning to the area affected by wildfires, please report hazardous impacts. Examples include blocked roads, downed power lines, threatened structures.

Report impacts by replying to this email or send a text to [PHONE NUMBER].

Thank you for your cooperation.

SUBJECT: Power outages for residents and businesses of [JURISDICTION NAME]

FROM: [AGENCY NAME]

Because of the [WILDFIRE NAME], [POWER COMPANY NAME] is reporting power outages affecting our county.

Crews are out clearing debris and making repairs. Please stay away from the area unless you are a resident. Cooperate with first responders.

Additional information at [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

Thank you,

