

Horse Evacuation Readiness

ALTA LOMA RIDING CLUB · ALERT

Protecting our horses when fire comes to the Rancho Cucamonga foothills.

A 2-hour community workshop · For horse owners & boarding facilities

Why we're here today

WELCOME

In the foothills, wildfire isn't an “if” — it's a “when.” Our horses depend entirely on us to get them out safely, and the choices that save them are made long before the smoke arrives.

In the next two hours you'll learn to:

- Understand our local fire risk and the ALERT team
- Build a real evacuation plan and go-kit
- Know when — and how — to self-evacuate early



Today's agenda

HOW THE TWO HOURS FLOW

- 1 The ALERT team & our history** *Who we are, how we deploy, and the 2003 Grand Prix Fire* **20 min**
- 2 Know your risk** *Foothill fire behavior, your hazard zone, recent reality* **20 min**
- 3 You are the first responder** *Why early self-evacuation is your best decision* **20 min**
- 4 Prepare before the smoke** *Go-kits, ID, documents, trailers, property · short break* **40 min**
- 5 When the alert comes & getting involved** *Alerts, step-by-step, sheltering, joining ALERT* **20 min**



THE CLUB

- Founded in 1964 — a non-profit 501(c)(7) built to promote family equestrian recreation, education, and community in Rancho Cucamonga.
- Manages and maintains the Heritage Park Equestrian Center and partners with the City to protect our community trails.
- Home to ALERT — the club's volunteer emergency response team for horses.

altalomaridingclub.org

Meet ALERT

THE TEAM

Alta Loma Emergency Response Team

- A group of trained community volunteers dedicated to making a difference in a time of need.
- Works closely with the Rancho Cucamonga Fire Department and allied agencies.
- Trained and ready to rescue a single horse or evacuate a whole herd — in Rancho Cucamonga and beyond.

altalomaridingclub.org/alert







How ALERT works

HOW WE DEPLOY

KEY RULE ALERT can only be activated through the Rancho Cucamonga Fire Department.

Staged & ready

Trucks, trailers and pre-purchased supplies are staged so teams can mobilize fast when called.

Directed by command

On scene, ALERT operates under the fire department and Incident Command — never freelancing.

Horses go to EVAC sites

Evacuated horses move to Quakes Stadium for short term housing then to partner locations such as fair grounds or other city's facilities

A backstop, not a substitute

ALERT supports your plan — your own early self-evacuation is still the first and best option.



The Grand Prix Fire

CASE STUDY • OCTOBER 24, 2003

RC Fire activated ALERT to evacuate horses across Etiwanda, Rancho Cucamonga and Alta Loma. Even a trained team was stretched — and space filled fast.

24+

trucks & trailers mobilized

185

horses evacuated to safety

#1

EVAC site filled — overflow to Norco

Know your risk

PART TWO

Foothill fire moves fast. Understanding it is the first step to staying ahead of it.

Fire in our foothills

THE LANDSCAPE

- North Rancho Cucamonga sits in the Wildland-Urban Interface at the base of the San Gabriels.
- Dry chaparral + steep terrain + Santa Ana winds = fast-moving fire, often with little warning.
- A fire can outrun the time it takes to catch, load and haul several horses.
- The 2003 Grand Prix Fire proved large equine evacuations happen here.



Know your fire hazard zone

DO THIS THIS WEEK

1

Look up your property

Check your Fire Hazard Severity Zone with CAL FIRE — much of the foothills is rated High or Very High.

2

Map where wildland meets your barn

Identify the edge where brush and open hillside reach your property, and clear it.

3

Plan two ways out

Know at least two routes off your property — your first choice may be closed.

Find your zone: [fire.ca.gov](https://www.fire.ca.gov) • CAL FIRE hazard-zone lookup



THIS IS NOT HYPOTHETICAL

- Wildfires burned tens of thousands of acres and displaced thousands of horses — within hours.
- Evacuation facilities were overwhelmed. Horses arrived without ID; owners arrived without paperwork.
- The question at every fairground gate was the same:

“Can you prove this is your horse?”

You are the first responder

A man wearing a dark cap and a quilted vest is holding the lead rope of a brown horse. The horse has a white blaze on its face. The background is a soft, hazy landscape. A dark horizontal band across the middle of the image contains the text 'PART THREE' in gold capital letters.

PART THREE

When fire comes, the person your horse is counting on is you.

No one is coming just for your horse

THE HARD TRUTH

<5%

of emergency personnel know how to handle horses — fewer still are trained for large-animal rescue.

100%

of the responsibility rests with you, the owner. You are the plan.

44%

of people who didn't evacuate in Hurricane Katrina stayed because of their animals.

The federal PETS Act (2006) covers household pets and service animals — not horses and other large animals. Source: Mad Barn.

Leave early

THE ONE DECISION THAT MATTERS MOST

Don't wait for a mandatory evacuation order.

- An unnecessary trip is far better than waiting too long to leave safely.
- If you wait to be evacuated by officials, you put your horse in jeopardy.
- Conditions change fast — once you leave, you may not be allowed back in.
- **Consider leaving on Recommendation vs warning or order.**

Source: San Bernardino County Animal Care



What waiting costs you

WHY MINUTES MATTER

Roads close

You may be turned back at a checkpoint — or trapped on the way out.

Trailer gridlock

When everyone leaves at once, the roads and staging sites jam.

Horses won't load

Smoke, heat and panic make catching and loading slow and dangerous.

Shelters fill

Space is first-come. The early evacuee gets the stall; the late one improvises.

UC Davis: *the best way to prevent injury to horses in a wildfire is to evacuate early.*

Prepare before the smoke

PART FOUR

Everything that saves your horse is done in advance. Let's build it — then take a short break.

Build your horse's go-kit

PREPARE • GO-KIT

Grab-and-go, waterproof, stored where you can reach it in minutes:

- Halter + two lead ropes (keep a non-nylon set for turn-loose)
- 5–7 day supply of feed and supplements; water and buckets
- Two weeks of any daily medications
- Equine first-aid kit
- Copies of all records on a flash drive
- Printed phone list — cell and internet may be down

Source: NFPA 'Take Action' • Colorado State • ASPCA





PREPARE • IDENTIFICATION

- Microchip your horse and register it — keep your contact info current.
- If you're separated with no chip: braid a luggage tag into the mane, add a neck band, or write your phone number on the coat with livestock crayon, paint or clippers.
- Keep current photos of you with the horse, showing unique markings.

Source: CDFA • ASPCA • UC Davis

Documents that bring your horse home

PREPARE • PAPERWORK

Keep a waterproof grab-bag at the barn AND digital copies on your phone:

Proof of ownership

Bill of sale, registration papers, or brand inspection — the strongest legal proof it's your horse.

Current Coggins (ELA) test

Required at most shelters and fairgrounds. If it's expired, your horse can be turned away at the gate.

Vaccination & health records

Current vaccines, medical history, special needs, and your vet's contact info.

Microchip paperwork

Chip number and registration — keep the address up to date.

Source: HorseBook • CDFA

Trailer & transport ready

PREPARE • TRANSPORT

- Keep trailers maintained, fueled and hitch-ready at all times.
- Teach your horse to load calmly — practice with different handlers and trailers.
- Make sure you have enough trailer space for every horse. If not, arrange help now.
- Buddy up: pool trailers and supplies with neighbors before disaster strikes.

Source: CDFA • ASPCA • UC Davis



Defensible space buys time

PREPARE · HARDEN YOUR PROPERTY

0–5 ft

Immediate zone

Nothing flammable against the barn or home — no mulch, firewood, or propane. Keep the roof and gutters clear.

5–30 ft

Intermediate zone

Fire-resistant plants, gravel instead of mulch, grass under 4 inches, and trimmed tree limbs.

30–200 ft

Extended zone

Thin trees, remove dead vegetation, and create fire breaks around barns and property lines.

Keep firefighting tools in one place, and clear brush around every structure. Source: CAL FIRE · Texas A&M

Write your evacuation plan

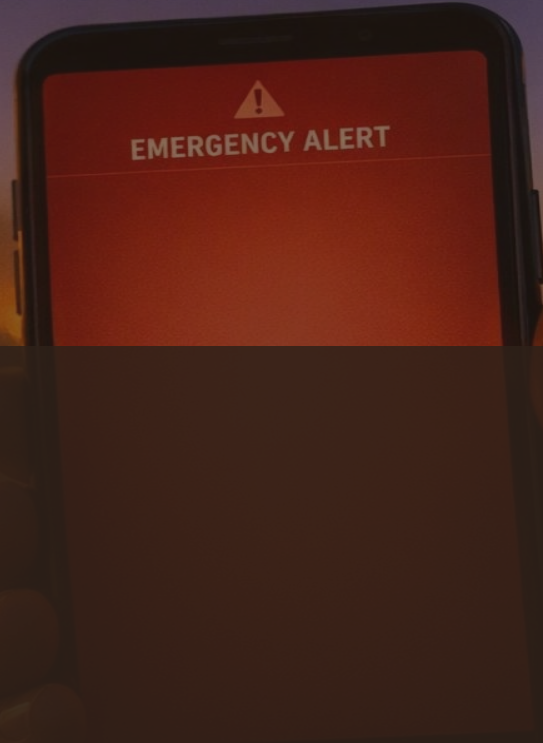
PREPARE • YOUR WRITTEN PLAN

Put it on paper and share it with everyone who cares for your horses:

- 1 Where you'll go** — Pick 2–3 sites — fairgrounds, equestrian centers, friends' stables — and call ahead to confirm.
- 2 How you'll get there** — Map at least two routes to each site. Roads may close without warning.
- 3 Who does what** — Assign who catches, loads and hauls — and who to call if you're not home.
- 4 When you'll leave** — Set your trigger now: you go on a recommendation, before the mandatory order.
- 5 Livestock Pass Program** — Ask San Bernardino County about access for vetted livestock owners during an incident.

Source: CDFA • ASPCA

When the alert comes



PART FIVE

You've prepared. Here's how to move — and where to turn if the worst happens.

SIGN UP NOW · DON'T RELY ON ONE ALERT

TENS

SB County Telephone Emergency Notification System — register your phone, text & VOIP.

Sign up: 211 or (888) 435-7565

Wireless Emergency Alerts

Turn on Emergency & Public Safety Alerts in your phone settings.

On by default — verify it's enabled

Ready SB County app

Alerts, evacuation maps, shelter locations and status check-ins.

prepare.sbcounty.gov

Watch Duty

Real-time wildfire maps and alerts from a trusted volunteer network.

app.watchduty.org

Also: ReadyRC / RCFD Emergency Management — (909) 477-2770 · cityofrc.us/readysrc

During evacuation, step by step

WHEN IT'S TIME TO GO

- 1 Leave early — go on the watch, not the order.
- 2 Grab your kit and records; ID every horse.
- 3 Load calmly and tie safely; take hay and water buckets.
- 4 Use roads not being used for human evacuation where you can.
- 5 Call your destination to confirm it's still open.
- 6 Check in and share your status through the Ready SB app.

Source: CDFA · San Bernardino County

If you truly can't get out

LAST RESORT • UC DAVIS

Only when there is no time and no defensible space:

- If it isn't safe for you to shelter in place, it isn't safe for your horse either.
- Move horses to a large, bare dirt turnout or the most defensible cleared area. Remove blankets and nylon halters; provide water.
- Turning loose is a final option — open gates, direct them to a cleared area, and try to keep them from returning to the barn.

Source: UC Davis CEH • Dr. John Madigan

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AFTER THE FIRE

- County shelters hold evacuated animals free of charge until you can safely return.
- Reunification requires proof of ownership and photo ID — this is why your documents matter.
- Watch for smoke effects — cough, labored breathing, lethargy — and call your vet.

Lost or found an animal? **County Animal Care 1-800-472-5609**

Get involved

PART SIX

The team that shows up on the worst day is built by neighbors on ordinary ones.

Volunteer with ALERT

JOIN ALERT

Help rescue horses in a time of need — three steps:

- 1 Become a member of the Alta Loma Riding Club.
- 2 Complete the ReadyRC volunteer application (Volgistics).
- 3 Pass a DOJ background check with the RC Police Department.

Then notify ALERT Director Joe Cowan so he can track your status:
joeofire@gmail.com • (909) 238-8803

Remember: ALERT deploys only at the fire department's request.



Key contacts & resources

KEEP THESE HANDY

Alta Loma Riding Club / ALERT

altalomaridingclub.org · [/ALERT Joe Cowan \(909\) 238-8803](https://www.facebook.com/ALERTJoeCowan)

Rancho Cucamonga Animal Center

(909) 466-7387

SB County alerts (TENS)

211 or (888) 435-7565 · prepare.sbcounty.gov

Watch Duty — wildfire alerts

app.watchduty.org

RCFD Emergency Management (ReadyRC)

(909) 477-2770 · cityofrc.us/readysrc

SB County Animal Care

1-800-472-5609 · animalcare.sbcounty.gov

CAL FIRE hazard zones

fire.ca.gov

HOW ALERT WORKS

STEP BY STEP

THERE IS A FIRE IN THE AREA

THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER IS ACTIVATED (EOC) AND STAFFED

THE EOC DETERMINS THE FIRE COULD HEAD OUR DIRECTION

ALRC ALERT IS NOTIFIED AND PLACED ON STAND-BY

ALRC WEBSITE STATUS CHANGED TO “ALERT STATUS” “STAND-BY”

ALERT MEMBERS EVAC PERSONAL ANIMALS IF NOT DONE SO AND NOTIFY ALERT DIRECTOR OF READINESS (Joe Cowan).

EOC ACTIVATES ALERT THE ALRC WEBSITE UPDATED TO “ACTIVATED”

ALL ALERT MEMBERS REPORT TO STAGING AREA

EOC ISSUES EVAC WARNINGS

ALERT STARTS EVACUATING HORSES IF NOT BEFORE



Check the Alta Loma Riding Club Website



ALTA LOMA RIDING CLUB



"ALERT STATUS"

— NO CONCERNS —



Sources & references

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

- Alta Loma Riding Club & ALERT — [altalomaridingclub.org · /alert](http://altalomaridingclub.org/alert)
- SB County Animal Care, Pet & Large-Animal Prep — animalcare.sbcounty.gov/pet-preparedness
- CDFA, Disaster Preparedness for Horses — cdfa.ca.gov
- SB County Animal Evacuation & Shelter Plan — cdfa.ca.gov
- City of Rancho Cucamonga, Emergency Alerts / ReadyRC — cityofrc.us/readyrc
- SB County Sheriff, Emergency Alerts — wp.sbcounty.gov/sheriff/alerts
- SB County Preparedness — prepare.sbcounty.gov
- Watch Duty — app.watchduty.org
- CAL FIRE, Fire Perimeters & Hazard Zones — fire.ca.gov
- NFPA ‘Take Action’ Horse Checklist — nfpa.org/TakeAction
- ASPCA, Disaster Prep for Equine Owners — aspcapro.org
- UC Davis Center for Equine Health — ceh.vetmed.ucdavis.edu
- Mad Barn, Emergency Preparedness for Horse Owners — madbarn.com
- HorseBook, Emergency Documents — horsebook.app

Be ready before the smoke

THE PLAN YOU MAKE TODAY



Prepare now. Sign up for alerts. Leave early. Bring them home.

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