

August 2, 2024

To: Dove Mountain Civic Group

From: Alejandro Sepulveda, Assistant Chief of Administration Services

The following is an evacuation plan for the Dove Mountain community if it is to be impacted by a large-scale emergency. Please understand that this is a complex subject, and no one plan can account for all the variables during an emergency incident. For instance, the specific type of emergency (brush fire, hazardous materials release, areal flooding, etc.), the location within the Dove Mountain community where this is occurring, and its magnitude play a critical role in determining the most appropriate emergency response and if an evacuation of the area is needed.

It's important to understand that a genuinely unprecedented and catastrophic incident would have to occur to necessitate a full or partial evacuation of the Dove Mountain community. However, it is always a prospect that we must prepare for. The most common concern we receive from Dove Mountain residents is the potential threat of brush fires spreading into the neighborhoods, which is a perfectly understandable concern. However, three (3) specific features of the Dove Mountain community uniquely mitigate the potential for a widespread disaster. These features include the type of fuel (vegetation) available to burn, the existing natural and artificial barriers, and a vast water supply.

The vegetation in and around the Dove Mountain community is typical of the Sonoran Desert. It burns quickly and does not produce the extreme heat seen in forest fires at higher elevations. For example, if we compare a burning tumbleweed to a Christmas tree on fire, we'll notice that the tumbleweed is consumed much quicker and produces less heat than the Christmas tree. This vegetation type also offers low fuel continuity, meaning the natural separations between bushes, trees, and cacti will lessen some of the fire spread. These attributes do not suggest that the fires are not dangerous, but they do not burn with the same intensity or spread as fiercely as those seen in areas like California or northern Arizona.

Moreover, the Dove Mountain community has an abundance of natural and artificial barriers or fire breaks, especially around the neighborhood areas. The fire must have a continuous fuel source to spread and grow. Natural elements such as sandy washes and rock faces are natural barriers to fire spread. The roadways, hiking trails, sidewalks, golf courses, brick walls around the yards, and other artificial disruptions to the natural environment further reduce the threat of fire spread. Additionally, most homes within the community have limited vegetation in the front, side, and back yard, as well as non-combustible roof tiles, significantly reducing the chance of a fire spreading into a structure.

Lastly, the Dove Mountain community boasts a robust water supply system that enables firefighters to quickly access large amounts of water. Most wildfires occur in remote areas where accessing the fire is difficult or near impossible, and water is scarce. This is not the case in the Dove Mountain Community. In the event of a fire near a structure, firefighters would have quick access to large volumes of water that would aid in structure protection and fire extinguishment efforts.

That said, if a large-scale emergency threatened a large portion of the Dove Mountain community, requiring a partial or complete evacuation of the area, we would take steps to coordinate with our other public safety partners to do so safely and effectively. These partners include the Marana Police Department, The Town of Marana, and the Pima County Office of Emergency Management, among others.

The first step in this process would be establishing a Unified Command structure with our public safety partners to coordinate efforts and reduce communication barriers. As an example, if a large-scale wildfire required the mass evacuation of an entire neighborhood, the Northwest Fire District would primarily focus on fire suppression, structure protection, and emergency medical services efforts, while the Marana Police Department would take the lead on evacuation notifications, defining routes, traffic control, and providing security. The Pima County Office of Emergency Management would support these efforts by coordinating other local and State resources and providing information through social media and its mass notification system, Everbridge ([www.myalerts.pima.gov](http://www.myalerts.pima.gov)).

We hope this information brings you further awareness about some of the unique features of the Dove Mountain community and some of our response considerations, giving you and your neighbors a sense of comfort. At the same time, we cannot guarantee that there will never be a significant, large-scale emergency event in the Dove Mountain community; we can ensure that we stand ready 24 hours a day to deploy our resources in response to such an event. Our mission is to save lives, protect property, and care for our community; we take our mission seriously. We are here to support and assist you in any way we can. Thank you again for taking the time to contact us, and please let us know if we can ever be of any assistance.