

Preparing Your Home (and Your Family) for the Unexpected

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LIVING IN BEND MEANS enjoying Central Oregon's outdoor lifestyle, but with that comes the need to prepare for the unexpected. Wildfire is usually a top concern for homeowners in our region, but power outages and fast-changing weather can also disrupt daily life with little warning.

September corresponds with National Preparedness Month, a timely reminder that it's wise to plan for such occasions. As a rooftop solar company, we (and our clients) know that preparedness starts well before an emergency. It begins with creating a more resilient home, as well as outlining a clear plan and stocking a go bag in case evacuation is necessary.



Make Your Property More Wildfire Resilient

State of Oregon guidance recommends that homeowners create defensible space, starting with the first five feet surrounding your home. Choose gravel or pavers rather than bark mulch, select and maintain fire-resistant plants (keeping them well watered), and remove dead debris.

The City of Bend also advises that homeowners trim tree branches at least ten feet from roofs and eaves, keep grass mowed to under four inches, and maintain clear space around power lines. These steps are particularly important in neighborhoods where homes sit close to trees, trails, and other potential sources of fuel.

It's also a good idea to think beyond the yard. This means cleaning gutters, moving firewood and propane away from the house, and keeping decks and porches free of flammable items. These may seem like basic chores, but taking these steps can improve a home's ability to resist exposure to embers during wildfire season.





Build a Go Bag

A go bag should be ready long before an emergency (like an evacuation order) arrives. The City of Bend recommends sturdy shoes and a flashlight by the bed, plus a packed evacuation kit that can be grabbed quickly, even in the middle of the night.

Oregon's emergency guidance suggests including the basics: prescriptions, phones and chargers, cash, documents, copies of insurance paperwork, and irreplaceable photos or keepsakes. It also makes sense to add water, snacks, a backup phone battery, and any supplies needed for children or older adults. (Think: anything needed to make a quick departure safer and less stressful.)

If you have pets, include food, leashes, vaccination records, and a carrier or crate.

Have an Evacuation Plan

In the event of a wildfire, waiting can be dangerous. Bend's evacuation guidance uses a Ready, Set, Go system, where Level 1 means be ready, Level 2 means be set and prepared to leave at a moment's notice, and Level 3 means go immediately.

To follow this guidance quickly, homeowners should decide in advance where they will go, how they will get there, and how family members will communicate if they become separated. It also helps to sign up for local alerts and follow official city, county, and fire agency updates, since power or cell service may be disrupted during an emergency.

A good rule of thumb in the event of a fire is not to wait until smoke is visible from your street to make decisions. When in doubt, the safest move is usually to leave early rather than wait for conditions to worsen.

Prepare for Power Outages

However, wildfire isn't the only concern for our communities. Oregon guidance also encourages households to be ready for power outages with enough supplies like food and water for up to two weeks, plus charged phones, batteries, and a plan for medical needs that depend on electricity. That is especially critical when power interruptions affect communication, refrigeration, or devices used for work or health care.

For homeowners, this is where solar + battery storage can offer value beyond monthly savings. A properly designed setup can help keep essential loads running during an outage, such as lights, internet, refrigeration, or device charging, depending on the system configuration. It's not a replacement for a full emergency plan, but a solar energy system can provide resilience in a place like Bend, where safety-related shutoffs and weather-related interruptions are happening more frequently.

Choosing Peace of Mind Over Fear

It's not being fearful or overly dramatic to prepare for the unexpected. Rather, it's about living with intention: having safe property, a packed go bag, a plan, and backup power options that fit your lifestyle and bring peace of mind in case of an emergency or grid interruption. Reach out to us at E2 Solar if you'd like to discuss your options.





