

01 / BEFORE THE EVENT

Wildfire & smoke

Prepare to leave. Have a cleaner-air fallback.

Evacuation, indoor smoke, deliberate power shutoffs and why rooftop solar may not keep running.

ACT FIRST Leave immediately when ordered. Do not wait for an order if you feel threatened by an approaching wildfire. Use official evacuation routes; a cleaner-air room cannot protect you from an approaching fire. [1, 4]

Make leaving a practiced action

Know your community routes and an alternative destination. Pack essential medicines, documents, chargers, supplies and pet needs. Arrange assistance early and keep transport ready to leave. [1, 4]

Prepare for smoke while staying is safe

Choose a room where the household can spend time with doors and windows closed, without blocking exits. Use a portable air cleaner sized for the room that does not generate ozone. Read its controls and keep replacement filters available. [2]

Check what the power shutoff means

In California, ask your utility about PSPS notifications and support resources. If you depend on a medical device, make an extended-outage plan with care and device providers. Confirm the actual backup capability of any rooftop solar system with its installer. [3]

U.S. and Canadian sources. Apply current local instructions wherever you live. This guide is not a live alert service or an official agency publication.

02 / DURING AND AFTER

When conditions change

DURING THE EVENT

Keep the evacuation decision first

Monitor local emergency instructions. Have your go-bag and transport ready. Do not spend departure time adjusting equipment, sprinklers or battery charging. Keep everyone together and follow the designated route.

[1]

Manage air and heat together

If officials say it is safe to remain, reduce indoor smoke sources, keep windows closed and run suitable filtration. If the room becomes too hot, smoke keeps entering or power fails, seek a safer cooler, cleaner-air location. [2, 4]

AFTER THE IMMEDIATE THREAT

Return only with permission

Stay outside evacuation areas until authorities allow return. Avoid downed power lines and damaged structures. Use qualified professionals to assess utilities before restoring them; do not restart a shut-off gas supply yourself. [4]

Review the backup that actually worked

Record how long your filtration and communication equipment operated, at the settings used. Replace dirty filters as instructed by the manufacturer. Update the transport fallback before the next smoke or shutoff event.

[2]

03 / DETAILS WORTH KNOWING

Small details. Better decisions.

Solar panels can switch off in sunshine

CPUC explains that most grid-connected solar systems shut down with the grid to prevent energizing it. Only suitable systems can operate independently during an outage. Ask your installer rather than assuming panels equal backup. [3]

Some cooling can draw smoke indoors

EPA advises using single-hose portable air conditioners sparingly during smoke events because they can pull smoke into the home. Check the cooling setup before relying on a closed room. [2]

Where backup power fits

Measure the air cleaner at the fan setting you intend to use. Record watts, planned hours and the recharge option, then check the battery manufacturer limits. Filtration, cooling and medical support may require very different amounts of power. Keep a destination with safer air and temperature even if you own a battery.

Try this before you need it

Write one plan for smoke when your home is safe to occupy, and a different plan for evacuation. Name the local alert or condition that sends your household to the departure plan immediately.

Local context: Canada

PSPS is a California utility term in this guide, not a universal Canadian program. In Canada use provincial wildfire authorities, local utility notices and the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI); follow evacuation instructions for your community.

04 / YOUR HOUSEHOLD ACTION CARD

Write it down. Keep it handy.

Complete this page before an emergency. Review when your household, equipment or local instructions change.

Evacuation routes / meeting destination

Driver, help and pet arrangements

Cleaner-air location / transport

Utility alert and shutoff contact

Air cleaner setting / power / fallback

READY CHECK

- ☐ Departure route practiced
- ☐ Go-bag and transport ready
- ☐ Local fire and air-quality alerts checked
- ☐ Solar backup capability confirmed
- ☐ Cooler, cleaner-air fallback identified

SOURCES / Numbers refer to the actions in this guide

1. [CAL FIRE - Go! Evacuation guide \(California\)](#)
2. [U.S. EPA - Create a cleaner-air room during wildfire smoke](#)
3. [California Public Utilities Commission - Public Safety Power Shutoff FAQs](#)
4. [Public Safety Canada - Wildfires: get prepared](#)

Original summaries and planning prompts by StillPower Guide, operated by Mihai Florea. Sources checked October 24, 2026. No agency endorsement. The linked sources provide fuller guidance.