

## **Creating a Grab and Go Bag in Case of an Emergency by Sheriff Dave Weaver.**

Wow! Can anyone believe that we are in the middle of one of the worst fire danger periods since 2002 (Hayman Fire year)? AND IT IS ONLY APRIL! The Burning Tree fire in Parker last month is an example of how the combination of ultra-dry conditions, low humidity, and strong winds can whip a small grass fire into a 1600 acre inferno in just a couple of hours. The fast moving characteristics of that fire resulted in the evacuation of 8500 homes in Burning Tree, The Pinery and other nearby subdivisions.

### **How you would be notified of a need to evacuate?**

My office has an Emergency Management Staff that is responsible for coordinating notification. While they use many avenues to inform the public such as alerts to the media, the fastest and most assured way used to alert those at risk is through the County's Citizen Alert System (Everbridge) In order to be sure you receive an evacuation communication, you should register with the County on this system. You can visit our website at [www.dcsheriff.net](http://www.dcsheriff.net) and click on the Emergency Mass Notification System tab and follow the instructions for sign up.

This system allows you to register not only your primary phone number, but also a cell phone, a work phone number, a pager or to receive email or text message to an iPhone or Blackberry or any other cell phone. Thus you can easily be contacted even if you were not home. The system also permits you to register someone in your home who might have special needs, e.g., an elderly person who is not mobile or someone with a disability. You might also be contacted via a house-to-house search by my deputies as was done in the recent Parker area fire (this is extremely time consuming and we would prefer you be notified via the above means).

### **What do you take with you?**

First, get yourself a large photo organizer box or something similar to create your 'grab and go' box. Make sure it's a size you'll be able to easily carry. You may want to get one for each [family](#) member. This will become your 'grab and go' box in case of emergency.

**Medications** – This is category of Must Have items that we often overlook. During the recent evacuation of the Pinery subdivision several residents took valuable time to go back in their houses to retrieve needed medications. So your 'grab and go' box should include at least a two day supply of medications for your entire family.

### **Important papers**

Next, you'll need to start gathering all your important papers and make copies of at least the first page that contains your account number and contact number for each of your policies or accounts should you need to contact them after an emergency. Having this information handy will make it easier and quicker to contact everyone after an emergency.

## [Insurance policy](#)

In your 'grab and go' box, make sure you include items such as insurance policy, homeowners policy or renter's insurance, social security card and driver's license. Don't forget your life insurance policy and credit card statements.

## **Professional Licenses**

You may also want a copy of any military and medical [records](#) in your emergency 'grab and go' box. It's also a good idea to include copies of any professional licenses and even your marriage certificate. Personalize your emergency grab and go box to include all paperwork or information that is important to you and your family.

## [Store grab and go box in a handy area](#)

Lastly, if you choose to have a second box, use it for many of your photos/memory books. Keep the box or boxes handy in your bedroom on a side table. It will look decorative and in case there is an emergency, you'll be able to get out with your 'grab and go' box and have your most important papers and information with you.

Finally, we are currently in the highest level of fire danger. That means NO OPEN FIRES. If you are a smoker, be particularly careful about extinguishing your tobacco and matches. The last time we had such dangerous fire conditions was in the summer of 2002. In June of that year we experienced the Hayman fire. Let's not let anything like that happen again.