

# HOSPITALITY HEROES®

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

# Wildfires

A practical guide for short-term rental (STR) operators to prepare, respond, and recover from wildfire events.



### PREPARE

Before the Event

- Review & update plans
- Train your team
- Stockpile supplies
- Inspect systems
- Know your risk zone



### RESPOND

During the Event

- Activate your plan
- Communicate clearly
- Account for everyone
- Prioritize life safety
- Document everything



### RECOVER

After the Event

- Assess before re-entering
- File claims promptly
- Support your team
- Serve your community
- Update your plan

## WHY THIS MATTERS



*The Maui wildfires directly destroyed an estimated 300–400 STR properties in the burn zone, but the real devastation was what came after; tourism collapsed, bookings dried up island-wide, and the fire triggered a regulatory response that is now phasing out nearly 6,200 STR properties across Maui County. For STR operators, the fire didn't just burn properties, it permanently reshaped the rules of doing business on the island.*



## BEFORE THE EVENT - PREPARE NOW



### Know Your Fire Risk Zone:

Check all properties wildfire risk rating through your state's fire agency or FEMA's National Risk Index. Understand your evacuation zone designation (Zone A, B, C, etc.) and subscribe to your county's evacuation alert system.



### Create Defensible Space:

Clear dry brush, dead plants, and debris within 30 feet of all properties. Trim trees so branches are at least 10 feet from structures. Ensure roofing and gutters are clear of debris. These steps significantly slow fire spread.



### Air Quality Protocols:

Establish an AQI (Air Quality Index) threshold policy. At AQI 100 (Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups): move outdoor activities inside, set HVAC to recirculate indoor air. At AQI 150+: close all windows and doors, halt outdoor operations entirely, offer N95 masks to guests and team.





## BEFORE THE EVENT

### PREPARE NOW

---



#### Evacuation Plan & Routes:

Be prepared to provide current evacuation routes. Practice evacuation with your team at least annually. In case of internet outage, be prepared to print current evacuation route(s). Register with local emergency management to receive emergency notifications.



#### Guest Communication Templates:

Pre-write guest communications for: (1) smoke advisory in the area, (2) evacuation watch, (3) evacuation warning, (4) mandatory evacuation order. Have these ready to send via text, email, and at the front desk the moment conditions change.



#### Document Assets:

Maintain a current digital and physical inventory of all property assets with photos. Store backups off-site or in the cloud. This is essential for insurance claims if the property is damaged.



## DURING THE EVENT

### PREPARE NOW

---

1

#### Monitor Fire & Evacuation Orders:

Watch for Watch, Warning, and Mandatory Evacuation Order notifications from your county emergency management. A Watch means prepare to leave. A Warning means be ready immediately. A Mandatory Evacuation Order means leave NOW, no exceptions.

2

#### Prioritize Guests Evacuation:

Initiate evacuation calmly and clearly using your communication system. For guests without transportation, coordinate with local emergency services or arrange shuttles.

3

#### Shut Down Systems Properly:

If time permits communicate with your guests to secure the following: turn off HVAC to prevent smoke infiltration, close all windows and doors, shut off propane tanks, and if possible, move vehicles away from buildings.

4

#### Account for Every Person:

Use your current guest report and team list to confirm all persons have left the property/area. If needed, designate a rally point outside the immediate area. Do not re-enter the properties/area once evacuation is underway.



## SMOKE INHALATION AWARENESS

Know the signs of smoke inhalation: coughing, shortness of breath, eye and throat irritation, headache, and dizziness. If a guest or member shows severe symptoms, call 911 immediately. Do not transport them yourself.



## AFTER THE EVENT LEAD YOUR RECOVERY

---



### **Air Quality Testing Before Re-Entry:**

Even if the structure is standing, wildfire smoke and ash contain toxic particles. Have indoor air quality tested before reopening. Run HVAC on recirculation with HEPA filters and replace all air filters before welcoming guests back.



### **Structural & Fire Damage Assessment:**

Hire a licensed contractor to assess structural integrity before the team or guests re-enter. Check for hidden ember damage in walls, attics, and crawl spaces. Document all damage thoroughly before any cleanup.



### **Guest Communication & Refunds:**

Contact all displaced guests with direct communication about their options according to your business policies. Proactive, compassionate communication prevents disputes and protects your reputation.



### **Your Teams Safety & Mental Health:**

Many team members may also be personally impacted by the fire. Connect them with employee assistance programs, Red Cross resources, FEMA assistance and Hospitality Heroes. Allow flexible scheduling for those managing personal recovery.



### **Business Recovery:**

File insurance claims promptly. Understand your business interruption coverage. Reach out to your state's Small Business Administration office for disaster loans if needed. The SBA offers low-interest disaster loans for operational losses.



### **Community Role:**

If your property is unaffected, consider becoming a staging area for relief workers or displaced residents. Partner with local emergency management or consider being a Hospitality Heroes Volunteer. Your visible community leadership strengthens long-term reputation and trust.



# EMERGENCY RESOURCES

## QUICK REFERENCE



### WILDFIRE TRACKING

#### Watch Duty

A nonprofit, staffed 24/7 by 150+ firefighters and dispatchers monitoring radio scanners. Widely credited with faster, more accurate wildfire reporting than official systems. Used during 2025 LA fires.

[Watchduty.org](https://www.watchduty.org)



### AIR QUALITY MONITORING

#### AirNow

US EPA / NOAA Official US government AQI (Air Quality Index) tracker. Essential for hospitality operators managing outdoor operations, pool decks, and guest safety during smoke events. Includes forecast.

[Airnow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov)



### GUEST COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST

- Smoke advisory in the area
- Evacuation watch
- Mandatory evacuation order
- Transportation assistance
- Rebooking or refund information



### EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency **911** \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Department \_\_\_\_\_

Poison Control \_\_\_\_\_

Utility Provider \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance \_\_\_\_\_



### INSURANCE & FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- Contact your insurance provider immediately after the event
- FEMA Disaster Assistance: [disasterassistance.gov](https://www.disasterassistance.gov)
- SBA Disaster Loans: [sba.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster)



### STRONGER TOGETHER

Hospitality Heroes is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) dedicated to equipping hospitality professionals with the skills, systems, and community connections they need to navigate disasters or crises and recover stronger.

