Mini Lesson: Red What??

Red flags fly at fire stations. Nevada County sends out a Code Red alert. Fire danger signs show the arrow pointed at red. *What does this all mean? What should I do?*

They are all related to high fire risk, but each one is based on a different situation. However, all require action. If you live in wildfire country, basically all of California, you need to know what to do when you see or hear that it is a red flag weather warning, code red emergency alert or Very High or Extreme (arrow on the red) fire danger rating.

At a Glance

About	Red Flag Warning	Code Red	Very High or Extreme Fire Danger Rating
Who decides	National Weather Service	County Office of Emergency Services	Federal and State Wildfire Agencies
Why it's declared	Very hot, dry and windy weather now or soon.	There is a wildfire emergency now.	Very dry fuels that change with season or heat waves (or heat domes).
What about wildfire risk?	Fires will spread extremely fast and are hard to control. Most deadly and catastrophic fires have occurred in red flag.	A wildfire is close or very close to you now and is spreading your way.	Fires catch very easily. Burn very hot, spread fast and are hard to control. Many of the largest fires have occurred in extreme fire danger rating levels.
What should you do?	Put go-bag in your car Leave for the day if you need extra time Move all flammable items, like cushions from your porch or deck.	Be ready to evacuate now. For an evacuation order, leave now. For an evacuation warning, be ready to leave in minutes. If you need a long time to evacuate- go now.	Be very careful about anything that might start a fire. Don't have outside open fires. Don't smoke outside. Don't use equipment that may spark a fire. Make sure your go bag is ready.

More Detail

Red flag Warning = very hot, dry and windy conditions that can change day by day. Fires will spread extremely fast, Most deadly and damaging fires have occurred.

Code Red = means an emergency is happening **now**! There is a fire near you. Get ready to leave, if you are in an evacuation zone.

Extreme Fire Danger Rating = very dry fuel that changes with season, drought and heat domes or heat waves. Fires start very easily and grow large and hot very fast.

Red Flag Warning

A "Red Flag Warning" is issued by the National Weather Service when weather conditions make dangerously fast wildfire spread highly likely. Temperatures are very high, the air is very dry—low humidity—and it is very windy. Many of the most deadly and damaging wildfires in California have occurred when there is red flag weather. This year the Palisades and Eaton fires. Last year the Park Fire. The deadly Camp, Tubbs and Oakland Hills fires.

When you hear that there is a red flag warning, it's time to act. Put your go bag in your car. If you need extra time to leave, consider going somewhere safe—like to the mall down the hill, and remove all flammable items on your porch or deck (like cushions).

Code Red

Code Red, means that the office of emergency service has issued an alert that you are in or near an area where there is an active wildfire or other emergency going on now. If you get an evacuation order, that means leave now! If you get an evacuation warning, that means you need to be ready to leave or if you need extra time to evacuate, leave **now**. Get your go-bag in your car. Get your animals ready.

Very High or Extreme Fire Danger Rating

In 1974, the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and state forestry organizations made fire danger ratings to help with fire prevention and public information. The rating is based partly on how dry vegetation and fuels are. The drier the fuels, the easier it catches fire and the hotter and faster it burns. We've all seen the signs with the arrows pointed at red, or the extreme fire danger rating. But what does it mean might happen?

According to the National Wildfire Interagency Coordinating Group -- comprising wildland fire managers at the US Forest Service and Department of Interior (Park Service, BLM, BIA) – extreme fire danger ratings mean: "Fires start quickly, spread furiously, and burn intensely. All fires are potentially serious. Development into high intensity burning will usually be faster and occur from smaller fires than in the very high fire danger class. Direct attack is rarely possible and may be dangerous except immediately after ignition."

TODAY'S FIRE DANGER
LOW
MODERATE
HIGH
VERY HIGH
EXTREME
PREVENT WILDFIRES