

# You Must Be Ready To Fight Fires During Time Of Civil Emergencies

(Editor's note: This is the next to the last in a series of articles on the civilian defense home protection plan which includes pertinent information on the alert warning system, home shelters, family food shelf, first aid and firefighting in the home, and fallout.)

By Norman Indahl

Fire reduces a section of homes in West Santa Cruz to a heap of smouldering ruins and sears the rugged Empire Grade hillside, leaving a blackened ugly grade naked of vegetation.

This grim, smoky scene is a picture of what may happen when fires sprout up from a nuclear explosion many miles away and are unattended. Small, seemingly insignificant fires can suddenly leap into dangerous, destructive blazes.

Col. Donald D. Gates, county civilian defense director, and Les Gum of Felton, veteran chief forest ranger for the county, who is chief of CD fire and rescue services, stress that only a "token amount of equipment" will be available for responding to house calls during an emergency.

"Fighting fires in your home will be up to you in the event of an enemy attack," the CD chief relates. "Knowing how to fight fires may pay dividends even if we have no war, since fire is always an enemy."

Main arteries of roads leading into the country will be tightly packed with bumper-to-bumper one-way traffic of evacuees from the San Francisco bay area during a 36-hour period in a national emergency, according to Col. Gates. Homes above Mission street in West Santa Cruz become a virtual island as far as fire protection is concerned, since city of Santa Cruz fire trucks will have a slow, difficult task in crossing Mission street.

With highway 9 filled with incoming traffic, Col. Gates said it would not be hard to imagine homes in certain areas of Boulder Creek and Ben Lomond quickly burning to the ground by fires breaking out in homes and not being immediately extinguished, Gum related.

"Unless the fire departments split their fire equipment on both sides of the highway, they would never make some of the blazes," the state ranger emphatically declared.

A basic knowledge of fire fighting in the home is one of six important links in the self protection plan for county residents in the civilian defense program.

Fires can be prevented, Col. Gates stresses. Firemen have a saying that "A clean building seldom burns," meaning that the majority of all fires start in trash-piles, rubbish, or stored odds and

ends that accumulate around the house.

Closets, attics and cellars are the main sources of home fires. Plain, ordinary good housekeeping is the first line of defense against such fires. The CD head advises people to clean out storage places and eliminate fire hazards.

"I can walk in eight out of ten homes and find a fire hazard," Gum pointed out. "It is something you look at everyday and to which you pay no attention. Many persons would probably be surprised that their home has not burned down when they discover the fire potential items."

The most useful firefighting tools for householders are a garden hose, hand pump, buckets of water and sand. Other expedient weapons include a mop, broom, or rug soaked in water.

"Because water is your best simple weapon against fire, you can't have too much on hand," Col. Gates reports. "You should have the equivalent of a barrel of water stored at all times, if you live in a house. If you are an apartment dweller, allow yourself at least one filled bucket for each two rooms."

Buckets should be filled to the top and covered, he recommends. Above all, thoughtful housekeepers should not wait until the alert signal for an atomic attack sounds, the CD chief stressed. Pressure in the mains will be greatly reduced.

Families with private wells should remember that there may be power failures and pumps will not function.

Col. Gates and Gum recommended that to make the best use of stored water, a hand water pump extinguisher, or a separate pump for use with any kind of water container, should be used. Hand water pumps without containers may be used with almost anything that will

hold water.

Persons using garden hoses must be sure to have a connection to the home water system — best step is to get adapters. The CD chief reminds people with chemical fire extinguishers to keep them filled and be thoroughly familiar with how to use them.

"Chemical fire extinguishers are good for putting out small fires, but they cannot be easily refilled during an emergency," Col. Gates stated.

"Immediately after an attack check both inside and outside the house for fires," the CD head explained. "If you have a fire, go to work immediately with the tools at hand. Don't wait for help to arrive. Assume that it can't. Any delay increases the fire's chance of getting out of control."

Three quick ways to put out a fire: Take away the fuel, take away the air, and take away the heat. If the burning material is removable, remove it from the house and douse the flames with water, fire extinguisher, sand or dirt.

The area around a fire should be kept cool with water to pre-

## Red Cross Nursing Service Meeting Tomorrow Night

First meeting of the newly-formed Red Cross nursing services committee, will be held tomorrow in the chapter house at 7:30, 513 Center street.

Marion Hilts, chairman, said that the committee is composed of the following: Genevieve Tarbell, Mrs. Lewis Nelson, Theta Cole, Mrs. Norma Post, Mrs. Jack Rasmussen, Mrs. Ellis Peterson, Mrs. Ambrose Cowdren, Dr. James Vail, Mrs. Norman Shockley, Molly Galbraith, Mrs. Stanley Huffman, Mrs. Frederick Mee, Lee Sims, Nan Dorsey, and Mrs. A. G. Athearn. Carl Boppell, local chapter chairman, will also be present.

Two classes in nursing services will soon be available to the public. The first will start Monday September 22, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. and will emphasize home care of the sick and injured.

The second is on mother and baby care, from 7 to 9 p.m., Thursday, September 25. Classes will be held at the Red Cross center. Seven each are slated.

Persons interested are asked to call GA 3-3360 during the week.

vent further spreading of the blaze, the CD chief emphasizes. A small fire can be smothered by a rug or any other material. "Don't lose your head," Col. Gates warns. "Fires can be fought. Never stop fighting a fire except to save your life. If you cannot control a fire, get away from it before you are trapped."

## Democrats Pick Up 5-1 Ratio In LA

Los Angeles (AP). — Since the June 3 primary, Democrats have been registering more voters in Los Angeles county than the Republicans by a ratio of nearly 5 to 1.

The deadline for registration for the November 4 general election is September 11. But in a report on registration since the primary, Registrar of Voters Benjamin S. Hite said that as of Friday there were 51,009 new Democratic voters and 11,420 Republican.

This brings the Democrats to a total of 1,494,955 registered voters in the county and the Republicans to 1,060,653.

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