



ASHLAND WILDFIRE EVACUATION DRILL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY EVACUATION DRILL OCT 11, 2025

Prepared by
Kelly Burns

20 East Main
Ashland, OR 97520

541-552-2299
Ashlandoregon.gov/evacdriill

& jump into action
Details given upon registration



Register Now,
scan the code or
visit URL below.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

- ✓ TEST your plan
- ✓ BUILD confidence & muscle memory
- ✓ MAKE Ashland ready

Executive summary – Ashland Community Wildfire Evacuation Drill Oct 11 2025

On October 11, 2025, the City of Ashland conducted a full-scale Community Wildfire Evacuation Drill, engaging more than 300 residents, local agencies and partner organizations (list included at end of this summary) in a coordinated evacuation exercise. This event was one of only a handful of community-wide wildfire evacuation drills ever conducted in the United States, demonstrating Ashland's continued leadership and innovation in community wildfire preparedness. The drill provided an opportunity for residents to practice their evacuation plans and actions, test communication systems, and experience real-world evacuation conditions in a safe, and managed environment.

Primary objectives were to test Ashland's emergency notification systems, and measure community participation, response times and traffic impacts. Objectives also included evaluating interagency coordination between Ashland Police, Oregon Department of Transportation, City of Ashland Emergency Management, City of Ashland Street Department, and Ashland Fire & Rescue. Initial results show many participants took longer than expected to prepare to leave their homes (~30 minutes in some cases). The high number of participants indicates strong community engagement and a clear interest in continued preparedness activities. Feedback from participants and responders highlighted the importance of preparing ahead of time, anticipating high-traffic volumes and therefore delays in some areas, and the success and utility of opening the North Mountain Escape Ramp. The outcomes of this drill will inform updates to Ashland's evacuation plans, public outreach strategies, and emergency communication systems, furthering the City's goal of becoming a model for wildfire readiness and community resilience.

Key achievements

- **Test of Everbridge/Nixle system: Over 95% of participants received drill text message or email.**
- **Messages, surveys, and instructions translated into Spanish (1 registered) and Ukrainian (5 registered) languages for non-English speakers within our community.**
- **N. Mountain Ave. Escape Ramp utilized for drill, cross training with ODOT and COA Streets.**
- **Evacuation traffic impacts and data collected: 12 locations throughout the city – data being compiled as of this report. (over 100 vehicles used N. Mountain Ave. Escape Ramp)**
- **Pre (total 172) and Post (total 148) evacuation surveys collected from participants: data being compiled as of this report.**
- **Over 300 participants gained practice and experience to test their evacuation plans.**
- **179 vehicles, 3 bicycles, 2 walkers, and over 80 family pets received at airport.**

- A true achievement of regional cooperation between local, state, federal, public and private partners (over 16 agencies including Canada and the United Kingdom).

Financial Impact

Cost to the City included overtime pay for additional personnel hired during the drill event (Police x3, Fire x2, Streets x5), and cost for signs advertising the event (~\$250). All other expenses covered by staff and volunteer time.

Conclusion

The Ashland Evacuation Drill is testament to the dedication and hard work of a city committed to preparing for the very real possibility of mass evacuations. This drill was one of only a handful that have occurred in the United States. The Ashland drill specifically had a high number of participants and a rare level of cooperation between agencies, both public and private. Looking ahead, emergency management is committed to further enhancing our response capabilities and expanding our community preparedness. Following this drill, focus will be on leveraging data analytics gathered from the drill to drive further improvements in our local and regional preparation, response and mitigation needs. A detailed analysis of the data will be published (2026) which will help inform local and regional decision-makers and the community to anticipate needs and actions to take during wildfire evacuations. Finally, the City of Ashland Emergency Management Coordinator wishes to acknowledge the support of all our stakeholders and looks forward to continuing the journey of fostering a disaster ready and resilient Ashland.

List of local, regional, and partnering agencies and volunteers for Ashland Evacuation Drill

City of Ashland Emergency Management	City of Ashland Police Dept	City of Ashland Streets Dept.
Oregon Department of Transportation	City of Ashland GIS	Oregon Dept. of Human Services/OREM
Ashland CERT	Ashland Fire & Rescue	Ashland Parks & Recreation
Boise State University	Oregon State University	Broadbent & Associates, Inc.
GHD Engineering International	University of Greenwich (UK)	National Research Council (CAN)
City of Ashland Public Works	Southern Oregon Transportation Eng. llc	Deployed Logix (Eugene, OR)
Jackson Co. Emergency Management	Southern Oregon University	University of Utah