

City warns of increased wildfire risk in San Marcos

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SAN MARCOS- Emergency officials of San Marcos warned residents of severe wildfire threat in the area on Friday evening, as dry climate and high winds are putting the city more at risk.

The National Weather Service issued a red flag warning for San Marcos as these weather conditions worsen. Local fire departments want to keep the public on high alert. The city met with residents Friday afternoon to discuss the preventative actions the city and its citizens can take to limit the outbreak of wildfire. City of San Marcos Emergency Management Coordinator, Rob Fitch, said the fire risk is increasing as neighboring communities are experiencing wildfire outbreaks.

“While we are in a wildfire threat, we do not have wildfires necessarily in the city of San Marcos, but that could change at any time,” Fitch said. “So we want to make sure everybody’s prepared and understands what the city of San Marcos is doing to prepare for this wildfire.”

Hays County fire departments are working to prevent wildfires from starting in the first place. Texas Forestry began clearing flammable brush around the city and police are ready to create safe evacuation routes. Fitch said the San Marcos Fire Department is well prepared for a potential emergency and other nearby fire stations are ready to step in and provide support if needed.

“We’re lucky in a sense that in Hays County itself, there’s a very tight coalition with the fire departments,” Fitch said “We have plenty of firemen available and well trained.”

If fires do start, Fitch assures citizens in the area will be well informed. Officials plan to put out alert messages over the radio, and have prepared signal warning sirens to let citizens know if a fire has broken out. Police also plan to make public evacuation routes available so citizens know the best routes to get to safety. In case of emergency, Fitch advises that families should make plans ahead of time.

“The key to evacuation is making sure you have a Go-Bag and put all your valuables you need in that,” Fitch said. “Things like medical records, if you have prescriptions, anything for identification. Take some cash with you and please do not forget about your pets.”

Fitch also said that citizens could be prepared to be away from homes for a minimum of 72 hours. In order to prevent wildfires from starting in the first place, Fitch advises the public to limit water use, to not use outdoor cookers and to clear brush away from homes.

For more information on protecting homes from wildfires, visit the website Texaswildfirerisk.com. The city also encourages residents to report smoke and any suspicious behavior.