

HELP EMERGENCY RESPONDERS FIND YOU – POST SIGNS!

Could firefighters or medics find you quickly in an emergency? Missing signs, or unreadable ones, can cost your life! Think of an ambulance driver trying to find your home when your loved one is having a heart attack at 3:00 a.m. Make sure they can find your home quickly, with no delays!

When you make and place signs, assume that the fire engine or ambulance driver will be completely unfamiliar with your area – because that may likely be the case. In a wildfire, fire engines may arrive from other counties or even other parts of the state. Ambulance personnel are often transferred from one location to another and may not know your area, either.

For all signs, the standard, and the easiest to read, is white reflective letters/numbers on a reflective green background. This exact color combination is not required, but it is standard – and is what the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council supplies; please see the back page for details.

ADDRESS NUMBER SIGNS

California law requires that all houses have address number signs posted at their driveways.

- 1) The sign must have reflective numbers on a contrasting color background.
- 2) The numbers must be at least 3” tall. (We recommend 4”; see below.)
- 3) The numbers must be on BOTH sides of the sign!
- 4) It’s best to place the numbers on the sign horizontally rather than vertically, because they are easier to read horizontally.
- 5) The sign should be mounted perpendicular (at a right angle) to the road.
- 6) The sign must be located so the numbers can be read from 100’ away in both directions – unless a curve in the road prevents this.
- 7) The sign must be located at a height where headlights from a fire engine or ambulance will illuminate it. 2’ to 5’ high is good; not high in a tree!
- 8) Make sure to put the sign where brush or grass won’t grow up and obscure it – or make sure to keep brush and grass cleared away.
- 9) If your driveway branches, post a number sign at every intersection, with an arrow clearly showing the way to your house. Don’t leave anything up to the guess of the emergency vehicle drivers.

Persons who don’t wish to post their house number should at least post a prominent “private driveway” sign to make it unmistakably clear that their driveway is NOT part of the road! This matters!_

About the size of numbers, the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council has found that 4” high numbers are much easier to read than 3” numbers from a distance. An ambulance driver must slow down to read 3” numbers, but not 4” numbers! Every second is precious in an emergency.

Why are numbers needed on both sides of the sign? Because a fire engine, for example, may be approaching your home from farther up the road due to changing circumstances in a wildfire. In an emergency numbers on both sides of the sign are crucial.

ROAD NAME SIGNS

Adequate and visible road name signs are also critical for emergency personnel to find you. There are no formal requirements for road signs on private roads, but here are some recommendations:

- 1) The signs should have reflective letters on a contrasting color background.
- 2) The letters should be 3" tall if there is enough room on the sign to hold letters that size.
- 3) The road name(s) should be visible from any direction traffic may come.
- 4) The sign should be placed about 8' above the ground – the height where drivers would expect to see road signs.
- 5) Make sure to put signs where tree branches won't grow over them – or be sure to keep the branches trimmed well away.
- 6) Post signs at EVERY intersection, and every place where it is not absolutely clear (a) which road is which, and (b) which is a road and which is a driveway. Keep in mind that emergency vehicles are likely to arrive in the dark or in thick smoke, with very poor visibility. Don't make them guess!

Note: New standards call for signs to be mounted on what are called "breakaway" posts – ones that will break if a vehicle hits them, resulting in less damage to the vehicle and driver. Mendocino County's Department of Transportation now uses 4" x 4" wood posts. On private roads you may do as you wish. But we've been advised that, to avoid liability, it's best that even private signs conform to this standard.

Your choice of metal or wood may be based on where you put the sign, any history of vandalism, how much flammable vegetation is nearby, and other factors. If you use metal posts and may have to deal with vandals, consider planting a short metal "sleeve" in a concrete base. Then insert your metal pole into the sleeve and bolt or lock it to the base. This makes fixes much easier.

Some hardware stores stock sign-making materials, and we urge you to patronize them.

For your convenience, courtesy of Coast Hardware in Willits, your Fire Safe Council stocks the following items in our office:

- Address number kits – make your own sign with 3" numbers provided in the kit (\$15 donation)
- Blank reflective double-sided green metal signs in 18" and 24" lengths (\$10 and \$12)
- Individual white reflective 4" tall numbers (\$.50)
- Individual white reflective 3" tall letters (\$.50)

We can also bring them to a gathering at your road association, ranch, subdivision, or town. If you wish, at the same time we could help you and your neighbors determine what other actions you can take to prepare for wildfires. Just let us know – we are here to serve you!

Thank you for every action you take to make your area more prepared for wildfires!

Mendocino County Fire Safe Council

We're located at 151 Laws Avenue, #B, Ukiah, CA 95482, near the corner of Laws Avenue and S. State Street, across from the airport, next building up Laws Avenue after the Ukiah Valley Fire District station.

Call us [at 462-3662](tel:462-3662) or email us at firesafe@pacific.net to arrange a time and place to connect.

Check out our newly-expanded website for more wildfire resources: www.firesafemendocino.org!