



# Ready, Set, Go!

## Background

In February 2010, the International Association of Fire Chiefs sponsored a meeting attended by approximately 35 people. The attendees represented all levels of fire organizations and affiliated groups.

Ready, Set, Go!, or RSG, has its roots in Australia's "Leave Early, or Stay and Defend" program, but American fire managers, primarily in Southern California, felt that the risks from the public not evacuating outweighed the potential benefits, and modified the program accordingly. RSG is geared toward communities and individuals taking responsibility for their own safety and ensuring that families and homes are as prepared as possible for wildfires.

- **Ready**  
teaches the public to prepare well in advance of a wildfire to retrofit their homes and take preventive actions to mitigate the effects of ember intrusion.
- **Set**  
teaches the public to elevate families' situational awareness when wildfires threaten and to monitor their environment and be prepared to put into effect their family disaster plan.
- **Go**  
is the simplest step. It encourages families to leave early, well before the fire arrives.

The primary problem addressed by RSG is the dramatic increase in the number of wildland fires, deaths and injuries caused by the fires, the acreage burned, structures destroyed, and soaring suppression costs. A main focus of the educational effort is on "the home ignition zone" and the role of ember intrusion.

RSG is not intended to supplant any existing programs, such as Firewise, Living with Fire, or Take Responsibility.

## Program Goals

- Improve firefighter and public safety.
- Protect life and property by creating and maintaining Fire-Adapted Communities.
- Encourage personal responsibility toward the overall solution.
- Improve educational procedures.
- Acceptance of the strategy to prepare your property and yourself, leave early, follow evacuation orders and survive.



---

## Products and Participation

Among the products are instructional videos, public service announcements, personal action plans, banners, posters and litter bags. Many of the products will be available through the Internet. One of RSG's goals is keep costs to a minimum to participating organizations. As of yet, little has been done with social media, but IAFC is aware of the need and working toward applications that would be helpful.

- RSG aims to keep the effort simple and intuitive. It acknowledges that firefighters are the best and most credible source of information to the public.
- As of now, RSG has a distinct Southern California flavor. However, RSG organizers are working toward creating materials that will be appropriate to a wider variety of locations.
- Participation is voluntary.

## What Comes Next

- RSG is an agenda item at the upcoming IAFC conference in Reno in March. Sample materials will be available. A pilot roll-out of the program in nine areas will be announced. A test program in Southern California was completed in 2009.
- RSG is aiming toward March 2011 for a national roll-out.

## Conclusion

- RSG fits with many of the federal agency goals, particularly its emphasis on preparation and personal responsibility in the WUI. The voluntary, low-cost approach makes it attractive to all fire organizations, from a rural community to a federal agency. It has the potential to make a difference in the WUI, always a trouble spot for the fire community. It also provides an opportunity for the fire agencies to work cooperatively with one another on mitigation and education programs.
- Several challenges remain. Launch of a nationwide program in a year, accompanied by an array of materials, is an ambitious goal. There will be confusion between RSG's intent and that of other existing programs. Greater funding will be required.
- Because of its low cost and voluntary nature, it's in NPS's interest to consider RSG as another means of reaching the public with vital prevention, education and mitigation information.

## RSG questions can be directed to:

IAFC  
Ready, Set, Go Program Administrator  
4025 Fair Ridge Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22033  
703-273-0911  
<http://www.iafc.org/>