

[Emergency preparedness focus of Poway Picnic with the Chief](#)

The San Diego Union-Tribune

Wildfire and emergency preparedness tips will be shared at free Picnic with the Chief event set for July 17 in Poway

A Picnic with the Chief event is set for 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 17 in Poway to help community residents prepare for an emergency such as a wildfire.

The free forum will be held at the Mickey Cafagna Community Center at 13094 Civic Center Drive. Doors open at 5:45 p.m., then free hamburgers and hot dogs will be served at 6 p.m. and presentations will start at 6:30 p.m.

Speakers will include Poway Fire Department Fire Chief Jeff Chumbley and at least one battalion chief. They will cover topics such as home fire-prevention strategies including clearing brush and debris to create defensible space around a building.

The emergency preparedness program is hosted by the Fire Safe Council in conjunction with the Poway Neighborhood Emergency Corps (PNEC), said the organization's president, Terri Sorensen. The PNEC was founded in 2011 and became a 501(c)3 nonprofit in 2016. The Fire Safe Council is a committee under the umbrella of PNEC, Sorensen said.

Fire officials have been giving an annual fire report regarding wildfires, wildfire abatement and preparedness since July 2016, but the program expanded with a picnic format last year, Sorensen said.

"We realize it's not always on the forefront of everybody's radar, but we like to help people get ready and build on a foundation so they can be more resilient to whatever the emergency event is," Sorensen said. "We never expect them and even with the planning the plans can go out the window in the middle of a



panic. So it's good to remind people to plan their evacuations so they have the muscle memory to spring into action rather than get paralyzed by fear."

Aside from the fire officials, Mona Freels, SDG&E emergency operations service manager, is expected to talk about public safety power shutoffs and share general wildfire readiness tips.

United Policyholders representatives will also share information about how to address rising fire protection insurance costs and cancellations.

Additionally SDG&E, PNEC and other organizations will be distributing information and free emergency supplies.

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