Citizen Planning Guide for Disaster Preparedness



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Office of the Town Manager Town of Paradise, California 5555 Skyway Paradise, CA 95969-4931

May, 2002

Dear Residents of Paradise,

The Town of Paradise is situated in one of the most beautiful locations in California. With our foothill location, ranging from 1080 to 2320 foot elevation, we have spectacular scenery, and abundance of beautiful trees and wildlife, and breathtaking canyon and valley views.

However, this beauty comes with a price. Due to our topography and elevation, we are subject to natural disasters that most communities would not dream of. Wildland fires are a constant threat during the summer months, and occasional winter snowstorms can create very treacherous driving conditions in the winter months. In addition, we have a history of occasional violent windstorms, hailstorms and localized flooding due to heavy rain.

These and many other disasters could affect Paradise at any time. Your Police, Fire and Public Works Departments are very well prepared to respond to these disasters. However, occasionally the sheer magnitude of an event may outstrip our resources, even under the best of conditions.

This Citizen Planning Guide for Disaster Preparedness was created with the citizens of Paradise in mind. We wanted to give you, our citizens, the tools and information you need to help yourselves in a disaster situation, until our Town Public Safety and Public Works crews can get the event under control.

If you would like to be involved in helping out during Town disasters, we have many programs for citizen involvement, ranging from the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program to becoming a Volunteer Fire Department member.

I sincerely hope you and your family find this Planning Guide useful. If you have comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at 872-6291.

Yours truly,

Chat I hanf fr.

Charles L. Rough, Jr. Town Manager

GENERAL RULES OF THUMB

If an emergency or disaster happens, there are a few things you should do right away:

- **Stay calm**-Try not to panic; take time to understand what has happened and to think about what you can do to stay safe or to avoid worse injury.
- Check the scene Pay attention to your surroundings to see whether you are safe where you are, and whether anyone around you needs help; if you think you are in danger, get to a safer place as soon as you can.
- **Give and get help-**If you or others are hurt or still in danger, call 911; explain what has happened, where you are, what injuries people have, and whether the danger still exists.
- Listen for official local announcements-Town of Paradise 1500 AM, KPAY 1290 AM and television stations will give emergency updates and instructions and will be your best source or information.
- Get prepared to evacuate if told to by local authorities-If told to leave your home or work, do so right away, follow exact evacuation routes and go to the specified shelter or safe area. If you can, bring your Emergency Kit with you, and get in touch with your family's emergency contact person as soon as you can to let them know how and where you are.

GETTING READY

An emergency often happens without warning, leaving little or no time for you and your family to plan what to do next. So, it is important for you to learn about the things you can do to be ready, before an emergency happens. Two key things you can do are to make an Emergency Plan and put together and Emergency Kit.

MAKE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Talk with your family about why and how you need to prepare for disaster emergencies:

- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen and what to do in each case. Some of these are described in the next section.
- Teach children how and when to dial 911
- Find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, children's school or child care center, and other places where your family spends time away from home; make sure your child's school or child care center has your current emergency contact number.
- Pick two places to meet if something happens: one that is right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire; and a second one outside of your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- Ask a friend or relative to be your emergency contact person. Make sure everyone has this person's address and phone number, list them on the emergency contact page of this booklet and by each phone. If your family members get separated, they should call this person to tell them where they are.

- Think about the special safety needs of small children, elderly or disable relatives or neighbors, and pets.
- Complete the attached family disaster plan.

PREPARE AN EMERGENCY KIT

Preparing an Emergency Kit ahead of time can save you time in case you must leave home quickly or go without power or water for awhile. Put your Kit together with items you may need after a disaster, and if you can, try to keep enough supplies on hand to meet your needs for at least three days. Keep them in sturdy, waterproof, easy to carry containers, such as backpacks, duffel bags or clean, covered trash cans.

Things you might try to include or have on hand are:

- □ A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) for drinking and cooking. Store in clean plastic soda bottles, as milk containers will break down and leak.
- □ Food that won't spoil or need much cooking (e.g. canned fruits and vegetables, cereals, peanut butter, crackers or cookies, and dry mixes like instant oatmeal or soups, rice or noodles). Use or replace them every six months if possible.
- □ One change of sturdy clothes and shoes, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person.
- □ Small household tools or items such as a battery-powered radio, flashlight with extra batteries, utility/boy scout knife, bowls and cups, silverware, can opener, lighter or matches, dish towel, etc.
- □ An extra set of car and house keys, personal identification, and credit cards, cash or traveler's checks. Keep important family papers (e.g. birth certificates, passports, etc.) in a waterproof container or plastic bag.
- □ Sanitation supplies such as toilet paper, handy wipes, tampons or sanitary pads, and plastic trash bags.
- □ Special items for young children, elderly or disabled family members and pets (e.g. special foods, medications, aid devices, carriers, etc.).
- □ A basic first aid kit that includes: your prescription medications, bandages in assorted sizes, safety pins, cleanser/soap, latex gloves, gauze pads, scissors, tweezers, sewing needle, alcohol wipes, burn cream, oral thermometer, non-aspirin pain reliever, antacid (for upset stomach), cotton balls and swabs.
- □ Address/Phone Book
- □ Camping Stove
- □ Money/Credit Cards

WHEN A DISASTER OR EMERGENCY HAPPENS

The next section will give you some tips on how to know when there is an emergency, information about different types of disasters that could happen in the Paradise area, and advice on how you can stay safe if and when they do.

HOW YOU WILL KNOW WHEN A DISASTER HAPPENS

There are different ways you will find out that an emergency or disaster is happening. Weather warnings will usually be given on television and radio. A "severe weather watch" means that severe weather might develop. A "severe weather warning" means that severe weather has already developed, and that you should seek shelter right away.

In other situations, a siren could sound, or you may be contacted by phone. In wild land fire situations, your first warning of a problem may be the sound of helicopters and air tankers. You may also be contacted by telephone, and given a pre-recorded message by the Town's "City Watch" emergency notification system. Emergency workers may drive by and give instructions over a loudspeaker, or they might even come to your door. In the meantime, you should be listening to radio or television for further emergency information.

WINTER STORMS

Winter storms in Paradise are not always severe, but often cause panic because people don't know what to do in a snow storm. Winter storms can range from a few hours to

several days. In 1990, the Town of Paradise received over 36 inches of snow in a three-day period. The following tips will provide a way to be more prepared for winter storms.

- A winter watch means that a storm may occur in your area.
- A winter warning means that a storm is happening or is about to occur in your area.
- A blizzard warning means winds are forecast to exceed 35 mph, with significant snowfall that reduces visibility to less than a quarter mile.
- If at all possible, do not travel during a storm.



- Most death and injuries during a storm are from transportation accidents. If you must drive, install chains or other traction devices.
- Overexertion can result in exhaustion and heart attacks. Elderly people get hypothermia the easiest when exposed to cold temperatures.
- To protect your home from extreme cold, put storm windows on to contain the warm air, and keep the cold air out.
- To keep pipes from freezing, wrap them in insulation or layers of towels. Let faucets drip to prevent freezing of pipes. Know how to shut off your water valves.



- Move animals to a sheltered area where the water is available.
- If you have children, try to keep them inside. If they want to play in the snow, they need to dress in layers and wear a hat and gloves.
- If you have to go outside, dress in layers and wear a hat and mittens.

IF YOU GET STUCK DURING A STORM

- Put on your emergency flashers, so other motorists and snowplows can see your car.
- Tie a bright colored piece of fabric to your antenna of the car so that rescuers can see it.
- Start the car and use the heater for about 10 minutes every hour. Also, keep the exhaust pipe clear so the fumes won't get into the car.
- Leave the overhead light on while the car is running so that you can be seen.



- When you are sitting, continue to move your arms and legs to keep blood circulating to stay warmer.
- Slightly open one window that is away from the blowing wind to let fresh air in.



THUNDERSTORMS

Thunderstorms in the North State can start fires, cause power-outages, and can be dangerous to the community. Children can become very frightened in a thunderstorm. You should educate your kids about the dangers and severity of thunderstorms. If you



encounter a thunderstorm these are some helpful hints that you should follow.

- If you hear thunder you may be in danger. Go to a safe shelter immediately.
- Pick a "safe place" in your home where everyone in the family can meet during a thunderstorm. Preferably the lowest floor in your house.
- If you are stuck outside find a low, open space immediately. If your hair stands on end, it means that lightening is going to strike. You should crouch down on the balls of your feet, place your hands on your knees and lower your head. Do not lay on the ground.
- Stay away from trees, towers, fences,

power lines, and other tall objects.

- Do not go near water. If you are swimming or boating get to land as quickly as possible.
- Turn off electronics in your house. Such as air conditioners, televisions, and computers. Do not use the phone unless it is an emergency.
- Do not turn on shower, sink, or any other running water inside your house.
- If someone is struck by lightening, call 911 immediately.

WHAT TO DO WHEN DRIVING IN A THUNDERSTORM

- Safely pull over to the side of the road.
- Do not park next to tall trees or towers.
- Avoid contact with electric conducting surfaces inside or outside of your car.
- Stay in your car. You are much safer inside your car then out in the open.



SEVERE WINDS/POWER OUTAGES

Severe winds can be very dangerous. High winds may cause trees to fall, roofs to blow off, and power lines to come down. Your electrical power may be out for several days during a severe wind storm. You should talk to your children about power outages before it happens. Here are some helpful tips when it comes to wind storms.

- Never touch a downed power line.
- If a power line lands on your car, do not get out. If you MUST leave the car, jump out far enough to that no part of your body is touching the car.
- If you have any life-support devices in your house make sure to have a generator so that you can keep it running in case of a power outage.
- Keep dry wood so you can heat your house if the power is out.
- Your house should have battery-powered radios so you can keep updated on the storm.
- You should keep flashlights, lanterns, and fresh batteries in your house.



- In your water is pumped electrically you should fill your bathtub and spare containers full of water if you know a storm is coming.
- Keep a supply of canned food in your house in case of a power outage.
- If the power goes off unplug heaters, washers, dryers, televisions, computers, and any other major appliances in your house.
- Turn your appliances back on one at a time once the power is back on (this helps to prevent a blown fuse).
- Keep your gas tank in your vehicles at least half full.
- Know how to use the manual option on electric garage doors.

FLOODS

Floods are more dangerous than most people think. They can happen suddenly and cause severe damage. Paradise is lucky because there is not a lot of flooding in the area. But that does not mean that you should feel exempt from the possibility of flooding be in minimal or severe. Here are some tips to help you out if know a flood is coming or if you find yourself stuck in a flood.

- In case of a flood always head for higher grounds.
- Develop a family meeting place in case of a flood.
- Do not go into floodwaters even if they are very shallow. Six inches of swift moving water can knock you off of your feet.
- Two feet of fast moving water can usually carry a car away. So don't try to drive through water even if you believe you can.
- If your vehicle gets surrounded by water get out and go to higher ground if possible.
- Throw away all food items that come into contact with flood waters.
- Be ready to evacuate if there is flooding.



WILD FIRES

Did you know that people start more than four out of every five wild fires? Carelessly discarded cigarettes, unattended campfires, improperly extinguished campfires, and negligent human behaviors are the main causes of forest fires.

PRE-FIRE PREPARATION

- Have an adequate clearance around your home and other structures on your property. If there is a slope, greater distances can be required.
- Clear away all yard debris, including pine needles, leaves and wood piles within 30 feet of your house.
- Clear gutters of pine needles and leaves and trim branches at least 10 feet from your chimney.
- Keep a 10-foot clearance around your propane tank and barbecue.
- Reduce the amount of flammable plants from around your house. Replace with less flammable plants.
- Keep flammable materials in a safe place, away from buildings.
- Have a way to transport your pets in case of an evacuation.
- Clearly mark your driveway with your address clearly displayed and easy to read.
- Make sure that a fire truck can easily get to your home.
- Report hazardous conditions to the local fire department.
- Plan several escape routes that you can use to get away from your home in case of needed evacuation.



- Inspect chimneys at least twice a year. Have them cleared at least once a year.
- Teach members of your family how to use a fire extinguisher (ABC type) and where it is kept.
- Keep a ladder that will reach the roof.
- Practice Stop, Drop and Roll with your kids. Also, visit a local fire station with your kids. During a fire, a full mask and suit might be a very frightful thing to a child. Teach your children that fire fighters are our friends and, if in a fire, don't run and hide from a fire fighter.

WHAT TO DO IF A WILD FIRE IS APPROACHING

- Park your car facing out. Put the keys where you can easily find them. Also, make sure you put your emergency kit in your car.
- Gather important papers and photos and load in your escape vehicle.
- Close the drapes and curtains and leave on some of your lights.
- Place your pets in a secure location. If you have horses, put on their bridles and get them ready to load into a trailer.
- Place a garden hose and buckets full of water close to your house.
- Cover up your body by putting on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes and a baseball cap or bandana to cover your face. Do not wear polyester or nylon, they will melt in high temperatures. Try to wear 100% cotton.
- Keep listening to a local radio station on a battery powered radio.
- Try to arrange for temporary housing at a friend or relative's house.

IF ASKED TO EVACUATE, PLEASE DO SO IMMEDIATELY

- Lock your home.
- Close all doors, windows and vents. This will prevent drafts and could help save your house.
- If you are trapped by fire while evacuating in your car, park in an area clear of vegetation, close all windows and vents, cover yourself with a blanket or jacket and lie on the floor. If you have a windshield shade, deploy it to minimize the heat transfer through the windshield.



• If you are trapped while evacuating by foot, your first place

of refuge should be a defensible building or swimming pool. If you cannot reach a structure, select an area clear of vegetation. Do not seek refuge in low-lying areas such as drainage ditches ad many times these geographic features will act as a "chimney", and will burn much hotter than other areas.

OUTSIDE

- Turn off gas at propane tank or at the gas meter.
- Connect all garden hoses to outside taps.
- Place lawn sprinklers on the roof and near above ground fuel tanks. Make sure to wet the roof thoroughly.



• Remove or soak thoroughly any shrubbery with 15 feet of your home.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO EVACUATE

- Stay inside your home and away from any outside walls and keep all doors and windows closed, but keep them unlocked.
- Keep calm. Remember that if it gets hot inside, it is four to five times hotter outside.

HEAT WAVES

Extreme heat can kill a person, if that person doesn't take precautions, by pushing the body beyond the limits. Anyone can become a victim of extreme heat, but elderly people, young children, those who are ill, and overweight people are more at risk and should take extra precautions. Extreme heat is defined as temperatures that are 10 degrees or higher than the average temperature and that lasts an extended period of time. To prevent sunrelated illnesses, you should know what terms mean and what the symptoms of these illnesses are.

- **Heat Exhaustion** occurs when a person is exercising or working hard in the heat or in a humid place where the bodily fluids are easily lost and not adequately replenished. Blood flow decreases to the vital organs that can cause mild shock and, if not treated, can worsen and the person may develop heat stroke. The symptoms are: cool, moist, pale or flushed skin, heaving, sweating, headache, nausea or vomiting, dizziness and exhaustion.
- **Heat Stroke** is a life-threatening illness that occurs when the body's cooling system, which produces the sweat the cools your body, stops working. Body temperatures can rise suddenly and so high that brain damage and death may happen if the body is not cooled down quickly. The symptoms are: hot, red skin, changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; rapid, shallow breathing.

HOW TO TREAT HEAST EXHAUSTION AND STROKE

• **Heat Stroke:** Call 911 immediately. Remember, heat stroke can be fatal. Move the person into a cooler area and cool the body quickly. Dipping the body into a cool bath can do this, or wrapping cool, wet sheets around the body and fanning it. Watch for breathing problems. Keep the person lying down and try to keep the body as



cool as you can in any way you can. If the victim refuses water, is in and out of consciousness, or is vomiting, do not give them anything to eat or drink.

• **Heat Exhaustion:** Get the person out of the heat and into a cooler place. Remove or loosen and tight clothes and apply cool, wet towels or sheets. Give the person cool water to drink if they are conscious. Watch for any signs of their condition worsening and give them a half cup of water to drink every 15 minutes or so. Make sure they are comfortable.

If you are at risk from extreme heat:

- Sit in front of a fan with a spray bottle full of water and spray away.
- If your home does not have air conditioning, choose to go to the library or to the movies, or even the mall or grocery store to escape the heat. Try to be in cool places during the warmest part of the day.

- Try to avoid all strenuous activities during the warmest part of the day. Usually, the warmest part is when the sun is right overhead. This is from about 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Check to see if any of the medications you or your family members are on to see if they intensify the effects of the sun's heat. Also, some medications advise to stay out of direct sunlight. Discuss any concerns with your doctor.
- Check on the neighbors and family members that you know do not have air conditioning, and those who spend a lot of their day alone.
- Try to wear loose fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothes because they will help reflect the sun's rays. Dark colors will only absorb the rays and make you warmer. Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face.
- Discuss extreme heat with your family and ask them if they have any questions on the things that are covered in this section.

WHAT TO DO DURING A HEAT WAVE

- Slow down and take it easy. Take a cool shower, or take a quick catnap to let your body's cooling system work.
- Avoid spending time in direct sunlight. If you must be outside: stay in the shade; drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty; take frequent breaks; work outside with a buddy so you can keep an eye on each other; and use sunscreen with a high sun protection factor (SPF).



- Postpone outdoor games and activities until after sunset or when it is cooler outside.
- Avoid taking a cool shower after being out in the sun. Extreme temperature changes, like being out in the heat to immediately taking a cool shower, can cause hypothermia.
- Keep the hot, outside air out and the cool, inside air in. Cover windows and skylights with heat reflecting shields over the m. Cardboard covered in aluminum works wonderfully.
- Eat small and more frequent meals and avoid alcohol or drinks with caffeine in them.
- **Drink water.** Water is best at cooling your body.
- Avoid using salt tablets unless your doctor tells you to continue.
- Vacuum air conditioner filters weekly because they can become clogged and work inefficiently.
- **NEVER** leave children or pets in a closed car. Temperatures can rise quickly to over 140F. Being exposed to high temperatures can kill in minutes.

AIR QUALITY

Occasionally, the air in Butte County does not meet the health standards for clean air. The two pollutants of greatest concern are ozone and particulate matter. The county's sunny climate, pollution-trapping mountains and valleys, along with the growing population all contribute to the problem.

Ozone is an invisible pollutant formed by chemical reactions involving nitrogen oxides, reactive hydrocarbons and sunlight. It is a powerful respiratory irritant that can cause coughing, shortness of breath, headaches, fatigue and lung damage, especially among children, the elderly, the ill and people who exercise outdoors. Ozone also damages plants, including agriculture crops, and degrades manufactured materials such as rubber and painted surfaces.

Particulate matter is the fine mineral, metal, soot, and dust particles suspended in the air. For health reasons, we are most concerned with inhalant particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM10), which can permanently lodge in the deepest, most sensitive areas of the lungs and can cause respiratory and other health problems.

Paradise occasionally will have very poor air quality usually caused by nearby wildfires. Following are some helpful hints regarding air quality.

- If you have any question or would like further information please call BCAQMD (Butte County Air Quality Management District) at 530.891.2882.
- If you are having trouble breathing, you should seek medical attention as soon as possible. Limit any outdoor exertion by seniors, young children, and adults who have respiratory or pulmonary problems.
- Reduce unnecessary travel.
- Close windows on smoky days.
- If working in a dusty area, make sure to war the appropriate dust mask.
- Water down dusty roads in the summer to keep the PM 10 levels low.



EARTHQUAKES

- Prepare your home for an earthquake
- Practice drop, cover and hold on at least twice a year.
- Drop under a sturdy desk or table and protect your eyes by pressing your arm against your face. If there is no table crouch down by an interior wall away from windows and bookcases.
- Choose an out of town family and let them know that you are okay.
- Be skilled in the first aid field (you can take a class at your local Red Cross).
- Know what to do when the shaking begins.
- Drop cover and hold on!
- If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, while protecting your head with a pillow.
- If you are outside, drop to the ground immediately and try to stay away from trees, power lines and buildings.
- If you are in the car, stay down and cover your head.

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE SHAKING STOPS

- Check yourself for injuries and put on protective clothing (long pants, long sleeve shirt, sturdy shoes and work gloves).
- Make sure to check other people for injuries.
- Try to put out all small fires. If you smell gas, turn it off as soon as possible. Only have a professional turn the gas back on.
- Turn on the Town radio (1500 AM) to listen for more instructions.
- If your house or office is damaged, keep everyone out of the structure until it has been evaluated by an engineer or the building official.

FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: ______

Meet with your family and discuss with your children and grandparents what disasters are, what types may affect you, and what each member of the family needs to do to remain safe. You should put a copy of this plan in every automobile, by your home phone, and at work.

Regroup the Family:

Determine the best escape routes out of your house. Make sure you have two ways to get out of every room.

In a larger scale event, such as a wild land fire, we will all meet at _____

(outside of your neighborhood, such as a church or school, make sure to include a phone number):

If we must evacuate Paradise, we will meet at: _____

Phone number:

(location in Chico, or Oroville, such as a restaurant or a friend's house):

In most disasters it is often easier to call long distance than in the same town. After an emergency, all family members should call the family contact to tell them where they are and let that contact know they are okay. An out-of-area relative or friend to be a family contact is:

Other important phone numbers: Mom's work phone:	Mom's cellular:	
Dad's work phone:	Dad's cellular:	
Grandparent's phone number:		
Other family members:		

Pets:

Due to health regulations, animals are usually not allowed inside emergency shelters. During a disaster, we can take our animals to: ______

If we must evacuate the Ridge, we will take our animals to: _____

Disaster Planning:

Find out about the disaster plans for your work, your children's school or day care, or any other place where your family spends time. If both parents work off the ridge, a local contact should be named to take care of children and pets in the event that roads are closed into Paradise due to snow, wildfire or other disaster.

Local contact (neighbor or relati	ve):
School phone number:	
Day care phone number:	
Church phone number:	

When a disaster strikes, the Public Safety resources such as Police and Fire are stretched very thin. You can help us by identifying any elderly or disabled people in your neighborhood, and assign someone to help them in the event a disaster strikes. Neighbors that may need help are:

Emergency Phone Numbers for Paradise are:

Police	911	or	872-6241
Fire:	911	or	872-6264
Public Works	872-6291	or	872-6241 (after hours)
Ambulance	911	or	891-4357 (24 hour dispatch)
Red Cross	891-0885		_

Teach children how and when to dial 911. Children need to be instructed that 911 should be dialed only when the situation threatens human life or property, and demands immediate attention. Parents, please do not dial 911 to inquire about road conditions or other non-emergency requests for information.

Practice and maintain your plan. Quiz your kids and grandparents about emergency instructions every change of season (from winter to summer) and practice evacuation drills.

Emergency Equipment and Emergency Kit:

Create an Emergency Supplies Kit, as outlined on page four of this guide. Location of our kit is: _______Name of parent or adult to maintain kit is: ______

Test and recharge fire extinguishers according to manufacturer's instructions. Our fire extinguishers are located: ______

Test your smoke detectors every month and renew batteries twice a year, whenever the time changes. Our smoke detectors are located: ______

Name of parent or adult to maintain smoke detectors is:

First Aid:

Learn First Aid. The Red Cross, First Responder Ambulance and other agencies offer free or low cost first aid training. The Pacific Bell phone book offers a guide to emergency first aid and offers a survival guide. Make sure every person in your family has basic first aid training. The location of our first aid kit is:

Congratulations. By completing this Family Disaster Plan, you have greatly increased the chances of you and your family surviving a disaster in the Town of Paradise.

CREDITS

This page is dedicated to all of the hard working individuals who helped make the **CITIZEN PLANNING GUIDE FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS** possible.

Delinda Fisk: Helped to edit research and compose Wild Fires and Heat Waves Cliff Dye: Helped research and compose Air Quality, Earthquakes and Chemical Spills. Eli Goodsell: Helped edit, research, locate graphics and compose Thunderstorms, Floods and Severe Winds/Power Outages.

Allison Greer: Helped to edit research and compose Winter Storms and Reference Page.

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