



Global Risk Services

Preparing for Wildfires

Every year, wildfires burn more and more acres across the country, putting homes and businesses at risk. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) states there are over 72,000 communities and over 45,000,000 structures exposed to wild fires.

Prepare Your Home or Business for a Wildfire

The NFPA summarizes prevention tips under seven headings:

CLEAR -

- Remove combustible debris from roofs, decks, fence lines, & patios
- Move wood piles uphill and away from structures
- Cull trees to keep at least a 10' separation

SCREEN & SEAL -

- Use noncombustible screens on roof, eave, and foundation vents that will prevent ember penetration
- Have spark arrestors on chimneys
- Close covers on grills and barbeques

TRIM -

- Maintain tree branches and shrubs 5' from the building
- Trim trees and plants of dead branches
- Trim branches to a height of 6' above the ground
- Keep lawns mowed

CLOSE -

- Doors, windows, pet doors to prevent embers penetrating the building

STORE AWAY -

- Remove outside furniture and highly flammable plants.
- Store propane tanks in protected locations

RAKE -

- Remove mulch and combustible ground cover within 5' of a building
- Rake leaves, needles, and other plant debris

REMOVE -

- All combustibles within 30' of buildings
- Do not have open fires.
- Trees that burn easily (eucalyptus)

OTHER PREVENTION TIPS -

- Build with fire resistant materials
- Install fire resistant window shutters
- Invest in class A (fire resistant) roof coverings
- Keep an adequate water supply
- Use fire resistive plants & trees
- Have rakes, shovels, saws, and fire fighting tools available
- Maintain smoke detectors and portable fire extinguishers
- Keep a ladder that can reach the roof

During A Wildfire

If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Take your disaster supply kit, lock your home or business and choose a route away from the fire hazard. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of the fire and smoke. Tell someone when you left and where you are going.



If you see a wildfire and haven't received evacuation orders yet, call 911. Describe the location of the fire, speak slowly and clearly, and answer any questions asked by the dispatcher.

If you are not ordered to evacuate and have time to prepare your home, FEMA recommends you take the following actions:

- Arrange temporary housing at a friend or relative's home outside the threatened area in case you need to evacuate
- Wear protective clothing when outside – sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothes, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves and a handkerchief to protect your face
- Gather fire tools such as a rake, axe, handsaw or chainsaw, bucket and shovel
- Close outside attic, eaves and basement vents, windows, doors, pet doors, etc. Remove flammable drapes and curtains
- Close all shutters, blinds or heavy non-combustible window coverings to reduce radiant heat
- Close all doors inside the house to prevent draft
- Open the damper on your fireplace, but close the fireplace screen
- Shut off any natural gas, propane or fuel oil supplies at the source
- Connect garden hoses to outdoor water faucet and fill any pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, tubs or other large containers with water
- Place lawn sprinklers on the roof and near above-ground fuel tanks, and leave the sprinklers on, dowsing these structures as long as possible
- If you have gas-powered pumps for water, make sure they are fueled and ready

If asked to evacuate...

- Place a ladder against the house or business in clear view to aid firefighters
- Disconnect any automatic garage door openers so that doors can still be opened by hand if the power goes out, and close all garage doors
- Take valuable papers, mementos and anything "you can't live without" with you when you leave
- Take your pets with you when you leave
- Place valuables that will not be damaged by water in a pool or pond
- Move flammable furniture into the center of the residence away from the windows and sliding-glass doors
- Turn on outside lights and leave a light on in every room to make the house more visible in heavy smoke

Consult these resources for additional details:

CalFire – <http://www.readyforwildfire.org>

Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) –

<https://disastersafety.org/wildfire>

Int'l Association for Fire Chiefs (IAFC) – Ready Set Go

<http://www.wildlandfirersg.org/Home/navItemNumber/575>

[Wildland Urban Interface – http://events.iafc.org/microsite-WUI/homeWUI.cfm?ItemNumber=7987](http://events.iafc.org/microsite-WUI/homeWUI.cfm?ItemNumber=7987)

Nat'l Association for Fire Protection (NFPA / Firewise) –

<http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/wildfire-and-seasonal-fires/wildland-fires>

Firewise – <http://www.firewise.org>

Fema – when the fire starts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWhTdfHOWqs&feature=youtu.be>

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