

Don't Let Your Safety Go Up In Flames

The threat of wildland fires for people living near wildland areas or using recreational facilities in wilderness areas is real. Dry conditions at various times of the year greatly increase the potential for wildland fires. Advance planning and knowing how to protect buildings in these areas can lessen the devastation of a wildland fire.

What to do before a wildfire:

- Make plans to care for your pets in case you must evacuate.
- Back your car into the garage or park it in an open side facing the direction of escape. Shut doors and roll up windows.
- Close windows, vents, doors, venetian blinds and heavy drapes. Remove lightweight curtains.
- Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off pilot lights.
- Open fireplace damper. Close fireplace screens.
- Move flammable furniture into center of the home away from windows and sliding-glass doors.
- Turn on a light in each room to increase the visibility of your home in heavy smoke.
- Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Place combustible patio furniture inside.
- Connect the garden hose to outside taps.
- Set up the portable gasoline-powered pump.
- Place lawn sprinklers on the roof and near above-ground fuel tanks. Wet the roof.
- Wet or remove shrubs within 15 feet of the home.
- Don't lock up. Leave doors and windows closed but unlocked. It may be necessary for firefighters to gain quick entry into your home to fight fire. The entire area will be isolated and patrolled by sheriff's deputies or police.

What to do during a wildfire:

- Wear protective clothing, sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothing, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves and handkerchief to protect your face.
- Take your Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Tell someone when you leave and where you are going.
- Choose a route away from fire hazards. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of fire and smoke.
- Stay calm. As the fire front approaches, stay inside unless advised to evacuate by officials.

What to do after a wildfire:

- Check the roof immediately. Put out any roof fires, sparks or embers. Check the attic for hidden burning sparks.
- If you have a fire, get your neighbors to help fight it.
- The water you put into your pool or hot tub and other containers will come in handy now. If the power is out, try connecting a hose to the outlet on your water heater.
- For several hours after the fire, maintain a "fire watch." Re-check for smoke and sparks throughout the house.
- Monitor radio and TV for current information.
- If you evacuate, return home only when authorities advise that it is safe.

