

Preparing for Wildfire Season

Checklist to ensure you, your family, and your property are ready for fire season.

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Preparing for a wildfire should start long before the fire season begins. Over the past several years, fire seasons have been lasting longer with larger, more destructive fires becoming the norm. Don't wait until there's an emergency to make a plan!

PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY

As a fire approaches, it is typically not a wall of flame, but blowing embers that burn down structures over many hours. Having 100 feet of clearing may not protect your property, as a blowing ember can start a fire from almost a mile away.

Follow these tips to help keep your property safer in the event of a wildfire. Remember, you can always ask your local fire department to come out to your property for specific guidance and recommendations.

- Learn about the type of vegetation you have around your house. Pine trees burn hotter and throw embers. Dry grass burns faster but will burn out quickly.
- "Ladder fuels" allow fires to move from the ground up into the trees. Trimming low branches can help prevent hotter fires. Eliminate dead branches on trees 6 to 10 feet from ground level.
- Clear dead or dry vegetation from the roof and around the base of your house.

HIGHLIGHTS

- » Prepare Your Property
- » Pack a Bug-Out-Bag
- » Prepare Your Evacuation Plan
- » Watch the Weather

- Trim vegetation so that a ground fire cannot spread to the top of trees or up the side of your house.
- Make sure combustible items, like floor mats, deck furniture, and wood piles, are not stored against the house.
- Eliminate landscaping that overhangs the house.
- Install a home camera security system that stores data in the cloud and allows you to have remote access.
- Take photos of everything in your house before a fire, including furniture, serial numbers, important documents, and photographs, and store a copy off-site.



PACK A "BUG-OUT BAG"

Make sure everyone in your house, including pets, has a bag with important supplies ready to go in case of an evacuation order. Keep your bug-out bags where they can be loaded quickly; in your garage or your hall closet next to the front door.

Be sure to include:

- Change of clothes
- Toiletries
- Extra cash
- Important keys
- Phone numbers on paper
- Food and water for at least two days
- Printed map with all the roads in your town
- Thumb drive with important documents (these can often be password encrypted for additional security)

WATCH THE WEATHER

Watching the weather is important in all seasons. Wildfires don't only happen in the summer. Staying up to date on wind events, lightning, red flag days, and extreme low humidity, high fire risks days is smart. Keep your evacuation plan and bug-out bag up-to-date.

PREPARE YOUR EVACUATION PLAN

You may need to evacuate your community quickly during a wildfire. Get to know the area around you and plan safe routes beforehand.

- Know more than one way out of your community.
- Note potential obstacles that could cause evacuation issues, like large trees near the side of the road.
- Keep a printed map of multiple routes out of your community in your car's glove box.
- Keep your family up to date on your plans so they know you are safe and are less likely to try to find you in the event of separation.
- Find a safe zone or meeting place away from the house to meet at if there is an evacuation order.
- Be part of a neighborhood watch or early alert system and don't wait to evacuate.