



# Prepare your family and home for wildfire risks.

No defense strategy can take the place of advance preparation and planning once a wildfire begins. Use these tips, along with information from local safety officials, to reduce the risk to your family, home, and property before wildfire strikes.

## Prepare your home

Regular upkeep of your home and property, and other common-sense precautions, are the most effective defense against wildfires. Take the following steps now to reduce your risk.

- Install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers throughout your home.
- Keep your roof and gutters free of leaves and other debris.
- Always stack firewood at least 30 feet from your home.
- Keep a garden hose long enough to reach the house and other structures on your property.

- Install a back-up generator. Wildfire can easily knock out power lines.
- Make sure your address is easily visible from the street.
- Consider upgrades to the construction of your home, such as metal roofing, to increase its chances of surviving a wildfire.
- Keep a video inventory or photographs of your possessions at a remote location.
- Store valuable documents in a fire-resistant safe or remote location.

## Prepare your property

Firefighting experts and other authorities urge you to create a zone of defensible space around your home to reduce the chances of ignition from radiant heat or embers and to provide firefighters a clear area in which to operate.

- Maintain this defensible space to at least 100 feet around your house (200 if on a slope).
- Remove all mulch, dead plants, trees, branches, and debris from this zone and keep it well watered.
- Remove all flammable plants, even healthy ones, within 30 feet of home (60 if on a slope).
- Remove branches that extend over the roof or within six feet of the home.
- Maintain a minimum of 15 feet between tree crowns.
- Trim tree limbs to 15 feet off the ground or one-third of the total crown height, whichever is less.
- Clear a 10-foot area around propane tanks or barbecue area.
- Keep shrubs thinned and separated by a distance of at least twice their height.
- Clear driveways of flammable vegetation (10 feet on both sides and overhanging obstructions to a height of 15 feet).

## Prepare your family

Design an emergency plan and discuss it with your family, including children, before wildfire strikes. Have each household member assemble a Go Bag — a collection of necessary items in case of evacuation. Pack a sturdy, easy-to-carry bag or case with:

- Copies of your important documents — including birth certificates, deeds, photo IDs, proof of address and insurance cards — in a waterproof, portable container.
- Contact and meeting place information for your household and an up-to-date regional map.
- Extra sets of car and house keys.
- Flashlight, battery-operated radio, and extra batteries.
- Credit and ATM cards, and cash in small denominations.
- Bottled water and non-perishable food such as energy or granola bars.
- Essential personal items, including medication for at least one week, a list of medications and dosages, and doctor's contact information.
- Child and other special care supplies.

## If a wildfire approaches

In addition to the steps below, make sure to stay aware of the latest advisories from officials. Remember, you don't need to wait for orders to evacuate. Your personal safety should come before all other considerations.

- Turn off all pilot lights. Shut off propane at the tank and/or natural gas at the meter.
- Wet shrubs within 15 feet of the home.
- Frequently check your roof and attic for embers or fire.
- Turn on houselights to increase the visibility of your home through heavy smoke.
- Close windows, vents, and doors. Seal attic and ground vents with plywood.
- Remove lightweight and/or non-fire resistant curtains and materials from around windows.
- Open fireplace damper(s) for proper updrafting. Close fireplace screens.
- Use garden hose and lawn sprinklers to wet the roof and above-ground fuel tanks.
- Prop a ladder against the house so firefighters have easy access to the roof.
- Place combustible patio furniture indoors.
- Move all flammable furniture to the center of the home away from windows and glass doors.
- Make sure your vehicles' gas tanks are full, your Go Bags are ready, and obey any evacuation orders promptly.

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