

# Wildland Fires

## Before a Wildfire

To prepare for wildfires, you should:

- Mark the entrance to your property with address signs that are clearly visible from the road.
- Keep lawns trimmed, leaves raked, and the roof and rain gutters free from debris such as dead limbs and leaves.
- Stack firewood at least 30 feet away from your residence.
- Store flammable materials, liquids, and solvents in metal containers outside your residence at least 30 feet away from structures and wooden fences.
- Create defensible space by thinning trees and brush within 30 feet around your residence. Beyond 30 feet, remove dead wood, debris, and low tree branches.
- Landscape your property with fire resistant plants and vegetation to prevent fire from spreading quickly. For example, hardwood trees are more fire resistant than pine, evergreen eucalyptus, or fir trees.
- Make sure water sources, such as hydrants, ponds, swimming pools and wells, are accessible to the fire department.
- Use fire resistant, protective roofing and materials like stone, brick, and metal to protect your residence. Avoid using wood materials. They offer the least fire protection.
- Have chimneys, wood stoves, and all home heating systems inspected and cleaned annually by a certified specialist.
- Insulate chimneys and place spark arresters on top. The chimney should be at least three feet above the roof.
- Remove branches hanging above and around the chimney.



## Follow Local Burning Laws

- Before burning debris in a wooded area:
  - Make sure you notify local authorities and obtain a burning permit.
  - Use an approved incinerator with a safety lid or covering with holes no larger than  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch.
  - Create at least a 10-foot clearing around the incinerator before burning debris.
  - Have a fire extinguisher or garden hose on hand when burning debris.

## During a Wildfire

If a wildfire threatens your home and time permits, take the following precautions:

- Shut off gas at the meter. Only a qualified professional can safely turn the gas back on.
- Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Place combustible patio furniture inside.
- Connect garden hose to outside taps. Place lawn sprinklers on the roof and near above-ground fuel tanks. Wet the roof.
- Wet or remove shrubs within 15 feet of your residence.



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- Gather fire tools such as a rake, axe, handsaw, or chainsaw, bucket, and shovel.
- Back your car into the garage or park it in an open space facing the direction of escape. Shut doors and roll up windows. Leave the key in the ignition and car doors unlocked. Close garage windows and doors, but leave them unlocked. Disconnect automatic garage door openers.
- Open fireplace damper. Close fireplace screens.
- Close windows, vents, doors, blinds, or noncombustible window coverings, and heavy drapes. Remove flammable drapes and curtains.
- Move flammable furniture into the center of the residence away from windows and sliding-glass doors.
- Close all interior doors and windows to prevent drafts.
- Place valuables that will not be damaged by water in a pool or pond.

**If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Choose a route away from the fire hazard. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of the fire and smoke.**