





# ◦ Wildfire

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## Wildfire Preparedness

### Overview:

- A wildfire is an uncontrolled fire that spreads rapidly through vegetation, forests, and wildland areas, posing significant risks to life, property, and the environment.
- Wildfires can be ignited by natural causes such as lightning strikes or human activities including campfires, discarded cigarettes, and equipment sparks.

### Causes:

- Natural Ignition: Lightning strikes, volcanic activity, and spontaneous combustion can ignite wildfires in forested and remote areas.
- Human Activities: Accidental or intentional ignition sources such as campfires, fireworks, power lines, and outdoor burning can start wildfires, particularly during dry, windy conditions.

### Effects:

- **Property Damage:** Wildfires can destroy homes, buildings, infrastructure, and personal belongings in their path, leading to extensive property damage and economic losses.
- **Evacuations:** Residents may be forced to evacuate their homes and communities due to wildfire threats, smoke exposure, and evacuation orders issued by authorities.
- **Environmental Impact:** Wildfires can cause habitat loss, soil erosion, air pollution, and water contamination, affecting wildlife, ecosystems, and natural resources.

## **Preparedness:**

### **1. Defensible Space:**

- Create and maintain defensible space around your home by clearing flammable vegetation, debris, and combustible materials within a specified distance from structures.
- Maintain a "lean, clean, and green" zone by removing dead vegetation, pruning trees and shrubs, and keeping grass and landscaping well-watered and maintained.

### **2. Fire-resistant Building Materials:**

- Use fire-resistant building materials such as non-combustible roofing, siding, and decking materials to reduce the risk of ignition and spread of wildfire to structures.
- Install ember-resistant vents, screens, and closures to prevent ember intrusion into attics, crawl spaces, and eaves during wildfire events.

### **3. Emergency Access:**

- Ensure clear and unobstructed access for emergency vehicles and personnel to reach your property, including driveways, roads, and access points.
- Trim overhanging branches, clear brush, and maintain vegetation along roadways to facilitate safe ingress and egress during wildfire emergencies.

### **4. Evacuation Planning:**

- Develop a household evacuation plan that includes evacuation routes, meeting points, and communication protocols in the event of a wildfire or other emergencies.
- Pack an emergency kit containing essential supplies such as water, food, medications, clothing, important documents, and pet supplies for evacuation.

#### **5. Community Engagement:**

- Participate in community wildfire preparedness initiatives, workshops, and outreach programs organized by local fire departments, emergency management agencies, and community organizations.
- Form or join neighborhood firewise groups, community emergency response teams (CERTs), or homeowners associations to collaborate on wildfire mitigation and preparedness efforts.

### **Building Vulnerability During Wildfires:**

#### **Ember Intrusion:**

- Ember showers from wildfires can ignite flammable materials such as leaves, pine needles, and debris near structures, leading to spot fires and structure ignition.
- Embers can enter buildings through vents, gaps, and openings in roofs, walls, windows, and doors, posing a significant fire risk to interior spaces.

#### **Radiant Heat Exposure:**

- High temperatures and radiant heat from wildfires can cause windows, siding, and other building materials to ignite and combust, leading to structure damage or loss.
- Homes located within close proximity to wildfire fronts or in areas with intense radiant heat exposure are at greater risk of ignition and fire spread.

#### **Firebrand Propagation:**

- Firebrands or burning embers can be carried by wind currents and updrafts over long distances, landing on roofs, decks, and landscaping, and igniting new fires.

- Embers can accumulate in gutters, on roofs, and in other vulnerable areas, posing a persistent fire risk to buildings and surrounding vegetation.

## **Safe Areas Within a Home:**

### **1. Interior Rooms:**

- Seek shelter in interior rooms located away from windows, exterior walls, and doors, which are more vulnerable to radiant heat, ember intrusion, and direct flame contact.
- Choose rooms with multiple exits and access points for evacuation in case of emergency.

### **2. Fire-resistant Structures:**

- Take cover in buildings constructed with fire-resistant materials and design features such as non-combustible roofing, siding, and window assemblies.
- Position yourself in areas with minimal combustible materials and fuel sources to reduce the risk of fire spread and structure ignition.

### **3. Sealed Enclosures:**

- Seal windows, doors, vents, and other openings with fire-resistant materials such as metal screens, shutters, or plywood panels to prevent ember intrusion and flame penetration.
- Close all doors and windows to create a barrier against radiant heat, smoke, and airborne embers during wildfire events.

### **4. Evacuation Routes:**

- Plan and maintain clear pathways for emergency evacuation from your home, ensuring unobstructed access to driveways, roads, and escape routes.
- Follow evacuation orders and instructions from authorities, and evacuate early if directed to do so to ensure your safety and well-being.

### **5. Post-Wildfire Safety:**

- After the wildfire subsides, assess your home for signs of structural damage, ember intrusion, and fire retardant residue before re-entering the building.

- Monitor for residual fire activity, smoldering debris, and hazardous conditions in the surrounding area, and follow guidance from local authorities and emergency responders regarding re-entry and recovery efforts.