Wildfire Preparedness

Weathering a wildfire begins with preparation.

If you live in an area prone to wildfires, there are actions you can take to prepare and stay safe before, during and after a fire. Learn what to do to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

Before a Wildfire

Protect Your Family

• Make sure your address is visible from the street in all directions.

• Treat, clear and cut back vegetation, and remove fallen debris and any combustible fuels, creating a defensible space perimeter and firebreak around your home and adjacent structures.

• Plant vegetation that slows fire, such as rockrose, ice plant and aloe, or fire-resistant shrubs such as hedging roses, bush honeysuckles, currant, cotoneaster, sumac or shrub apples.

• Replace wood mulch with rock or gravel. Remove dead leaves and pine needles from roofs, decks and patios.

• Install a safe to help protect documents, jewelry and other valuables from fire damage.

• Remove lint and other buildup from air conditioner screens.

• Install fire-resistant vents so burning embers can’t enter your home.

• Consider purchasing a portable gasoline-powered water pump, which allows fire engines to draw water from nearby swimming pools in the event of a power outage.

Protect Your Home

• Turn on outdoor lights.

• Close windows, vents, doors, blinds, noncombustible window coverings and your fireplace.

• Remove non-fire-resistant curtains from windows and doors.

• If time permits, seal attic and ground vents with plywood or commercial seals or metal screening.

• Set up your portable gasoline-powered water pump.

• Shut off propane at the tank or natural gas at the meter.

• Turn off all pilot lights. Move combustible items, such as wood piles and patio furniture, at least 30 feet away from all structures.

• Move all flammable furniture to the center of your home.
**During a Wildfire**

**If you face an imminent wildfire threat, monitor the local news and evacuate when ordered to do so.**

Be prepared to evacuate quickly. Locate a local emergency shelter ahead of time and know your routes and safe destinations. Pack a safety kit with basic requirements.

- Determine the best sources in your area for the latest information, updates and evacuation orders (local radio, NOAA or other government radio online, and TV stations).
- Heed evacuation warnings. It may seem like you have time, but conditions can change in an instant, making evacuation more difficult. In addition, leaving when ordered by local officials clears the roads so firefighters can get the necessary equipment in place to fight the fire.
- Plan evacuation routes from your home. Consider how you will evacuate on foot if roads are closed or impossible to use, such as if they are blocked by emergency personnel.
- Remember that ponds, lakes, rivers and landscaping can serve as safety zones.
- Keep supplies of food, water, necessary medications, and cash (should power outages interfere with electronic transactions).
- Pack flashlights, cell phones, charging options, portable battery-operated radios and extra batteries to get the latest information.

**After a Wildfire**

**For your safety, do not return home until all evacuation orders have been lifted and the roads surrounding your home are clear.**

Watch for downed trees and power lines, and use caution as the threat of flash floods or mudslides is real. In addition:

- Turn on your flashlight before entering your home to prevent sparking a fire if gas is present inside.
- Check for sparks or embers.
- Contact your power company if the power is out and your main breaker is on.
- Do not drink or use water unless you know it is safe.
- Discard food that may have been damaged by fire or smoke.
- Keep away from loose or dangling power lines. Report them to the power company immediately.
- Inspect your home’s structure, utilities and systems after a wildfire.
- Take pictures of home damage, both of the buildings and their contents, for insurance purposes.

**Notify NFP right away if you believe you will have a claim to file.**

NFP cannot guarantee that all information here will be applicable to every situation. While we use reasonable efforts to ensure accuracy, your situation may require different actions and this article is not a complete list of all possible risk management strategies. We assume no responsibility or liability from any action or inaction taken as a result of this content.