

## Are You Prepared For Wildfire?

Property damage from forest fires can be devastating. When wildfires strike, fire fighters work to save those properties with the best chance of surviving. Protect your guests and your business by practicing wildfire safety.

### Practice Wildfire Safety

People start most wildfires. . .find out how you can promote and practice wildfire safety.

- Contact your local fire department, health department, or forestry office for information on fire laws. Make sure that fire vehicles can get to your building. Clearly mark all driveway entrances and display your name and address.
- Report hazardous conditions that could cause a wildfire.
- Post fire emergency telephone numbers.
- Plan several escape routes away from your property by car and by foot.
- Talk to your neighbors about wildfire safety. Plan how the neighborhood could work together after a wildfire.

### Protect Your Building

- Regularly clean roof and gutters.
- Inspect chimneys at least twice a year. Clean them at least once a year. Keep the dampers in good working order. Equip chimneys and stovepipes with a spark arrester that meets the requirements of National Fire Protection Association Code 211. (Contact your local fire department for exact specifications.)
- Use 1/2-inch mesh screen beneath porches, decks, floor areas, and the property itself. Also, screen openings to floors, roof, and attic.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your building, especially near bedrooms as well as in each bedroom; test monthly and change the batteries at least twice each year.
- •each employees how to use fire extinguishers.
- Keep a ladder that will reach the roof.
- Consider installing protective shutters or heavy fireresistant drapes.
- Keep items, that can be used as fire tools, handy: a rake, axe, handsaw or chainsaw, bucket, and shovel.

### Before Wildfire Threatens

Design and landscape your property with wildfire safety in mind. Select materials and plants that can help contain fire rather than fuel it. Use fire

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resistant or non-combustible materials on the roof and exterior structure of the dwelling. Treat wood and other combustible materials used to construct roofs, siding, decks, trim and out buildings with UL-approved, fire-retardant chemicals. Plant fire-resistant shrubs and trees. For example, hardwood trees are less flammable than pine, evergreen, eucalyptus or fir trees.

### **Create a 30–100 Foot Safety Zone Around Your Building**

Within this area, you can take steps to reduce potential exposure to flames and radiant heat. Buildings surrounded by pine forests need a minimum safety zone of 100 feet. If your building sits on a steep slope, standard protective measures may not suffice. Contact your local fire department or forestry office for additional information.

- Rake leaves, dead limbs, and twigs. Clear all flammable vegetation.
- Remove leaves and rubbish from under structures and dispose of them properly.
- Thin a 15-foot space between tree crowns, and remove limbs within 15 feet of the ground.
- Remove dead branches that extend over the roof.
- Prune tree branches and shrubs within 15 feet of a stovepipe or chimney outlet.
- Ask the power company to clear branches from powerlines.
- Remove vines from the walls of the building.
- Mow grass regularly.
- Clear a 10-foot area around propane tanks and the barbecue. Place a screen over the grill—use nonflammable material with mesh no coarser than onequarter inch.
- Regularly dispose of newspapers and rubbish at an approved site. Follow local burning regulations.
- Place stove, fireplace, and grill ashes in a metal bucket, soak in water for two days, then bury the cold ashes in mineral soil.
- Store gasoline, oily rags, and other flammable materials in approved safety cans. Place cans in a safe location away from the base of buildings.
- Stack firewood at least 100 feet away and uphill from your building. Clear combustible material within 20 feet. Use only UL-approved woodburning devices.

### **Plan Your Water Needs**

- Identify and maintain an adequate outside water source such as a small pond, cistern, well, swimming pool, or hydrant.
- Have a garden hose that is long enough to reach any area of the building and other structures on the property.
- Install freeze-proof exterior water outlets on at least two sides of the building and near other structures on the property. Install additional outlets at least 50 feet from the building.
- Consider obtaining a portable gasoline-powered pump in case electrical power is cut off.

**When Wildfire Threatens**

If you are warned that a wildfire is threatening your area, listen to your radio for reports and evacuation information. Follow the instructions of local officials and keep your guests informed. You should also warn guests of the threat and alert them to the possibility of evacuation.

1. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately
  - You and your guests should wear protective clothing—sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothing, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves, and a handkerchief to protect your face.
  - Lock your building.
  - If authorities advise a specific evacuation route you and your guests should follow it. If no route is suggested choose an evacuation route away from fire hazards and advise your guests of the escape route to take. Remember they may be unfamiliar with the area. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of fire and smoke.
2. If you're sure you have time, take steps to protect your building
3. Inside:
  - Close windows, vents, doors, venetian blinds or noncombustible window coverings, and heavy drapes.
  - Remove lightweight curtains.
  - Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off pilot lights.
  - Open fireplace damper. Close fireplace screens.
  - Move flammable furniture into the center of the building away from windows and sliding-glass doors.
  - Turn on a light in each room to maximize visibility of the structure in heavy smoke.
4. Outside:
  - Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals.
  - Turn off propane tanks.
  - Place combustible patio furniture inside.
  - Connect the garden hose to outside taps.
  - Set up the portable gasoline-powered pump.
  - Place lawn sprinklers on the roof and near above-ground fuel tanks. Wet the roof.
  - Wet or remove shrubs within 15 feet of the building.
  - Gather fire tools.

## Emergency Supplies

When wildfire threatens, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit with items you may need if advised to evacuate. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks, duffle bags, or plastic garbage bags prominently labeled "Emergency Kit".

Include:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't spoil.
- A first aid kit.
- Emergency tools including a battery-powered radio, flashlight, and plenty of extra batteries.
- Sanitation supplies.
- Keep important documents in a waterproof container.
- Assemble a smaller version of your kit to keep in the trunk of your car.

The information in this Data Guide is from the US Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). You can find additional information on the FEMA website.

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