

Wildfire Safety Tips



Prepare for a Wildfire

- A fire weather watch means that dangerous fire weather conditions are possible over the next 12 to 72 hours. A red flag warning is a higher alert that means dangerous fire weather conditions are either occurring or will shortly. Extreme caution is urged, because a simple spark can cause a major wildfire.
- Update your phone number and e-mail address with your electric company.
- Have several ways to receive alerts. Download the FEMA app and receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations nationwide. Sign up for community alerts in your area and be aware of the Emergency Alert System and the Wireless Emergency Alert.
- Charge all cell phones and other battery-powered devices. Print out emergency contact information in case you lose power. Make copies of important documents and keep them in a secure password-protected digital space.
- Have your Emergency Outage Kit stocked and readily available. If there is a wildfire watch or warning, place your kit in the car along with other valuables and mementos in case you need to evacuate. Keep the garage door closed.

- Create a fire-resistant zone that is free of leaves, debris or flammable materials for at least 30 feet from your home.
- Know the route to take and have a plan of where you will go in case you are ordered to evacuate. Check on your friends, family, and neighbors.

During a Wildfire

- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Go to a designated public shelter if you have been told to evacuate or you feel it is unsafe to remain in your home. Take your Emergency Outage Kit and choose a route away from the fire hazard. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of the fire and smoke. Tell someone when you left and where you are going.
- If you see a wildfire and haven't received evacuation orders yet, call 9-1-1. Don't assume that someone else has already called.
- Pay attention to emergency alerts and notifications for information and instructions.
- Wear protective clothing—sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothes, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves, and a N95 mask to protect yourself from smoke inhalation.

- Close all shutters, blinds, or heavy noncombustible window coverings to reduce radiant heat. Close all doors inside your house to prevent draft.
- Choose a room to close off from outside air and set up a portable air cleaner or filter to keep the air in this room clean even when it's smoky in the rest of the building and outdoors.
- Shut off all natural gas, propane, and fuel oil supplies at the source.
- Before a wildfire gets close, connect garden hoses to a spigot. Fill any pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, tubs, or other large containers with water in case firefighters need to use it.
- Close the garage door and disconnect the automatic garage door opener so the door can be opened manually if power goes out.
- Turn on outside lights and leave a light on in every room to make the house more visible to first responders in heavy smoke.
- Leave doors and windows closed but unlocked. It may be necessary for firefighters to gain quick entry into your home to fight the fire.
- If you or someone you are with has been burned, call 911 and seek help immediately; immediately cool and cover burns to reduce chance of further injury or infection.

After a Wildfire

- Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Stay away from downed power lines and debris. Treat all fallen wires, and anything touching them, as though they are energized. Immediately report downed lines to your electric company or call 911.
- For hours after the fire, maintain a fire watch. Monitor for smoke, sparks, or hidden embers throughout the house, including the roof and the attic.
- Avoid hot ash, charred trees, smoldering debris, and live embers. The ground may contain heat pockets that can burn you or spark another fire.
- Wear a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health certified-respirator and wet debris down to minimize breathing dust particles.
- Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke, or soot.
- Do not drink water that you think may be contaminated.

If Your Power Is Out

- Report your outage immediately to your local electric company. Don't rely on your neighbors to report your outage.
- Remain patient. Every company has a detailed plan for restoring electrical service after a power outage. Typically, one of the first steps a company takes—to prevent injuries and fires—is to make sure that power is no longer flowing through downed lines. Restoration then proceeds based on established priorities, which you can learn about on EEI's website, www.eei.org.

Source: www.Ready.gov, a website operated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)