

Wildfire

Preparedness Checklist

A wildfire is an unplanned fire in a natural area. Wildfires affect everyone. They can spread fast, harm us, and destroy our homes. Climate change is making parts of the US warmer and drier, causing wildfires to grow bigger and become more destructive. More people are living in areas at risk for wildfires. But we can take action to prepare. Prepare now to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your home.



What to Do: Before



Be Ready to Evacuate Quickly

Evacuate means going from an unsafe place to a safe place.

- You may have to leave your home quickly to stay safe.
- Know where you will go, how you will get there, and where you will stay.
- Have different escape routes from your home and community.
- Practice these routes so everyone in your household is familiar with them.
- Be sure to understand how your community will respond to a wildfire.
- Have an evacuation plan for pets and livestock.
- Ensure your gas tank is full and you are ready to leave at a moment's notice.



Plan to Stay Connected

The most important information will come from your local government.

- Authorities will let you know when you should leave to stay safe.
- Sign up for free emergency alerts from your local government.
- Have a backup battery or a way to charge your cell phone.
- Have a battery-powered radio.
- Plan to monitor weather conditions and fires near you.



Learn Emergency Skills

- Learn First Aid and CPR.
- Utilities may be offline. Be ready to live without power, gas, and water. Plan for your electrical needs, including cell phones and medical equipment.



Understand Health Impacts

- Wildfire smoke is a mixture of air pollutants that are harmful to your health. Learn how to reduce your exposure.



Gather Emergency Supplies in Advance

Gather food, water, and medicine. Stores and pharmacies might be closed. Organize belongings into a Go-Kit in case you need to leave quickly.

- Go-Kit: 3 days of supplies that you can easily carry with you.
- Have a 1-month supply of medication in a child-proof container.
- Keep personal, financial, and medical records safe and easy to access (hard copies, or securely backed up).



Create Defensible Space

- Creating defensible space means reducing flammable materials (grass, trees, shrubs) within a certain distance of your home.
- By changing how you take care of your home and land, you can reduce the chance of your home catching fire.
- Use the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) defensible zone concept. For more information, see [Firewise.org](https://www.firewise.org).



Get Involved with Community Efforts

- Be a good neighbor. People cause most wildfires. Do your part and practice prevention.
- Wildfires affect entire communities.

Everyone needs to work together to manage vegetation and use fire-resistant construction. Find out about efforts in your area and get involved.

- Check with your neighbors before a fire to see if they need assistance evacuating.

What to Do: During



Pay Attention to Your Surroundings

- Keep track of the weather, fires near you, and listen to instructions from local authorities.
- Be ready to leave quickly with your Go-Kit.

- You might not get an official notice to evacuate.
- Be ready to leave if local authorities advise, or if you feel you are in danger.

What to Do: After



Stay Safe

- Wait for officials to say it is safe before going back home.
- Avoid hot ash, charred trees, smoldering debris, and live embers. The ground may contain heat pockets that can burn you or spark another fire.
- Avoid damaged or fallen power lines, poles, and downed wires. They can electrocute you.
- Watch for pits in the ground filled with ash. They may have hot embers underneath that could burn you. Mark them for safety, and warn your family and neighbors to keep clear of the pits.



Cleanup Safely

- Follow public health rules and wear safety equipment.
- Avoid direct contact with ash.
- Protect yourself against ash when you clean up. Wear gloves, long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks to protect your skin. Wear goggles to protect your eyes. Limit how much ash you breathe in by wearing an N95 respirator.
- Wash off ash that gets on your skin or in your eyes or mouth as soon as you can.
- Children, pregnant women, and people with asthma, heart or lung conditions should not breathe in dust from ash.



Stay Healthy

- Wildfires can make drinking water unsafe. Check with your local health department about drinking water safety.
- When in doubt, throw it out! Throw out food that was exposed to heat, smoke, fumes, or chemicals.
- Ask your healthcare provider or doctor about using refrigerated medicines.



Take Care of Yourself

- It's normal to have a lot of bad feelings, stress or anxiety.
- Eat healthy food and get enough sleep to help you deal with stress.
- You can contact the Disaster Distress Helpline for free if you need to talk to someone. Call or text **1-800-985-5990**.

Prepare so you can protect. | For more information, visit redcross.org/prepare | Download the Emergency App

