

It's going to be the worst Fire Season ever!! You always hear Firefighters saying that phrase around this time of the year. The truth is we live in California and the potential for a catastrophic wildfire is tremendous no matter the location or how much rain we receive. We are coming out of a severe drought which had several years of terrible fires and loss of lives, property, homes, and wilderness areas. The forests are littered with bug kill from the bark beetle epidemic that is spreading across the state at a rate that is baffling foresters and experts say is working its way from higher elevation pine stands to oak covered valley areas. The large amount of rain over 40 inches in the Sacramento region has caused the grass to grow high and the landscape is lush and green. If you look close you can already see the grass turning hues of brown on the roadsides. By June the grass that was so green is now considered light flashy fuels to firefighters and can catch fire from a cigarette thrown out the window, a trailer chain dragging on the asphalt, or a lawnmower hitting a rock. If the conditions are right high winds, low humidity, and higher temperatures the grass "light flashy fuels" combined with any ignition source can produce a catastrophic running wildfire like was seen in Lake County this past summer.

Some things you can do to prepare for the upcoming fire season:

1. Maintain a defensible space by removing and clearing away all flammable vegetation and other combustible growth within 30 feet of your house.
 - Creation of Defensible Space through vegetation management usually means reducing the amount of fuel around the home, providing separation between fuels, and or reshaping retained fuels by trimming. Creation of Defensible Space can typically be done by removing fuels; removing lower limbs of trees; or reducing the height of the smaller fuels.
 - In all cases, fuel reduction does not mean cutting down all trees and shrubs, or creating a bare ring of earth across the property. It does mean arranging the tree, shrubs and other fuels sources in a way that makes it difficult for fire to transfer from one fuel source to another.
2. Clear vegetation early, don't wait until fire season. Do mowing in the morning when the humidity is high and the temperatures are low, to reduce the chance of your mower starting a fire.
3. Clean off roofs, gutters:
 - Remove that portion of any tree, which extends within 10 feet of the outlet of any chimney or stovepipe.
 - Maintain any tree adjacent to or overhanging any building free of dead or dying wood.
 - Maintain the roof of any structure free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth.
 - Provide and maintain at all times a screen over the outlet of every chimney or stovepipe that is attached to any fireplace, stove, or other device that burns any solid or liquid fuel. The screen shall be constructed of nonflammable material with openings of not more than one-half inch in size.
4. Have an exit plan ready, in case of evacuations.
5. Mark your address:

- The address of your home should be posted and visible from the roadway fronting the property. Whenever the numbers on the building will not be clearly visible from the access roadway, the numbers should be placed at the access roadway and the driveway. Address numbers should be visible from both directions of travel on the roadway fronting the property. Said numbers shall be a minimum 4 inch letter height, 1/2 inch stroke; reflectorized, and contrast with their background, or may be a minimum 5 inches high and contrast with their background. Numbers must be visible from at least 100 feet. This makes it easier for the firefighters to find you and your home.

By doing these few things before the fire season is declared you can improve the chances of your house surviving a wildfire and you will be prepared for a quick safe evacuation.

Eric Walder, EFO

Fire Chief

South Placer Fire District

Loomis Fire District