

WILDFIRE

PREPAREDNESS AND SAFETY

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Wildfire Safety	2
Preparing For A Disaster during COVID-19	2
Prepare in Advance for a Wildfire	2
Stay Safe During a Wildfire	3
Stay Safe After a Wildfire	3



Be sure to download the free Red Cross [Emergency App](#) and encourage others to do the same. This app features expert advice on how to prepare and respond to 14 different types of emergencies and disasters. It allows you to customize more than 35 emergency alerts and includes a map with local Red Cross shelters. Text GETEMERGENCY to 90999 or search “Red Cross Emergency” in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

WILDFIRE SAFETY

PREPARING FOR A DISASTER DURING COVID-19

Please review our guidance on preparing for a disaster while still protecting yourself from COVID-19. (Available in multiple languages.)

[Preparing for Disaster During COVID-19](#)

- PDF Format [English](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Haitian](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Traditional Chinese](#), [Korean](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Tagalog](#)
- RTF Format [English](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Haitian](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Traditional Chinese](#), [Korean](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Tagalog](#)

PREPARE IN ADVANCE FOR A WILDFIRE

Source: *American Red Cross* <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/wildfire.html>

Be sure you're Red Cross Ready. That means:

- Assembling an [emergency preparedness kit](#).
- Creating a [household evacuation plan](#) that includes your pets.
- Staying informed about your community's risk and response plans.
- Educating your family on how to use the [Safe and Well website](#).
- Download the Emergency App for [iPhone >>](#) or for [Android >>](#)

Additional steps to protect your family

- Talk with your family about wildfire facts: how to keep them from starting and what to do if one occurs. Discussing ahead of time helps reduce fear, particularly for younger children.
- Post emergency phone numbers by every phone in your house.
- Ensure that every member of your family carries a Safe and Well wallet card.
- Make sure you have access to NOAA radio broadcasts:
 - Find an [online NOAA radio station](#)
 - Search for a NOAA radio app in the [Apple Store >>](#) or [Google Play>>](#)
 - Purchase a battery-powered or hand-crank NOAA radio in the [Red Cross Store](#)
- Keep insurance policies, documents, and other valuables in a safe-deposit box. You may need quick, easy access to these documents. Keep them in a safe place less likely to be damaged. Take pictures on a phone and keep copies of important documents and files on a flashdrive that you can carry with you on your house or car keys.

Additional steps to protect your pets & animals

- Prepare a [pet emergency kit](#) for your companion animals.

Additional steps to protect your home

- Identify and maintain an adequate water source outside your home, such as a small pond, cistern, well, or swimming pool.
- Regularly clean roofs and gutters.
- Keep a garden hose that is long enough to reach all areas of your home and other structures on the property.
- Install freeze-proof exterior water outlets on at least 2 sides of your home and near other structures on the property.
- Make sure driveway entrances and your house number or address are clearly marked so fire vehicles can get to your home.

- Install additional outlets at least 50 feet from your home. Firefighters may be able to use them.

STAY SAFE DURING A WILDFIRE

1. Be ready to evacuate at a moment's notice. Obey all evacuation orders.
2. Listen to local radio and television stations for updated emergency information including your safest escape route.
3. [Check your emergency kit](#) and replenish any items missing or in short supply, especially medications and medical supplies. Keep it in the car.
4. Arrange for temporary housing at a friend or relative's home outside the threatened area. Identify nearby [shelter sites](#) and know your routes to get there.

Then, if you can, do this...

- Back your car into the garage or park it outside in the direction of your evacuation route.
- Confine pets to one room so you can find them if you need to evacuate quickly.
- Limit exposure to smoke and dust:
 - Keep indoor air clean by closing windows and doors to prevent outside smoke from getting in.
 - Do not use anything that burns and adds to indoor pollution such as candles, fire places and gas stoves.
- If you have asthma or another lung disease, follow your health care provider's advice. Seek medical care if your symptoms worsen.
- Dress to protect yourself: wear cotton/woolen clothing including long sleeve shirts, long pants and gloves.

If you still have time...

- Shut off gas meter only if advised to do so by local officials.
- If you have a propane tank system, turn off the valves and leave them closed until the propane supplier inspects your system.
- Open fireplace dampers and close fireplace screens. Burning embers will not be "sucked down" into a home from the outside.
- Wet down your roof (if combustible).
- Close windows, vents, doors, blinds, or noncombustible window coverings, and heavy drapes. Remove lightweight drapes and curtains.
- Move combustible furniture into the center of your home away from windows and sliding-glass doors.
- Close all doors and windows inside your home to prevent draft.
- Place valuables that will not be damaged by water in a pool or pond.
- Place sprinklers up to 50 feet away from the structures to raise the moisture level of nearby vegetation.
- Seal attic and ground vents with precut plywood or commercial seals.
- Remove combustible items from around the home, lawn and poolside, such as furniture, umbrellas, tarp coverings and firewood.
- Connect the garden hose to outside taps.
- Be aware that water pressure will probably decrease due to heavy demand for firefighting. Water may not be available at all because electric pumps have failed or water reservoirs are drained.

STAY SAFE AFTER A WILDFIRE

Returning Home & Recovering after a Wildfire

- Do not enter your home until fire officials say it is safe.
- Use caution when entering burned areas as hazards may still exist, including hot spots, which can flare up without warning.
- Avoid damaged or fallen power lines, poles, and downed wires.

- Watch for ash pits and mark them for safety—warn family and neighbors to keep clear of the pits also.
- Watch animals closely and keep them under your direct control. Hidden embers and hot spots could burn your pets' paws or hooves.
- Follow public health guidance on safe cleanup of fire ash and safe use of masks.
- Wet debris down to minimize breathing dust particles.
- Wear leather gloves and heavy soled shoes to protect hands and feet.
- Cleaning products, paint, batteries and damaged fuel containers need to be disposed of properly to avoid risk.

Ensure your food and water are safe

- Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke or soot.
- Do NOT ever use water that you think may be contaminated to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, wash hands, make ice or make baby formula.

Inspecting your home

- If there is no power, check to make sure the main breaker is on. Fires may cause breakers to trip. If the breakers are on and power is still not present, contact the utility company.
- Inspect the roof immediately and extinguish any sparks or embers. Wildfires may have left burning embers that could reignite.
- For several hours afterward, recheck for smoke and sparks throughout the home, including the attic. The winds of wildfires can blow burning embers anywhere. Keep checking your home for embers that could cause fires.
- Take precautions while cleaning your property. You may be exposed to potential health risks from hazardous materials.
- Debris should be wetted down to minimize health impacts from breathing dust particles.
- Use a two-strap dust particulate mask with nose clip and coveralls for the best minimal protection.
- Wear leather gloves to protect hands from sharp objects while removing debris.
- Wear rubber gloves when working with outhouse remnants, plumbing fixtures, and sewer piping. They can contain high levels of bacteria.
- Hazardous materials such as kitchen and bathroom cleaning products, paint, batteries, contaminated fuel, and damaged fuel containers need to be properly handled to avoid risk. Check with local authorities for hazardous disposal assistance.
- If you have a propane tank system, contact a propane supplier. Turn off valves on the system, and leave valves closed until the supplier inspects your system.
- If you have a heating oil tank system, contact a heating oil supplier for an inspection of your system before using.
- Visually check the stability of the trees. Any tree that has been weakened by fire may be a hazard.
- Look for burns on the tree trunk. If the bark on the trunk has been burned off or scorched by very high temperatures completely around the circumference, the tree will not survive and should be considered unstable.
- Look for burnt roots by probing the ground with a rod around the base of the tree and several feet away from the base. If the roots have been burned, you should consider this tree very unstable.
- A scorched tree is one that has lost part or all of its leaves or needles. Healthy deciduous trees are resilient and may produce new branches and leaves as well as sprouts at the base of the tree. Evergreen trees may survive when partially scorched but are at risk for bark beetle attacks

As you rebuild

- Obtain information from local authorities about defensible space requirements.
- Clear 30 feet of space around your home of vegetation.
- Store firewood at least 30 feet away from your home.
- Clear debris off the roof, out of the gutters and away from air conditioning units.
- Plant fire-resistant shrubs and trees. Hardwood trees, for example, are less flammable than pine, evergreen, eucalyptus or fir trees.

- Use vegetation that is resistant to fire, and is found naturally in the area. Do not import vegetation.
- Equip chimneys and stovepipes with a spark arrester that meets the requirements of NFPA 211, a specific standard for chimney fire safety.
- Install 1/2-inch mesh screen beneath porches, decks, floor areas and the home itself. Also, screen openings to your floors, roof and attic.

Ask a professional to

- Select and install fire-resistant roofing, siding and other building materials.
- Install or develop an adequate outside water source such as a small pond, cistern, well, swimming pool or hydrant.
- Install freeze-proof exterior water outlets on at least two sides of the home and near other structures on the property. Install additional outlets at least 50 feet from the home.

Client-Facing Resources:

On-site staff may make these materials available to clients, staff, volunteers and the general public in the language most appropriate.

- **NEW [How to Prepare for a Disaster during COVID-19](#)**
PDF Format [English](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Haitian](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Traditional Chinese](#), [Korean](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Tagalog](#)
RTF Format [English](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Haitian](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Traditional Chinese](#), [Korean](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Tagalog](#)
- **Download Free Red Cross Emergency App** ([English](#) , [Spanish](#)) features expert advice on how to prepare & respond to wildfires and features real-time local alerts for severe weather and hazards and includes a map with local Red Cross shelters. Text GETEMERGENCY to 90999 or search “Red Cross Emergency” in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Promotional material available [here](#).
- **Wildfire Safety Checklist** (1 page) ([English](#), [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [French](#), [Korean](#), [Tagalog](#), [Vietnamese](#))
- **Short Wildfire Safety Checklist** (1 page) ([English & Spanish](#))
- **Power Outage Checklist** (1 page each) ([English](#), [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [French](#), [Korean](#), [Tagalog](#), [Vietnamese](#))
- **Taking Care of Your Emotional Health after Disaster** – [Landing Page](#) ([English](#), [English – Large Print](#), [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [French](#), [Haitian](#), [Korean](#), [Tagalog](#), [Vietnamese](#))
- **Children: Helping Children Cope with Disaster** (12 pages) ([English](#), [Chinese](#), [Korean](#), [Tagalog](#), [Vietnamese](#))
- **Download the free Monster Guard: Prepare for Emergencies App.** Children should ask a parent or guardian for permission to download the app. Promotional material available [here](#).
- **Red Cross Disaster Preparedness Media Tools:** A variety of visuals to supplement media and social outreach efforts are available [here](#).

FEMA / US Fire Administration

- Emergency Planning for People with Disabilities, Access and Functional Needs – FEMA – Landing Page ([English](#))
FEMA Checklist ([English](#) , [Spanish](#) , [English – Large Print](#)), [Preparing Makes Sense for People with Disabilities and Other Access and Functional Needs](#), PSA (5:00), [We Prepare Everyday](#), PSA (2:00), [We Prepare Everyday: Make a Plan](#), PSA (:30), [We Prepare Everyday: Be Informed](#), PSA (:30), [We Prepare Everyday: Build a Kit](#), PSA (:30)
- [Wildfire Safety Outreach Materials](#)

Center for Disease Control

- <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/index.html>
- [CDC – Safety Tips – Wildfire Smoke](#)

National Fire Protection Association

- <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>

CalOES

- <https://www.caloes.ca.gov/ICESite/Pages/California-Wildfire-Resources.aspx>

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

- [Wildfire Smoke FAQ](#)
- [Reduce Exposure to Ash When Returning Home After a Fire \(PDF\)](#) | [Spanish](#)