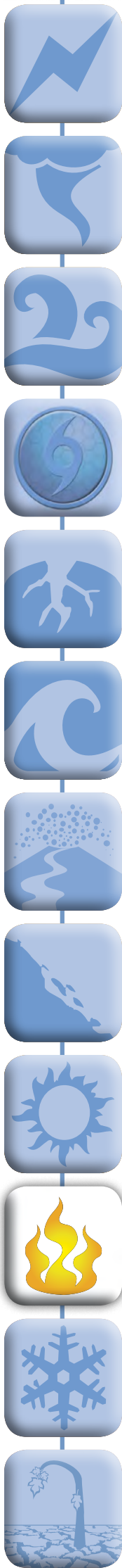




WILDFIRES



? WHAT IS A WILDFIRE?

A wildfire is any uncontrolled fire in combustible vegetation that occurs in the countryside or a wilderness area.

WILDFIRE FACTS

- The threat of wildfires for people living near wild land areas or using recreational facilities in wilderness areas is real. Dry conditions at various times of the year and in various parts of the United States greatly increase the potential for wildfires.
- Advance planning and knowing how to protect buildings in these areas can lessen the devastation of a wildfire. There are several safety precautions that you can take to reduce the risk of fire losses. Protecting your home from wildfire is your responsibility.
- To reduce the risk, you'll need to consider the fire resistance of your home, the topography of your property and the nature of the vegetation close by.



ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

BEFORE

- If you see a wildfire, call 911 (or equivalent). Don't assume that someone else has already called. Describe the location of the fire, speak slowly and clearly, and answer any questions asked by the dispatcher.

Before the Fire Approaches Your House

- Evacuate your pets and all family members who are not essential to preparing the home. Anyone with medical or physical limitations and the young and the elderly should be evacuated immediately.
- Clear items that will burn from around the house, including wood piles, lawn furniture, barbecue grills, tarp coverings, etc. Move them outside of your defensible space.
- Close outside attic, eaves and basement vents, windows, doors, pet doors, etc. Remove flammable drapes and curtains. Close all shutters, blinds, or heavy non-combustible window coverings to reduce radiant heat.
- Close all doors inside the house to prevent draft. Open the damper on your fireplace, but close the fireplace screen.
- Shut off any natural gas, propane, or fuel oil supplies at the source.
- Connect garden hoses. Fill any pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, tubs or other large containers with water.
- If you have gas-powered pumps for water, make sure they are fueled and ready.
- Place a ladder against the house in clear view.
- Back your vehicle into the driveway or garage and roll up the windows.
- Disconnect any automatic garage door openers so that doors can still be opened by hand if the power goes out.
- Close all garage doors.
- Place valuable papers, mementos and anything "you can't live without" inside the vehicle, ready for quick departure. Any pets still with you should also be put in the vehicle.

Preparing to Leave

- Turn on outside lights and leave a light on in every room to make the house more visible 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 fire. The entire area will be isolated and patrolled by sheriff's deputies or police.

DURING

If in a Vehicle

- This is dangerous and should only be done in an emergency, but you can survive the firestorm if you stay in your vehicle. It is much less dangerous than trying to run from a fire on foot.
- Roll up windows and close air vents. Drive slowly with headlights on. Watch for other vehicles and pedestrians. Do not drive through heavy smoke.
- If you have to stop, park away from the heaviest trees and brush. Turn headlights on and ignition off. Roll up windows and close air vents.
- Get on the floor and cover up with a blanket or coat.
- Stay in the vehicle. Do not run! The engine may stall and not restart. Air currents may rock the vehicle. Some smoke and sparks may enter the vehicle. Temperature inside will increase. Metal gas tanks and containers rarely explode.

If Trapped in Your Home

- If you do find yourself trapped by wildfire inside your home, stay inside and away from outside walls. Close doors, but leave them unlocked. Keep your entire family together and remain calm.

If Outdoors

- The best temporary shelter is in a sparse fuel area. On a steep mountainside, the back side is safer. Avoid canyons, natural "chimneys" and saddles.
- If a road is nearby, lie face down along the road cut or in the ditch on the uphill side. Cover yourself with anything that will shield you from the fire's heat.
- If hiking in the back country, seek a depression with sparse fuel. Clear fuel away from the area while the fire is approaching and then lie face down in the depression and cover yourself. Stay down until after the fire passes!

AFTER

- Check the roof immediately. Put out any roof fires, sparks, or embers. Check the attic for hidden burning sparks.
- If you have a fire, get your neighbors to help fight it.
- The water you put into your pool or hot tub and other containers will come in handy now. If the power is out, try connecting a hose to the outlet on your water heater.
- For several hours after the fire, maintain a "fire watch." Re-check for smoke and sparks throughout the house.
- Report property damage to your insurance agent immediately.



DID YOU KNOW...

An average of 1.2 million acres of U.S. woodland burns every year.

Contact your Installation Office of Emergency Management for further information.

