

Before a Wildfire

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The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family and your property in the event of a fire.

- To begin preparing, you should [build an emergency kit](#) and make a [family communications plan](#).
- Design and landscape your home with wildfire safety in mind. Select materials and plants that can help contain fire rather than fuel it.
- Use fire-resistant or noncombustible materials on the roof and exterior structure of the dwelling, or treat wood or combustible material used in roofs, siding, decking or trim with fire-retardant chemicals evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Plant fire-resistant shrubs and trees. For example, hardwood trees are less flammable than pine, evergreen, eucalyptus or fir trees.
- Regularly clean roof and gutters.
- Inspect chimneys at least twice a year. Clean them at least once a year. Keep the dampers in good working order. Equip chimneys and stovepipes with a spark arrester that meets the requirements of National Fire Protection Association Standard 211. (Contact your local fire department for exact specifications.)
- Use 1/8-inch mesh screen beneath porches, decks, floor areas, and the home itself. Also, screen openings to floors, roof and attic.
- Install a dual-sensor smoke alarm on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms; test monthly and change the batteries at least once each year.
- Teach each family member how to use a fire extinguisher (ABC type) and show them where it's kept.
- Keep handy household items that can be used as fire tools: a rake, axe, handsaw or chain saw, bucket and shovel.
- Keep a ladder that will reach the roof.
- Consider installing protective shutters or heavy fire-resistant drapes.
- 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.

PLAN YOUR WATER NEEDS

- Identify and maintain an adequate outside water source such as a small pond, cistern, well, swimming pool, or hydrant.
- Have a garden hose that is long enough to reach any area of the home and other structures on the property.
- 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.
- Consider obtaining a portable gasoline powered pump in case electrical power is cut off.