

STAY INFORMED! LEAVE EARLY!

Before a Wildfire

If you see a wildfire, call 911. Don't assume someone else already has. Have a disaster kit (see page 14) and emergency plan ready.

Well Before the Fire Approaches Your House

- Evacuate pets, the young, and anyone with medical or physical limitations.
- Wear protective clothing made of cotton that covers exposed skin. Do not wear nylon or similar fabrics.
- Clear flammable items from around the house, including woodpiles, lawn furniture, barbecue grills, tarp coverings, etc. Move them at least 30 feet from the area around your home.
- Close and protect openings. Close all doors inside the house to prevent drafts. Open the damper on a fireplace but close the fireplace screen. Close outside attic, eave 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.
- Shut off any natural gas, propane, or fuel oil supplies at the source.
- Connect garden hoses and fill any pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, tubs, or other large containers with water. Firefighters may take advantage of these resources if near your home.

- Back your car into the driveway and roll up the windows.
- Disconnect any automatic garage door openers so doors can still be opened by hand if the power fails. Close all garage doors.
- Place valuable papers, mementos, and anything "you can't live without" inside the car, ready for quick departure. Any remaining pets should also be put in the car.

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. Firefighters may need quick entry into a home to fight fire. The entire area typically will be isolated and patrolled by sheriff's deputies or police after the fire moves on.

During a Wildfire

Survival in a Vehicle

This is dangerous and should only be done in an emergency, but surviving a firestorm is possible if you stay in a car. 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.

FIREFIGHTING DEPENDENT ON ACCESS AND WATER

During a wildfire, firefighting resources are generally limited, and those fighting the fire have to decide how to best position those resources. Firefighters unable to safely enter and leave properties may not defend structures. Make sure firefighters have the room and water needed to best defend your home if able.

Some items to consider:

- Underground cisterns, aboveground water tanks, or draftable water sources that are accessible by emergency vehicles can help provide firefighters with water. Remember, your well may not pump water fast enough for firefighters to use, and the electricity that powers your water pump may go out. Make sure signs or other markings indicate any water sources firefighters can use.
- Reflectorized fire numbers and street name signs can help firefighters find your property, especially in smoky situations.
- Firefighters need a clearance of 12 feet wide and 14 feet high along any roads to and through the property.
- Firefighters need a 45-foot turnaround area and pullouts large enough for emergency vehicle use to safely enter and leave a property.
- Fire trucks can be very heavy. They may not be able to climb slopes steeper than 10 percent grade when fully loaded.
- Bridge weight limits should be posted. Bridges should be wide enough and strong enough to support a fire truck weighing 18 tons or more (check with your local fire department for their requirements) and built of non-combustible material.
- All roads more than 150 feet in length should have turnouts to allow two vehicles to pass.



Photo: NPS, Kelly Martin