

THE TOOLBOX

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a loss control resource for members

Compliments of  member INSURANCE



Wildfire Preparedness



According to the National Fire Protection Association, wildfires across the United States have taken more than 100 lives and cost more than \$25 billion dollars in property losses in just the last two years.

A wildfire is an unplanned, unwanted fire burning in a natural area, such as a forest, grassland, or prairie. As building development expands into these areas, homes and business may be situated in or near areas susceptible to wildfires. This is called the wildland urban interface. Wildfires can damage natural resources, destroy homes, and threaten the safety of the public and the firefighters who protect forests and communities.

Wildfires can occur at any time throughout the year, but the potential is always higher during periods with little or no rainfall, which make brush, grass, and trees dry and burn more easily.

High winds can also contribute to spreading the fire. Your community may have a designated wildfire season when the risk is particularly high.

HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A WILDFIRE THREATENS

EVACUATE

When a wildfire threatens your area, the best action to protect yourself and your family is to evacuate early to avoid being trapped. If there is smoke, drive carefully because visibility may be reduced. Keep your headlights on and watch for other vehicles and fleeing wildlife or livestock.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE AND FIRE-RESISTANT MATERIALS

Your goal now, before a fire happens, is to make your home or business and the surrounding area more resistant to catching fire and burning. This means reducing the amount of material that can burn easily in and around your home or business by clearing away debris and other flammable materials, and using fire-resistant materials for landscaping and construction.



Wildfires can occur anywhere and can destroy homes, businesses, infrastructure, natural resources, and agriculture. **How to Prepare for a Wildfire** explains how to protect yourself and your property, and details the steps to take now so that you can act quickly when you, your home, or your business is in danger.

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Protect Yourself During A Wildfire

Evacuate:

If authorities advise or order you to evacuate, do so immediately. Be sure to remember the Five Ps of Evacuation: People, Prescriptions, Papers, Personal Needs, and Priceless Items.

If Trapped in Your Home:

If you do not leave before the fire reaches your immediate area and you are trapped in your home, take the following actions.

- Call 911, provide your location, and explain your situation.
- Turn on the lights to increase the visibility of your home in heavy smoke.
- Keep doors, windows, vents, and fire screens closed. Keep your doors unlocked.
- Move flammable materials (e.g., curtains, furniture) away from windows and sliding glass doors.
- Fill sinks and tubs with water.
- Stay inside, away from outside walls and windows.

If Trapped in a Vehicle or Outdoors:

Researchers are examining guidance to provide the best advice for last resort actions if you are trapped in a vehicle or outdoors. If you are in a vehicle, base your decision to stay in the vehicle or to take cover outside on your specific circumstances, including your distance from the fire, the direction of the fire, whether there is fuel (e.g., brush and trees) near your vehicle, and the potential for rescue. Try to stay away from fuel sources; stay in a rocky area or roadway, or near a water source. Stay low to reduce the effects of heat and smoke, breathe through cloth to avoid inhaling smoke, and cover yourself with a wool blanket or coat, or even dirt. If you are trapped by the fire, immediately call 911, if possible, to provide your location and explain your situation.

WATER NEED



- Identify and maintain water sources, such as hydrants, ponds, swimming pools, and wells, and ensure that they are accessible to the fire department.

- Have a garden hose(s) that is long enough to reach any area of the house and other structures. When evacuating, leave hoses connected to a water source so that they are available for firefighters.

Wildfire Activity by County: 1994–2013

Source: *Wildfire Today*

Frequency of Wildfires
Greater or Equal to
300 Acres

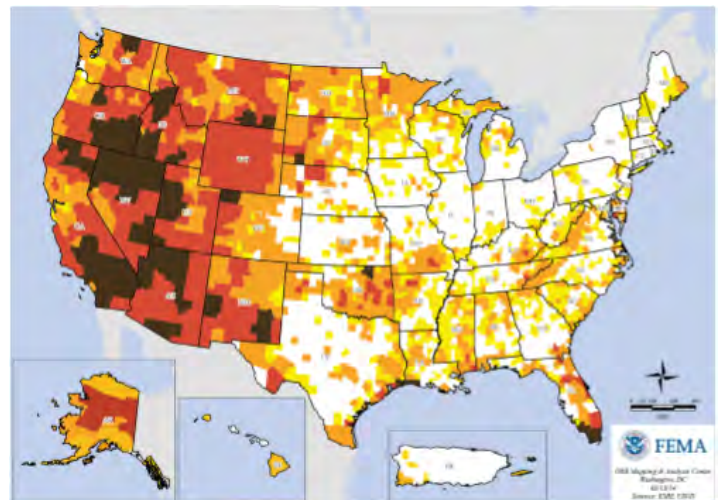
101–1,308

21–100

1–20

Counties where
largest wildfires
were less than
300 acres

Counties with
no recorded
wildfires



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