



Prepare Now For Wildfires

Hot, dry weather in the Pacific Northwest increases the potential of wildfires. To help Northwest residents prepare for possible wildfires, NW Insurance Council recommends the following safety measures to minimize losses and protect lives.

- Find your fire district. Make sure that there is a legally responsible fire protection agency in your area before you purchase a home, and if you live in an area that is unprotected by a fire protection agency, start or join a community effort to build your own community fire department.
- Inside the home, make sure every room has a smoke detector and each is tested monthly. Replace the batteries in smoke detectors twice a year, usually the best time to do that is when you change your clock times in the fall and the spring.
- Maintain an inventory of all of your possessions, including descriptions and serial numbers, if any, and keep this list (or video) in a safe location away from your home, such as in a safety deposit box.
- Keep fire extinguishers in strategic and accessible places and make sure they are properly charged and that each family member knows how to use them. To protect your interior possessions from damage due to the radiant heat of an external fire, consider installing protective shutters and fire resistant drapes.
- Landscape against fire. It is recommended to clear brush from within 30 to 100 feet or more of your home and to keep your yard groomed and well watered. Remove old stumps and weak or diseased trees from your property. If you notice tree branches touching power lines, contact your local utility company, and, move propane, oil and other tanks as far away from any structure as possible and surround them with 10 feet of clearance.
- Fireproof the roof. Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home because it can easily catch fire from wind-blown sparks. It is highly recommended that you build or re-roof with fire-resistive roofing materials and be sure to clear pine needles, leaves or other debris from your roof or gutters. Additionally, install screens on chimneys, stovepipes, roof or attic openings and unenclosed porches and decks.
- Be sure that your house number can be seen from the street. If firefighters can't find you -- they can't help you. And, make sure that the access to your property is at least 15 feet wide and clear of bushy shrubs and overhanging trees, as fire trucks are tall and wide.

These are just a few of the tips that can help you protect your family and possessions and give your home a chance to survive a wildfire. For additional information, contact your local emergency management office or fire department.