

Wildfire Emergency Plan

1. Preparing for Wildfire Season

Clear leaf debris, pine needles and other debris from the roof and gutters. This will reduce the risk of embers igniting combustible material on or near your roof. Install gutter guards to prevent combustible debris build-up.

To reduce ember penetration, replace or repair loose or missing roof shingles or tiles, and caulk any gaps or openings on roof edges. Install bird stops or ember stops into gaps between roof tiles and decking.

Seal any cracks or gaps in the eaves. Flying embers can get lodged in the cracks or enter the attic. Install specialty aftermarket ember resistant venting certified by the California state Fire Marshal. Unlike standard vents, they are designed to prevent embers from passing through into the attic. Manufacturers include Brandguard, Vulcan, and Embers Out.

Clear combustible debris, including dead vegetation and leaves, from under wood decks. Screen or enclose areas below decks with 1/8" metal mesh to prevent debris accumulation.

Remove combustible items stored under decks or porches, such as patio cushions, fuel cans, propane tanks, wood scraps, etc.

Fireproof storage: Use a UL fire-resistant safe for important documents, keep a map or blueprint of your residence.

Maintain an inventory of possessions, including fine art and jewelry. Consider listing items by room. Take videos of each room by opening drawers and cabinets for documentation.

Emergency Alerts: Sign up for regional emergency notification systems.

Visibility: Ensure the property address is visible from the road.

0-10 feet from the home:

Replace bark mulch within ten feet of all structures. Consider using rock, gravel or bare soil in these areas. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck, or porch.

Remove highly flammable planted vegetation within ten feet of all structures including juniper bushes, Italian Cypress trees, oleander, acacia, rosemary, and ornamental grasses. To maintain juniper bushes and Italian Cypress greater than ten feet from structures, use a pressure washer to blow out the dead material.

Trim trees that hang over your home or other structures, as they are more likely to transfer fire to your home. In addition, these trees will continually deposit combustible debris on the roof and in the gutters. Trimming trees away from the roof also reduces the risk of rodent intrusion.

Move wood piles away from any structure (we recommend 30 feet away) or cover with a fire-resistant tarp.

10-30 feet from the home:

Prune low-hanging branches on tall trees six to ten feet from the ground to lessen the likelihood of fire "laddering" up the trees. For smaller trees, prune low-hanging branches no more than one-third of the tree's height. Remove tall grasses, leaf debris, and any other combustible material from under trees.

Space trees to have a minimum of 18 feet between the crowns, with the distance increasing according to the steepness of the slope.

Remove dead thatch from palm trees as it ignites easily from flying embers. The thatch can also detach during windy conditions and spread flames to your home or elsewhere on your property.

30-100 feet from the home:

Reduce native grasses and brush. If it is brown, trim it down to reduce fire intensity. Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger; dispose of these items quickly. Native vegetation must be reduced up to at least 100 feet from the home, per most fire agency ordinances.

Keep flammable vegetation away from your propane tank, water tank, and solar panels.

Space trees to have 12 feet between the treetops. Ample spacing can help slow the spread of fire.

2. Creating a fire-resistive envelope for all structures

Your home's building envelope should have a minimum one-hour fire rating with no unconditioned spaces (including the attic, crawl space, and mechanical areas). This construction type eliminates the need for exterior vents that can allow embers to enter the home.

On renovations and partial fire loss reconstruction where the home has existing unconditioned spaces, retrofit all ventilation openings with specialty ember-resistant venting.

Cover exterior walls with fire-resistive siding such as fiber-cement, stucco, or plaster. Use nonflammable sheathing or constructed with concrete block or reinforced concrete.

Use a Class A-rated fire-resistive roof cover such as slate, concrete tiles, clay tile, or metal. Use bird stops or ember stops on "S" shaped tiles where the roof cover meets the decking. Use nonflammable underlayment.

Enclose eaves, fascia, and soffits by boxing them in with nonflammable material.

Install noncombustible gutters with a noncombustible gutter guard.

Use dual-paned or tempered glass in windows and/or sky lights. Consider installing large, missile impact-rated glass or a fire shutter system on all exterior glass openings.

Exterior doors, including garage doors, should have a one-hour U.L. fire rating.

Install interior and exterior fire sprinklers to minimize damage and to promote life safety.

Use fire-resistive materials or heavy timber for attachments to the home, such as decks, balconies and porches. Box in attachment undersides with fire-resistive materials so flammable debris cannot accumulate underneath. Replace vegetation underneath with gravel or rock. For decks that have open slats where embers can drop through, use fire-rated protection for the underside of floor structures. For example, Trex or Ipe must have noncombustible material such as concrete board underneath. Attached or detached heavy timber structures should be capped with metal.

Avoid locating elevated decks or similar attachments at the top of a hill. If stilts are used, they should be made of fire resistive materials or encased in stucco or plaster.

Do not directly connect wood fences to any structure. Use fire-resistive materials or separate the fence from the structure. As an alternative, use a masonry barrier or metal decorative pedestrian gate.

Use fire retardant additives for water-based latex paints, stains, polyurethane, and acrylic-type coatings.

Install an automatic back-up electrical generator to maintain power to the homes' critical systems including electric driveway gates, fire suppression systems, and water pumps as power failures can occur during a wildfire.

Fire caulk all mechanical penetrations through the exterior envelope of the structure (i.e., plumbing, HVAC, or electrical penetrations).

Only use low-growing, irrigated, fire-resistive plants within five feet of any structure as well as under eaves, fascia, and soffits.

Do not use highly flammable tree species such as Juniper, Italian Cypress or Palms on the property.

Replace bark mulch with rocks, stone, or hardscaping.

Do not use treated railroad ties as decorative landscaping, retaining walls, stairs, etc.

Install propane tanks at least 30 feet away from all structures.

If your home has a gated entry, incorporate a Knox Box system to expedite fire department access in the event of a fire. Install a mechanism that allows for manually opening the gate in case of a power outage.

Firewood should be stored at least 30 feet from all structures. Firewood enclosures should be constructed of noncombustible materials (i.e., concrete block or metal framed with concrete board and stucco or masonry cover).

Use fire-resistive water tanks for water sources instead of plastic materials.

3. Tips for a safe evacuation

(The following information, provided by the Ventura County Fire Department, is intended to assist in preparing for an evacuation)

Before you leave

Alert family and neighbors.

Dress in appropriate clothing (i.e., made from natural fibers, such as cotton, and work boots).

Have goggles and a dry bandana or particle mask handy.

Ensure that you have your emergency supply kit on hand that includes all necessary items, such as a battery powered radio, spare batteries, emergency contact numbers, and ample drinking water.

Stay tuned to your TV or local radio stations for updates or check the fire department website.

Remain close to your house, drink water, and keep an eye on your family and pets until you leave.

Indoor checklist

Shut all windows and doors, leaving them unlocked.

Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off pilot lights.

Leave your lights on so firefighters can see your house under smoky conditions.

Shut off the air conditioning.

Outdoor checklist

Gather flammable items from the exterior of the house (e.g., wood piles, patio furniture, children's toys, door mats, etc.) and bring them inside, move them to an open area away from structures or place them in your pool.

Turn off propane tanks and move them away from any structures.

Don't leave sprinklers on or water running—they can waste critical water pressure.

Leave exterior lights on.

Back cars into the driveway or garage with keys in the ignition. Shut doors and roll up windows.

Have a ladder available.

Patrol your property and extinguish all small fires until you leave.

Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals if time permits.

Leave residential gate open or manually disconnect in the event of a power failure

If you are unable to leave

Shelter away from outside walls.

Bring garden hoses inside the house so embers don't destroy them.

Patrol inside your home for spot fires and extinguish them.

Wear long sleeves and long pants made of natural fibers such as cotton.

Stay hydrated.

Ensure you can exit the home if it catches fire (remember if it's hot inside the house, it is four to five times hotter outside).

Fill sinks and tubs for an emergency water supply.

Place wet towels under doors to keep smoke and embers out.

After the fire has passed, check your roof and extinguish any fires, sparks, or embers.

Check inside the attic for hidden embers.

Patrol your property and extinguish small fires.

If there are fires that you cannot extinguish with a small amount of water or quickly, call 911.

Go early

By leaving early, you give your family the best chance of surviving a wildfire. You also help firefighters by keeping roads clear of congestion, enabling them to move more freely to do their job.

When to leave

Leave early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke, or road congestion. Don't wait to be told by the authorities to leave. In an intense wildfire, they may not have time to knock on every door. If you are advised to leave, don't hesitate!

Where to go

Leave to a predetermined location (it should be a low-risk area, such as a well-prepared neighbor or relative's house, a Red Cross shelter, or evacuation center, hotel, etc.)

How to get there

Have several travel routes in case one route is blocked by the fire or by emergency vehicles and equipment. Choose an escape route away from the fire.

What to take

Take your emergency supply kit containing your family's and pet's necessary items.

Emergency supplies

The American Red Cross recommends every family have an emergency supply kit assembled long before a wildfire or other emergency occurs. Use the checklist below to help assemble yours. For more information on emergency supplies, visit the American Red Cross Web site at www.redcross.org.

Three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day)	Important family documents and contact numbers
Non-perishable food for all family members and pets (three-day supply)	Map marked with evacuation routes
First aid kit	Prescriptions or special medications
Flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries	Family photos and other irreplaceable items
An extra set of car keys, credit cards, cash or traveler's checks	Easily carried valuables
Sanitation supplies	Personal computers (information on hard drives and disks)
Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses	Chargers for cell phones, laptops, etc.

Note

Keep a pair of old shoes and a flashlight handy in case of a sudden evacuation at night

4. Wildfire Defense Services

WDS Response Resources are allowed into each division of the wildfire upon the discretion of each Division Supervisor (fire agency appointed personnel). The Division Supervisor will allow WDS resources to operate within the respective Division of the fire if it is safe to do so. The Division Supervisor may also restrict our access within specific divisions due to safety precautions.