

WILDFIRE

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MONTHLY TOPIC

Increasing numbers of people are making their homes in woodland settings, rural areas, or remote mountain sites. These residents face the danger of wildfires. Wildfires often begin unnoticed, however they spread very quickly. Reduce your risk by preparing now - before wildfire strikes. Meet with your family to decide what to do and where to go if wildfires threaten your area.



CAUSES OF WILDFIRE

- Droughts and dry conditions throughout various times of the year increase the risk of wildfires.
- Careless use of fire in highly wooded or grassy areas dramatically increases the chance of a wildfire, which can then quickly spread across trees and dry brush and threaten homes and business that are in the vicinity.

PRACTICE WILDFIRE SAFETY AND PLAN AHEAD

- Contact your local fire department, health department, or forestry office for information on fire laws.
- Make sure that fire vehicles can get to your home.
- Clearly mark all driveway entrances and display your house number or address.
- Identify and maintain an adequate water source outside your home, such as a small pond, cistern, well or swimming pool.
- Set aside household items that can be used as fire tools. You may need to fight small fires before emergency responders arrive.
- Select building materials and plants that resist fire. Check this list for fire resistant plants in your area: <http://www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/firewise-landscaping-and-plant-lists.aspx>
- Regularly clean roofs and gutters.
- Teach children about fire safety. Keep matches out of their reach.
- Post fire emergency telephone numbers by every phone in your home.
- Plan several escape routes away from your home - by car and by foot.
- Select a family meeting place outside of your neighborhood in case you cannot get home or need to evacuate.
- Identify someone who is out of the area to contact in case local phone lines are not working.
- Talk to your neighbors about wildfire safety. Plan how the neighborhood could work together after a wildfire. Make plans to take care of children who may be on their own if parents can't get home.
- Report hazardous conditions that could cause a wildfire.
- Check <http://wildfireoregondeptofforestry.blogspot.com/> for daily wildfire alerts.



DEFENSIBLE SPACE

http://www.readyforwildfire.org/defensible_space

Defensible space is the buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surrounds it. It improves your home's chance of surviving a wildfire by slowing down or stopping the spread of wildfire.

Two zones make up the 100 feet of defensible space:

- ◇ Zone 1 - extends 30 feet out from structures
 - Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds (vegetation).
 - Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
 - Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- ◇ Zone 2: extends up to 100 feet from structures
 - Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
 - Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
 - Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs and trees.
 - Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of 3 inches.



DURING A WILDFIRE

- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Take your disaster supply kit, lock your home, and choose a route away from the fire hazard. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of the fire and smoke. Tell someone when you left and where you are going.
- Be ready to leave at a moment's notice. Listen to local radio and television stations for updated emergency information.
- Consult Ready.gov for more information on how to defend your home from wildfires.

OSU EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND WARNING INFORMATION



[OSU Emergency Preparedness Website](#)
[OSU Alert—Sign Up](#)

OSU Emergency Plan mobile device app—*In Case of Crisis*

- [Apple iTunes Store \(iOS\)](#)
- [Google Play \(Android\)](#)
- [Kindle Fire](#)
- [Windows devices—download a PDF version of the plan](#)

MORE INFORMATION

Firewise.org - Firewise Landscaping and Plant Lists

Redcross.org - Wildfire Preparedness

Ready.gov - Wildfires

Readyforwildfire.org - Wildfire is Coming. Are You Ready?

*If electronic copy (with clickable links) is needed, e-mail your request to Michael.Bamberger@oregonstate.edu
Publication developed by Aimee Vrvilo. Design and content editing by Lindsey Hollinger.*