

Before Fire Season

Review this checklist every spring.

Be Ready for Wildfire

- Determine the meeting places and emergency contacts for family members.
- Provide meeting places and contact information to daycare providers, elder caregivers, and/or teachers.
- Determine safe places to take pets and livestock.
- Identify escape routes — from house and from property.
- Create or purchase an emergency disaster supply kit — include nonperishable food, potable water, flashlight and batteries.
- Store a ladder, rakes, axes, and shovels for use in case of fire.
- Make sure there is enough garden hose to reach all parts of the house.
- Evaluate the driveway for fire and emergency vehicle access.
- Check posted road signs and house numbers for visibility.

Maintain Your Defensible Space

- Prune any new growth within the defensible zone.
- Dispose of slash. Mow grass and weeds to a low height.
- Stack firewood uphill and away from home.
- Clear vegetation from fire hydrants, cisterns, and propane tanks.
- Call your utility company to remove vegetation near power lines.

Maintain Your Structures in Preparation for Wildfire

- Clean out all pine needles and other materials from gutters, chimneys, and stove pipes. Sweep the roof.
- Check spark-arrester screens and fire extinguishers.
- Remove any branches overhanging roof and chimney.
- Install and semi-annually test smoke detectors.
- Screen any foundation or attic vents.
- Enclose foundations and decks so they are less likely to become heat traps or collect blowing embers.



FireWise Southwest Colorado

FireWise Southwest Colorado is a citizen-based council created to promote wildfire preparedness, mitigation, and education. For more information e-mail:

firewiseswcolorado@yahoo.com

Or visit this website:

www.southwestcoloradofires.org

For more information, contact:

- Your local fire department
- Colorado State Forest Service
(970) 247-5250
www.colostate.edu/depts/CSFS/
- Firewise
www.firewise.org/
- Firewise Colorado
www.firewise.org/co/



This brochure funded by San Juan Public Lands and San Juan Mountains Association.



Preparing for Wildfire

We don't have to worry about hurricanes and tornadoes in southwestern Colorado, but we do need to think about wildfire. We live in a fire-dependant ecosystem often affected by drought. Adjusting to this fact and being prepared is the price we must pay to live in such a beautiful place.

There are many things you and your family can do in advance to prepare for wildfire. You can improve the defensible space around your home and make it easier for firefighters to do their jobs. You can have a pre-arranged plan for your family in case a wildfire occurs near your home. Plus you can have your family, home, and important personal items ready for evacuation if it becomes necessary. What you do now, in advance, can make a difference and give you peace of mind.

What to do During a Wildfire

Prepare to Evacuate

- Dress to prevent burns: wear sturdy shoes, cotton or wool clothing, long pants, gloves, eye protection, and a bandana to protect your face.
- Contact your neighbors and tell them about the fire.
- Park the car in the garage, facing out with the windows closed and the keys in the ignition. Do NOT leave the vehicle running.
- Close and unlock garage door. Disconnect automatic openers.
- Place documents and mementos inside the car in the garage. Don't forget home insurance information, your address book, the computer hard-drive, prescriptions and eyeglasses, cell phone charger, extra car keys, and credit cards. Take personal items and clothes for a minimum of five days.
- Confine pets to one room or inside pet carriers.
- Leave a note inside your home with contact information.



If Time Allows — Outside Your Home

- Cover windows and other openings with fire-resistant material.
- Shut off propane or natural gas valves.
- Move excess gasoline and propane bottles to open areas.
- Attach garden hoses to spigots and place them so they can reach any area of your house.
- Fill trashcans and buckets with water and place outside where firefighters can find them.
- Place a ladder against the house, opposite the approaching fire.



If Time Allows — Inside Your Home

- Move combustible deck furniture inside the home or garage.
- Close all windows and doors to prevent sparks from blowing inside.
- Remove curtains or drapes. If you have metal blinds or fire-resistant window coverings, close them.
- Turn on room lights and porch lights for visibility.
- Move stuffed furniture away from windows and walls.



Evacuating

- Let authorities know of neighbors needing assistance.
- Use pre-planned routes, away from the approaching fire front.
- If you are trapped by fire while evacuating in your car, park in an area clear of vegetation. Close the windows and vents, cover yourself with a blanket or jacket, and lie on the floor.
- If you are trapped by fire while evacuating on foot, select an area clear of vegetation along a road, or lie in the road ditch. Cover any exposed skin. Stay low; fire travels fast uphill.
- If you are trapped by wildfire inside your home, stay away from outside walls. Close doors, but leave them unlocked. Keep your entire family together and remain calm.