

Wildfires are intense fires that are usually caused by careless humans or lightning. Campfires, children playing with matches or lighters, and cigarettes are the most common things that cause brush fires or wildfires so please be careful when you're out in deserts, mountains, or any other heavy vegetation areas. And please don't toss cigarettes out when driving!

NEVER leave a campfire burning - make sure it is completely out using plenty of water before leaving the area. Stir the coals around with a stick or log while pouring water over them to ensure all the coals get wet and they are no longer hot. Any hot coals left unattended can be easily ignited by wind since they can stay hot for 24 - 48 hours.

When building a campfire, always choose a level site, clear away any branches and twigs several feet from the fire, and never build a fire beneath tree branches or on surface roots. Also, build at least 10 feet (3 m) from any large rocks that could be blackened by smoke or cracked from a fire's heat.

See your local Forest Service office or Ranger Station for more information on campfires and permits. Or visit www.fs.fed.us or www.pc.gc.ca

BEFORE A WILDFIRE (FIRE SAFETY TIPS):

Prepare - See WILDFIRE MITIGATION at beginning of this Section.

Learn fire laws - Ask fire authorities or the forestry office for information on fire laws (like techniques, safest times to burn in your area, etc.)

Could they find & reach you? - Make sure that fire vehicles can get to your property and that your address is clearly marked.

Safety zone - Create a 30-100 foot (9-30 m) safety zone around your home. (see *WILDFIRE MITIGATION*)

Teach kids - Explain to children that matches and lighters are TOOLS, not toys... and if they see someone playing with fire tell an adult right away. And teach kids how to report a fire and when to call 9-1-1.

Tell authorities - Report hazardous conditions that could cause a wildfire.

Be ready to evacuate - Listen to local authorities and leave if you are told to evacuate. (see *EVACUATION*)

DURING A WILDFIRE:

Listen - Have a radio to keep up on news, weather and evacuation routes.

Evacuate? – If you are told to leave - do so ... and **IF** you have time also...

- Secure your home - close windows, vents, all doors, etc.
- Turn off utilities and tanks at main switches or valves.
- Turn on a light in each room to increase the visibility of your home in heavy smoke.
- See WILDFIRE MITIGATION at front of this section.

Head downhill – Fire climbs uphill 16 times faster than on level terrain (since heat rises) so always head down when evacuating the area.

Food & water - If you prepared ahead, you'll have your **Disaster Supplies Kit** handy to **GRAB & GO**... if not, gather up enough food and water for each family member for at least 3 days or longer!

Be understanding - Please realize the firefighters main objective is getting wildfires under control and they may not be able to save every home. Try to understand and respect the firefighters' and local officials' decisions.

AFTER A WILDFIRE:

Don't go there - Never enter fire-damaged areas until authorities say it's okay and watch for signs of smoke or heat in case the fire isn't totally out.

Critters - Don't try to care for a wounded critter -- call Animal Control.

Utilities - Have an electrician check your household wiring before you turn the power back on and **DO NOT** try to reconnect any utilities yourself!

Damage - Look for structural damage (roof, walls, floors) -- may be weak.

Call for help - Local disaster relief services (Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.) can help provide shelter, food, or personal items that were destroyed.

Insurance - Call your insurance agent or representative and...

- Keep receipts of all clean-up and repair costs
- Do not throw away any damaged goods until an official inventory has been taken by your insurance company.

If you rent - Contact your landlord since it is the owner's responsibility to prevent further loss or damage to the site.

Move your stuff - Secure belongings or move them to another location.

Recovery tips - See TIPS ON RECOVERING FROM A DISASTER.