

OREGON WILDFIRE READINESS GUIDE



Regardless of where you live, wildfires can impact your way of life. Whether a fire is threatening your property or home, or smoke from a fire miles away is affecting your health or daily routine, wildfires know no boundaries.

A wildfire can spread quickly by igniting brush, trees, homes, and anything else in its path.

This guide will help you prevent wildfires and, in the event of a fire, prepare your home and loved ones. Keep this guide at your fingertips to learn what to do before, during, and after a wildfire.

The Fire Triangle

Fire occurs due to a combination of heat, oxygen, and fuel. These three elements make up the **fire triangle**.

By removing one of these elements, the fire cannot stand, or survive, and will go out.



When fighting a wildfire, removing the oxygen is the most difficult. Firefighters focus their efforts on removing the fuel (using dozers and hand tools) and heat (using water) to put fires out.

As a homeowner or outdoor enthusiast, you can apply the fire triangle in your daily life. From removing fuel around your home creating defensible space to having the proper fire tools and water on hand while enjoying your campfire, these simple steps will help prevent wildfires from starting or spreading.



Fire Danger

Signs depicting fire danger are used to remind us that fires can start from spark-emitting activities. Fire danger is determined by several factors, including weather and vegetation moisture levels. Fire restrictions may be implemented based on the fire danger level.



Low: Fires are possible but not easily started. Vegetation doesn't ignite easily. Fires may burn slowly or smolder in grass. Caution, these types of fires may go unnoticed and turn into something bigger as fire danger increases. Few fire restrictions may be in place.

Moderate: Fires may start and can spread. Fires can start from sparks or embers, but they often need the right combination of wind and dry fuels to increase the rate of fire spread. Fires are not likely to become large and can be controlled relatively easily. Fire restrictions start to increase, such as equipment use during the heat of the day.

High: Fires start easily and can spread at a fast rate. Grasses, leaves, and twigs ignite easily, and fire can spread rapidly into heavier fuels, such as branches and logs. Fire potential increases and can be difficult to control. Fire restrictions continue to tighten, such as limiting off-road driving or equipment use to cooler morning hours.

Extreme: Fires start very easily and intensify quickly. Fire restrictions are elevated to prohibit certain activities, such as campfires, off-road driving, and equipment use.

Red Flag Warnings

Red Flag Warnings issued by the National Weather Service mean warm temperatures, very low humidities, and stronger winds are expected to combine to produce an increased risk of fire. When a Red Flag Warning is in effect, avoid all spark-producing activities and stay alert to fires in your area.



National Weather Service (NWS)

[weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov) (Scan QR code to visit)

[weather.gov/fire](https://www.weather.gov/fire)

[fb.com/NWS](https://www.facebook.com/NWS)

[x.com/nws](https://www.x.com/nws)

Prevent Accidental Wildfires

Two out of every three wildfires in Oregon are started by people. As the weather warms and the winds pick up, common outdoor activities, from mowing to backyard campfires, can ignite dry vegetation and spread out of control. Please do your part to prevent wildfires.

Contact your local fire agency or forestry office for information on current fire restrictions or burn bans. Regulations can vary by location depending on the weather and fuel conditions.

Keep Oregon Green

Any activity that produces sparks, from target shooting to gas-powered equipment, can ignite a wildfire. Always have proper fire tools on hand, such as a fire extinguisher, shovel, garden hose or bucket of water to extinguish any sparks or escaped embers.

If you see smoke or a fire, call 911 immediately.

For more information on preventing human-caused wildfires visit Keep Oregon Green.



keeporegongreen.org

(Scan QR code to visit)

fb.com/keeporegongreen

x.com/keeporegongreen

instagram.com/keeporegongreen



Wildfire Prevention

oregon.gov/odf/fire/pages/fireprevention.aspx *(Scan QR code to visit)*

Debris Burning

Escaped debris burns are a leading cause of wildfires. If you choose to burn debris, state law requires the proper clearing, building, attending, and extinguishing of any open fire year-round. In most areas during fire season, debris burning requires a permit or is completely prohibited. When allowed, the safest time to burn is in the morning when temperatures are low, and humidity is high. Follow all air quality regulations related to outdoor burning.

- **Keep burn piles small** – Large burn piles can cast hot embers long distances. Keep piles small (a maximum of four feet by four feet, 50 feet away from structures, and clear a 10-foot radius down to bare soil). Add debris to the pile in small amounts as the pile burns.
- **Always have water and fire tools nearby** – When burning, have a charged water hose or a bucket of water and shovel on hand to put out the fire. Drown the pile with water, stir the coals, and drown again, repeating until the fire is out cold.
- **Go back and check burn piles** – Piles retain heat for several weeks and may restart when the weather warms up and winds blow.



beforeyouburn.net (Scan QR code to visit)



Wildfire Data

oregon.gov/odf/fire/pages/firestats.aspx (Scan QR code to visit)

Equipment Use

Motor vehicles (including ATVs), lawn mowers, and power saws are a few examples of equipment that can cause a wildfire. A vehicle driving or idling over dry grass, a lawn mower blade striking a rock, or a power saw casting sparks into dry vegetation can start a fire.

Keep vehicles on established roads and trails during fire season. Secure tow chains and repair dragging metal car parts. Follow current equipment use restrictions and keep overheated power equipment away from dry vegetation.

Make sure exhaust systems are in good working order and spark arresters are free of carbon build-up.



Campfires

Campfires can escape if left unattended or not fully extinguished before you call it a night or leave the campsite. Build campfires in a fire ring, clear debris at least 10 feet around them, always stay with the fire, and put the campfire out cold.

Keep a full bucket of water and a shovel nearby to extinguish your campfire completely. Drown the fire with water, stir the coals, and drown again, repeating until it is out cold.

Neighborhood Preparedness

Wildfires cross property boundaries. When you work with your neighbors you improve your safety as well as theirs.

Talk with your neighbors about wildfire preparedness. Plan how the neighborhood can work together before, during, and after a wildfire.

There are many ways to organize your neighborhood around wildfire preparedness. The Firewise USA® program is one opportunity to explore. Becoming a nationally recognized Firewise USA® site encourages your neighbors to work together with support from practitioners to improve your community's wildfire resilience. Firewise USA® neighborhoods use free community wildfire risk assessments developed by fire professionals to create an action plan to reduce their shared risk. Firewise USA® sites may even be eligible for grant opportunities.

To learn more about becoming a Firewise USA® site contact your Oregon Firewise liaison at firewise.org.



FIREWISE USA®
Residents Reducing Wildfire Risks

firewise.org (Scan QR code to visit)



Home Hardening & Defensible Space

Home hardening involves making specific improvements to a building, such as installing fire-resistant roofing, screening vents to prevent embers from entering, upgrading to non-combustible building materials, and ensuring windows and doors are fire-resistant, all to better protect the structure against fire.

Defensible space is the buffer you create between a structure and the vegetation (grasses, shrubs, trees) and other fuels around it to slow or stop the spread of wildfire as it approaches the building.

Home Ignition

Buildings, homes, and communities are vulnerable to three potential ignition sources during a wildfire:

- **Embers** carried by the wind from the main fire can blow into attic vents, open windows, underneath decks, into the nooks and crannies of the roof, and onto flammable landscaping and stored items. Most buildings lost in wildfires are due to ember ignition.
- **Surface fires** burn through grass, trees, and shrubs, which can lead the fire to your house.
- **Radiant heat** is intense heat from nearby burning vegetation or structures like a woodshed. It can produce large flames that radiate enough heat to ignite wood walls or break windows.

Home Hardening

Consider the following home improvement options to increase the chances of your home surviving a wildfire.

Roof: The roof is the most vulnerable part of your home. Flying embers easily ignite wood shake roofs or roofs in disrepair. Ensure your current roof is in good condition with no missing shingles or gaps that could allow embers to intrude.

When building a new home or replacing a roof, choose a fire-resistant or non-combustible roof made of asphalt, metal, clay tile, slate, or concrete.

Gutters: When building a new home or replacing the gutters, choose metal gutter materials and covers.

Siding: Common siding materials made of wood and vinyl are flammable.

When building a new home or replacing your siding, choose non-combustible or ignition-resistant siding such as fiber cement, brick, stone, plaster, or metal.

Check that your siding and skirting are in good condition.

Ensure that there are at least six vertical inches of non-combustible material between the ground and the home's siding.

Windows: Radiant heat from a wildfire can break windows, allowing embers to enter your home and start a fire. When building a new home or replacing windows, install dual-paned windows that include at least one pane of tempered glass.

Vents: Flying embers can enter your home through vents. Cover vents or open areas, including exterior attic, foundation, and soffit vents with 1/8-inch metal wire mesh.

Decks and other attachments: Any wooden attachments, such as decks, porches, and stairs, can ignite and lead a fire to your home.

Build decks using composite decking, fire-treated wood boards, or non-flammable materials.

For first-story decks, use 1/8-inch metal screen or non-combustible skirting to enclose the area under the deck.

For second-story decks, keep that area completely clear of combustible debris and stored items or enclose the area under the deck.

Install non-combustible flashing between any wooden attachments and your siding.

Fencing: When installing a fence within five feet of a home or structure, create a five-foot non-combustible buffer, such as a metal gate, fencing, or a concrete barrier.

Defensible Space

Creating and maintaining defensible space can increase the chance that your home survives a wildfire. Use fire-safe building materials and landscaping techniques to create defensible space which can help protect your home and even firefighters. Apply these principles to any structure on your property that you wish to protect.

THE BUILDING AND AREA DIRECTLY NEXT TO IT

- Clean leaves, conifer needles, and other debris from the roof and gutters.
- Remove or relocate vegetation growing within five feet of your home.
- Remove leaves, conifer needles, wood, bark mulch, and other debris from the surface of, around, and below decks and fences.
- No combustible material should be within five feet of your home.

UP TO 100 FEET FROM THE BUILDING OR TO PROPERTY LINE

- Prune and space trees following the example in the illustration.
- Remove leaves, conifer needles, wood, bark mulch, and other burnable debris from within 100 feet of the building or the property line.
- Plant and care for fire-resistant plants.
- Keep grass mowed to less than four inches during wildfire season.
- Keep firewood and lumber piles at least 30 feet from any structure during wildfire season.
- Clear combustible vegetation and materials are placed at least 10 feet around and above permanent propane tanks.
- Store portable propane tanks at least 30 feet away from the house or in an outbuilding.



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

If you live on a slope, or have the space on your property, extend your defensible space out to 200 feet.

Make sure your driveway is accessible to first responders:

- Clear vegetation along the length of your driveway at least 20 feet wide and 13.5 feet tall. The driving surface should be 12 feet wide.
- Add visible address markings with a reflective sign with numbers at least four inches in height.
- Check for and follow local ordinances and covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs), or regulations focused on defensible space or vegetation management.

FARMS AND RANCHES

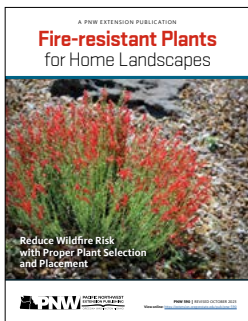
- Communicate early with fire professionals to coordinate firefighting on your property.
- Keep copies of gate keys and a written list of combinations in a known location.
- Mow grass and trim back weeds around pastures and structures to create and maintain fuel breaks.
- Clear a 10 foot space around fuel tanks. Ground all fueling nozzles to avoid sparking a fire.
- Keep fire equipment on site. Create a safety zone for fire equipment and water supply that is clear of combustible fuels.
- Reinforce fences with metal posts.
- Make sure wiring is grounded.
- Check hay bale moisture content frequently.
- Use spark arresters and check for dragging metal components on all equipment.

Home Hardening & Defensible Space Resources

Consult the Oregon State Fire Marshal, your local fire agency, or an Oregon Department of Forestry field office for a free property assessment.



oregon.gov/osfm/wildfire/Pages/defensiblespace.aspx
(Scan QR code to visit)



catalog.extension.
oregonstate.edu/pnw590



oregon.gov/bcd/Documents/fire-hardening-grant-guide.pdf



oregon.gov/osfm/Pages/Fire-Adapted-Oregon.aspx
(Scan QR code to visit)



oregonexplorer.info
(Scan QR code to visit)

Insurance

Insurance Tips Before a Wildfire

- Create and keep a written inventory of your possessions with lists, pictures, or video. Document each room, closet, and drawer. Remember to include the contents of your garage or any other structure on your property.
- Keep receipts of major purchases. Store important documents and insurance cards and policies outside the home or make digital copies.
- Understand your insurance policy and know what it covers. Contact your agent annually to make sure your insurance policy is active and that it provides enough coverage to pay the full cost of replacing your property.
- Update your policy after a remodel.
- Make sure your policy reflects your home's square footage.
- Consider a policy that includes additional living expenses to cover lodging, food, and other expenses if you're forced to leave your home after suffering a covered loss.

Homeowner and Renter Insurance

Your home may be your biggest asset; protect it with insurance. Most homeowner policies cover property losses caused by brush, grass or forest fires. Renter's insurance can cover personal belongings.

For more information on homeowner's insurance, visit the Insurance Information Institute's website at iii.org.

For insurance inquiries and help, visit dfr.oregon.gov or call 888-877-4894 to speak with a consumer advocate, free of charge.



**Insurance
Information
Institute**

iii.org

(Scan QR code to visit)



**Division of
Financial
Regulation**

dfr.oregon.gov

(Scan QR code to visit)



NAIC Home Insurance Guide

[dfr.oregon.gov/help/
outreach-education/
Documents/publications/
NAIC-Home-Insurance-
Guide.pdf](http://dfr.oregon.gov/help/outreach-education/Documents/publications/NAIC-Home-Insurance-Guide.pdf)

Evacuation Planning

Be Informed

- Sign up or update your information at ORalert.gov to receive local emergency alerts.
- Enable Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) on cell phones.
- Follow local emergency services' official pages on social media.
- Have a battery-powered AM/FM emergency radio.
- Create a community network by talking to your neighbors about emergency plans.



oralert.gov
(Scan QR code to visit)

Older Adults and People with Disabilities

Older adults and people with disabilities should consider individual circumstances and specific needs when planning for emergencies and disasters.

- Make plans for how you will communicate, equipment needed, transportation, and service animal considerations.

Pets, Livestock and Other Animals

- Have an evacuation plan for all animals.
- Prepare a pet evacuation kit with food, water, leashes, bedding, identification, medication, and vaccination and medical records.
- Plan for transportation of large animals and identify safe shelter options. Practice loading animals before an emergency occurs.
- Ensure proper registration and branding of livestock.
- Have a plan for feeding livestock if grazing land is destroyed by fire.
- Open/unlock gates so livestock can escape flames.
- Hook up your stock trailer early and be ready for an evacuation.

Have an Emergency Plan

- Identify evacuation routes from home, work, or school.
- Establish a household communication plan that names an out-of-area contact, a meeting place outside of the hazard area, and how you'll contact each other if you're separated during an emergency.
- Discuss the plan with your household, loved ones, friends, and neighbors.
- Practice the plan so you'll be ready when disaster strikes.

Make a Go-Kit

Pack a bag for each member of the family that includes essential supplies:

- Food, water, hygiene, sanitation, and clothing.
- Medications, contacts, eyeglasses, and medical devices.
- Phones, computers, and chargers.
- Debit and credit cards and cash.
- Photo I.D., birth certificates, social security cards, insurance policies, mortgage deeds or rental agreements, medical records, and financial records.

During a Wildfire

BE READY. BE SET. GO NOW!

Knowing what to do when receiving an evacuation notification will help you stay safe during a wildfire.

Oregon follows a three-level evacuation notification system structured around the readiness need and threat level:

LEVEL 1

BE READY:

Prepare to evacuate.

LEVEL 2

BE SET:

Be set to evacuate at a moment's notice.

LEVEL 3

GO NOW!

Leave immediately!



wildfire.oregon.gov/evacuations
(Scan QR code to visit)

Current Fire Incidents
<https://arcg.is/1qr5bS>

Become familiar with the three evacuation levels and what they mean.

- Evacuate any time you feel unsafe, as conditions can change quickly.
- If you are advised to evacuate, follow your emergency plan, grab your go-bag, and leave immediately.
- Do not stop to gather additional belongings or protect your home.
- Drive carefully, turn on headlights, and follow traffic safety warnings and instructions from local authorities.
- After an evacuation, do not return to the area until public safety officials announce it is safe.

Wildfire Evacuation Resources

EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Designated public shelters may be available if you have been told to evacuate or if you feel it is unsafe to remain in your home.

To find an emergency shelter, **call 211** or **1-866-698-6155**, visit **211info.org**, or text your zip code to 898211. Text is available Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., in Spanish/English. TTY: dial 711 and call 1-866-698-6155. Language interpreters are available by phone.

211info provides free, confidential information about health, community, and social services.



211info.org (Scan QR code to visit)



**American
Red Cross**



[redcross.org/
local/oregon.
html](http://redcross.org/local/oregon.html) (*Scan QR
code to visit*)

fb.com/RedCrossCascades
x.com/RedCrossCasc



Smoke Info
[oregon
smoke.
blogspot.com](http://oregon.smoke.blogspot.com)



**Air Quality
Index**
[oregon.gov/
deq/airquality/Pages/
airquality.aspx](http://oregon.gov/deq/airquality/Pages/airquality.aspx)

(*Scan QR code to visit*)
x.com/ORSmokeInfo

Prepare Your Home for Evacuation

WHAT TO DO INSIDE YOUR HOME IF YOU HAVE TIME

- Shut all windows and doors, including pet doors and interior doors.
- Close fireplace dampers and screens.
- Turn off pilot lights.
- Leave interior and exterior lights on to make your home visible to firefighters in smoke or darkness.
- Turn off the air conditioning and ventilation fans to reduce airflow through the house.
- Leave your contact information on your dining room table.
- Take a video or pictures of the inside and outside of your home for insurance purposes.

WHAT TO DO OUTSIDE YOUR HOME IF YOU HAVE TIME

- Load your emergency supplies into the vehicle and make sure the gas tank is full. Carry your keys with you. Keep car doors and windows shut and set the ventilation system to recycle air to keep smoke out.
- Gather flammable and combustible items and bring them inside. This includes furniture, portable propane tanks, toys, doormats, etc.
- Turn off propane tanks. Move propane appliances and gasoline cans away from structures.
- Do not shut off your natural gas. The company can shut down systems when fire threatens an area. If your natural gas is shut off during a wildfire, do not turn it back on. Call your natural gas provider.
- Help firefighters by placing a metal ladder at the corner of the house, leaving gates securely propped open, connecting garden hoses to outside water faucets, and filling water buckets and placing them around the house.
- Don't leave sprinklers on or water running for municipal or community systems, as that can affect critical water pressure.
- Close and seal your attic and ground vents with non-combustible materials.



After a Wildfire

Returning Home

Return home only when you are given the all-clear from local law enforcement. Authorities need to ensure that the fire danger has passed and any fallen electrical lines, gas leaks, or dangerous trees are dealt with before you return.

Be Cautious

Be very careful when returning to your property after a fire. Wear gloves, long-sleeves, long pants, shoes, and socks to protect your skin. Wear goggles to protect your eyes. Limit how much ash you breathe in by wearing an N95 respirator.

Look out for unstable burnt trees or power poles, live power lines on the ground, hot embers, and holes filled with hot ash.

WHEN FIRST ENTERING YOUR HOME:

- If you smell gas, leave the house and call your utility provider.
- If you have power, turn it off until your inspection is complete.
- Inspect the roof, rain gutters, porch, etc., for sparks or embers. If you find any, wet them right away or call the fire department.



**FEMA Disaster
Recovery Center**
800-621-FEMA (3362)
disasterassistance.gov

ONCE INSIDE YOUR HOME:

- Check for embers in your attic. Do this several times over a few days.
- Watch for animals that may have found shelter in your home or garage.
- Contact your utility providers about restoration of services, such as electricity, water, and gas.
- Throw out any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke, or soot.
- Do not use water that you think may be contaminated.
- If you have a safe or strong box, do not try to open it. It can hold heat for several hours. If opened before cooled, the contents can catch fire.

Insurance tips after a wildfire

- Contact your insurance company immediately. Keep a record of all communication you have with your company.
- Make a list of your damaged property. Photograph or record a video of the damage, if possible.
- Make the necessary repairs to protect your home and property from further damage. Keep a record of your repair expenses and save all receipts.
- When repairing your home, work only with licensed and bonded contractors. Check references and insist on having an itemized contract. Pay only as work is completed.
- Ask your agent about additional living expenses. Keep your receipts.
- Know what deductibles you have to pay.
- Be home when the adjuster inspects your damage.

State of Oregon Resources

Dept of Agriculture (ODA)

oregon.gov/oda/agriculture/Pages/WildfireResources.aspx

Dept of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS)

oregon.gov/dcbs
fb.com/OregonDCBS
x.com/OregonDCBS

Dept of Emergency Management (OEM)

oregon.gov/oem
fb.com/OMDOEM
x.com/OregonOEM

Dept of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

oregon.gov/deq

Dept of Forestry (ODF)

oregon.gov/odf
fb.com/oregondepartmentofforestry
x.com/ORDeptForestry

Dept of State Fire Marshal (OSFM)

oregon.gov/osfm
fb.com/OregonStateFireMarshal
x.com/OSFM

Dept of Transportation (ODOT)

oregon.gov/odot
fb.com/OregonDOT
x.com/OregonDOT

LIVING WITH WILDFIRE

Wildfire is a natural occurrence across all Oregon landscapes. Living in a fire-adapted place comes with certain risks that we can learn to mitigate. For example, we can protect our homes, create emergency plans, prepare for smoke, and minimize the chance of accidentally sparking a fire.

This guide offers tips to prevent fires and reduce the risks that come with living with wildfire.

Thank you to Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Deschutes Rural Fire District #2, OSU Extension Fire Program, Oregon Department of Emergency Management, and Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services for their contributions to this guide.

