

Preparing for Wildfire

Numerous grass and brush fires have already sprung up across western Washington, and conditions are most likely going to get worse over the next couple of months. The good news is there are simple ways to help prepare and protect your property in the event of a wildfire.

If you live in or adjacent to a wooded area, especially at the top of a slope, take special precautions to reduce your wildfire risk. Always be careful with fire and obey burn bans.



Here are some tips for preparing your home and landscape to be more survivable in a wildfire.

For Fire-Service Access, Ensure:

- Your address marker is easily viewed at night.
- Firefighters can get equipment down your driveway. Driveways and gates should be at least 12 feet wide with a 15-foot vertical clearance, and a less than 5% slope.
- Adequate turnaround areas for firetrucks are incorporated into your road. If firefighters have concerns their equipment could become trapped they may not be able to drive down your driveway.

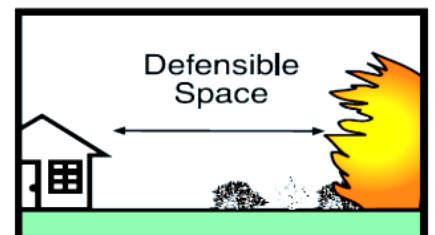
Your Home & Structures (Built Fuel)

- The roof is the most vulnerable part of your home in a wildfire. It should be Class A fire-rated roofing. Ask a professional for guidance on this.
- Choose metal or vinyl gutters.
- Keep your roof and gutters free of flammable leaves, needles, and debris.
- Cover or enclose attic, eave, soffit and crawl space openings with 1/8-1/4 inch metal screening to prevent embers from blowing in.
- Install double paned windows that can withstand more heat.
- Choose metal screening for windows.
- Remove highly flammable furniture and floor mats from decks when leaving for multiples days during fire season.
- Enclose the area under decks with 1/8-1/4 inch metal screening or other fire-resistant material to prevent embers from blowing in.
- If wooden fences are connected to the house, put metal flashing between the connections.
- Store firewood and lumber 40 feet away from the house and other structures.



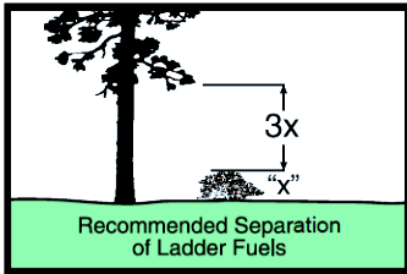
Your Landscaping – 5 feet from house

- Remove dead vegetation and debris from around structures and under decks, including raking back accumulated layers of dry needles and leaves from against the house.
- Trim tree limbs so they don't hang over the roof.
- Keep areas adjacent to structures clear of highly flammable plants, such as most evergreen trees, junipers, lavender, etc.
- Consider putting a 3 to 5-foot wide swath of gravel around the base of homes and structures.



Your Landscaping – up to 30 feet from house

- Keep grass short around all structures, wood piles, and propane tanks.
- Maintain vegetation in a healthy condition. If possible, irrigate this area of your landscape.
- Maintain an emergency water source. If you have an irrigation system, make sure it is operable even if you've turned it off in to conserve water; it may come in handy in case of fire.
- Have tools (e.g., shovel, rake, axe, handsaw or chainsaw) and water hoses readily available. These can be useful in the event of wildfire.



Your Landscaping – over 30 feet from house

- Ground fires can become dangerous tree crown fires if the lower limbs of large trees and understory vegetation that create a ladder for the fire are not removed. The lowest limbs should be trimmed 6 to 10 feet from the ground or understory plants.
- Incorporate fuel breaks into your landscape such as a gravel driveway or path, healthy lawn, water features, and sidewalks.

Lastly, prepare for wildfire by developing, discussing and practicing a disaster plan with everyone in your home. Your disaster plan should include the following:

- Details for care/evacuation of pets and livestock.
- Identification of at least two ways out of your neighborhood.
- A designated meeting place.

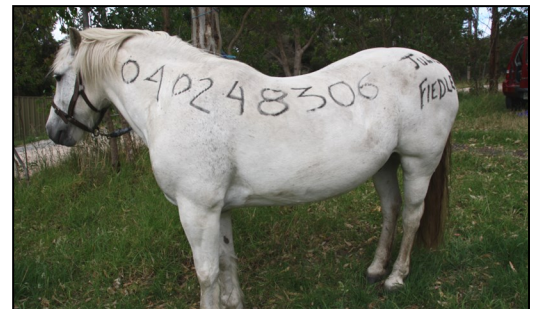


Visit [Washington Department of Natural Resources website for more Wildfire Prevention](#) information.

Fire Evacuation Planning for Large Animals



- Make sure animals are trained to load quickly in a trailer or, if they are not trained to lead, that you have fence panels or a corral to pen them up to load into a trailer.
- Pre-determine possible locations to take your animals. Have portable fencing ready in your trailer (solar charger, hot wire and step-in posts) in case you need to put up a temporary fence.
- Put animals in a pre-determined “fire safe area” on your property if evacuation isn’t possible. It should be as large as possible, devoid of flammable vegetation and surrounded by fire-proof, metal fencing. It could be a large sand arena (no wood footing or fencing which can ignite and burn), a large dry lot turnout or an over-grazed pasture. If time permits, put water and feed in the center in non-flammable, metal containers.
- Remove all synthetics (nylon halters, blankets, fly masks), since they can melt and burn an animal. Instead, use cotton or leather halters and leads.
- If you have to leave animals try to put your contact information on them with a livestock marking pen (grease pen). On horses, a metal identification tag like those used on dog collars can also be braided into a mane.
- Finally, **never, ever turn animals loose**. Loose horses and livestock on roadways can block both traffic and emergency personnel who are trying to deal with the fire.



A livestock marking pen is used to make the owners phone number and name large enough to be read from a distance.