

# ***ARE YOU READY FOR WILDFIRE?***

## ***Extreme Winter Drought Conditions have Increased Wildfire Danger Statewide***

California's drought continues to cause wildfire activity to remain much higher than normal. While the late winter of 2014 and early part of 2015 brought some rainfall, the state's snowpack remains critically low. It is important to start preparing for wildfire now by taking personal responsibility for protecting yourself, your family and your property.

The work you do today can make a difference!

### ***PREPARE FOR WILDFIRE NOW***

Each year, wildfires consume hundreds of homes in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Studies show as many as 80 percent of the homes lost to wildland fires could have been saved if their owners had followed simple fire-safe practices. In addition, wildfire related deaths occur because people wait too long to leave their home.

Increase your home's survival and family's safety during a wildfire by making the right decisions now about defensible space and situational awareness. Have a plan in place before a wildfire is threatening your home. The Ready, Set, Go Program helps residents *be READY* with preparedness understanding, *be SET* with situational awareness when fire threatens, and *to GO*, acting early when a fire starts.

*For more great tips on preparing for wildfire, visit [www.wildlandfirersg.org](http://www.wildlandfirersg.org).*

### ***FIREWISE TIPS FOR HOMEOWNERS***

A wildfire is still a threat, even if it is miles away. Traveling embers can ignite roofs, vents, lawn chairs, decks, fences, mulch, pine needles, and other common items around your house and yard. Cleaning your property of debris and maintaining your landscaping reduces the likelihood of ignition. A home within one mile of a natural area is in the *ember zone*. Wind-driven embers

can attack your home. You and your home must be prepared well before a fire occurs. Ember fires can destroy homes or neighborhoods far from the actual front of the wildland fire.

Neighbors are linked by their wildfire risk. If one home is inadequately prepared, the risk level to the entire neighborhood increases, and everyone's safety is impacted. Work with your neighbors to make a difference and learn about how to start employing Firewise principals in your community. Prepare your home by following these simple actions steps now and throughout the year:

- Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
- Remove dead vegetation from under your deck and within 10 feet of the house.
- Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches.
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, dry vegetation) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- Wildfire can spread to tree tops. If you have trees on your property, prune so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.
- Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire.
- Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
- Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.
- Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.
- Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screen with metal mesh to prevent ember entry.

*Learn how to keep your family safe and reduce your home's risk for wildfire damage at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) and [www.readyforwildfire.org](http://www.readyforwildfire.org).*

## SAFE DEBRIS BURNING

During the early months of the year, many wildfires have been started by residents burning landscape debris like branches and leaves, often in an attempt to complete their Defensible Space around their homes. While creating Defensible Space and ridding your land of dead and dying vegetation is critical, residents are asked to use extreme caution when burning. Homeowners should always check with their local CAL FIRE station or local fire department, as well as their local air quality management agency, before burning.

With proper permits, dry vegetation grown on your property can be burned. Green vegetation should be dried 3-6 weeks before burning. Debris burning is encouraged during winter and spring months while conditions are wet and fire danger is very low. Always use caution while burning. Consider alternatives to burning, such as: composting, chipping and shredding, or green waste pickup from your local disposal company.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR DEBRIS BURNING:**

- Check with your local fire agency for burn permit requirements.
- Burn a maximum pile size of four feet in diameter.
- Clear all flammable material and vegetation within 10-feet of the outer edge of the pile.
- A water supply is required at the burning site and must be ready to use.
- An adult must be in attendance with a shovel until the fire is dead out.
- No burning shall be undertaken unless weather conditions (particularly wind) are such that burning can be considered safe.
- Dry, natural vegetation, grown on the property can be burned outdoors in open piles, unless prohibited by local ordinances.
- Household garbage and construction debris cannot be burned.
- Burning can only be done on permissive burn days; you must call prior to igniting your burn pile.
- Burn Permits are only valid on permissive burn days as determined by the State Air Resources Board or the local Air Pollution Control District (APCD).

**Learn more at [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov) and [www.preventwildfireca.org](http://www.preventwildfireca.org).**