

Resources to Cover Wildfire Season:

Tips for Homeowners to Prepare Homes, Evacuate

Given the current level of wildfire activity in Colorado and across the west, residents should be prepared to be Ready, Set and Go, as outlined in IAFC's [Ready, Set, Go! Program](#). Here's what we suggest:



First, be Ready: Take personal responsibility and, whenever possible, prepare long before the threat of a wildfire so your home is ready in case of a fire. Some examples of this include:

- Create defensible space around your house by clearing away dry vegetation such as grass, leaves and branches.
- Examine, then replace or repair any shingles or roof tiles 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.
- Limit vegetation surrounding the home's perimeter, at least 30-100 feet, depending on the area's wildfire risk.

NFPA provides a more comprehensive [Firewise tips checklist](#) for homeowners that is available on the Firewise website and can help you get started today.

Other things to keep in mind before a fire: assemble emergency supplies and belongings in a safe spot. (Check out NFPA's [emergency preparedness/safety information page](#) that has a number of resources and tips for residents including what to put in an emergency supply kit.) And make sure all members of your family know your planned escape routes.

Second, Get Set: Get your family and home prepared at the onset of fire in your area. Gather family pets and have them prepared to evacuate. Pack your vehicle with your emergency items including medication and personal identification. **Stay aware of the latest news from local media and your local fire department** for updated information on the fire. Be prepared to evacuate your home if called to do so.

In some cases, don't feel like you have to wait for a formal announcement to evacuate. Leaving before the fire approaches your area is good practice and allows you and your family time to get someplace safe.

If you do have time before you evacuate, the following are some additional tips that can help keep your home safer from a wildfire:

- Close and protect your home's openings, including attic and basement doors and vents, windows, doors, and pet doors to prevent embers from penetrating your home.
- Remove flammable drapes and curtains and close all shutters, blinds, or heavy non-combustible drapes.
- Close all the interior doors in your home and the fireplace screen. Open the fireplace damper.
- Shut off any natural gas, propane, or fuel oil supplies at the source.
- Connect garden hoses and fill any pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, tubs, or other large containers with water. Firefighters have been known to use the hoses to put out fires on rooftops.
- Place a ladder against the house in clear view.
- Disconnect garage door openers so the doors will open if there is no power.
- Remove flammable materials (propane tanks and firewood) within 3-5 feet of the home's foundation.
- Move patio or deck furniture, cushions, door mats and potted plants in wooden containers either inside the house or as far away from the home, shed and garage as possible. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch the house, deck or porch.

And Third ... Go: Do not linger once evacuation orders have been given. Leave early and stay away until your area has been cleared for return by local officials. **Promptly leaving your home and neighborhood clears roads for firefighters to get equipment in place** to best maneuver the wildfire, and ensures you and your family's safety.

I was also just alerted to great information and a checklist regarding [evacuation plans and procedures](#) for residents courtesy of the El Paso County Sheriff's department. It's available on [KKTV 11's website](#). Please check this out. I think you'll find the information valuable.

As always, you can learn more about keeping you and your family safe, and reducing your home's risk for wildfire damage at www.Firewise.org. Additionally, complimentary brochures, booklets, pamphlets, videos and much more can be found on the [information and resources](#) page of the website and ordered online through NFPA's [online wildfire safety catalog](#).