Are You Prepared?
Living with wildfire in Mendocino County

PREPARATION TIPS
Household Evacuation Plan
Assemble An Emergency “Go Bag”

EVACUATION PROCEDURES
Wildfire Approaching?
What To Do If You Become Trapped?

A DEFENSIBLE SPACE
Prepare Your Home

CONTACT INFORMATION
Local Organizations Serving You

MCFSC is a 501(c)(3) corporation and an equal opportunity employer. All of your contributions are tax-deductible.
The purpose of the Mendocino Fire Safe Council is to help residents reduce the risk of wildland fires. Fire plays an important role in a healthy eco-system. However, fire too close to residential neighborhoods and its effects can be disastrous.

That is why Mendocino Fire Safe Council wants to help you assure your survival by helping you manage the surrounding forest and interface around your homes and building assets. It is really up to each one of us to take part, to assume responsibility for our own parcels and to help folks, who have not heard this message, take action.

Why do some homes survive a wildfire and others do not? It’s all in the details. By reducing the vegetation, eliminating ladder fuels, maintaining a clean roof and gutters, and cleaning up debris around your home, you can limit the effects of a wildfire if one should happen near you.

Create Defensible Space Around your Home

Take responsibility, create a defensible space! Why? IT’S THE LAW!

California Public Resource Code, Section 42991
Defensible Space Zones

ZONE 0
0 feet – 5 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures
- The goal is to avoid home ignition from blowing embers.
- Use noncombustible materials such as rock, stone pavers, cement, bare earth, gravel, or sand.
- Remove all plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove leaves and needles from your roof and rain gutters.
- Remove dead branches that overhang or touch your roof. Keep branches 10 feet away from your chimney.
- Remove all leaves, needles, or other debris that fall in this zone.

ZONE 1
5 feet – 30 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures
- The goal is to reduce heat and movement of flame.
- Remove all dead plants, grass, and weeds.
- Actively prune live shrubs.
- Relocate woodpiles outside of this zone.
- Avoid extensive use of mulch, which can convey fire to the house.
- Limit fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches to a depth of 2 inches.
- Move all gas and propane tanks outside of this zone.

ENTIRE PROPERTY
5 feet – 100 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures, or to the property line
- Create islands of vegetation with horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
- Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees.
- Choose low-growing, irrigated, non-woody plants such as vegetables, succulents, erosion-control grasses, flowers, or lawn to create landscaping in this zone.
- Mow or remove dead or dried vegetation.
- Trim trees regularly to maintain a minimum of 10 feet of clearance between branches of adjoining trees or shrubs.
- Mow any grass to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- To protect water quality, maintain vegetation near waterways; do not clear to bare soil. Vegetation removal can cause soil erosion that damages streams, especially on steep slopes. Remove dead trees and shrubs, leaving the roots in place, if practical.
- Break up dense shrub cover on slopes by creating small islands of pruned shrubs staggered horizontally.
- Prior to evacuation, pull patio furniture, play sets, and gas BBQ tanks as far as possible from any structure, and bring cushions inside.

Fire Resistant Landscaping

A fire-resistant landscape isn’t necessarily the same thing as a well-maintained yard. A fire-safe landscape uses plants that are strategically placed to reduce the spread of fire to your home. The good news is, you don’t need to spend a lot of money to make your landscape fire safe. You will find that a fire-safe landscape can increase your property value and conserve water while beautifying your home. Maintenance is the key to safety.

Proper placement makes the difference
- From right outside your door in the first 5 feet surrounding your home, use rock, mulch, pavers, and other noncombustible materials in this area immediately adjacent to your home. This is especially important around windows and vents, as the heat from a spot fire can easily break a window and/or create more embers to enter your home via vents.
- Break up the continuity of fuels by having a maintained lawn 5-30 feet around your home.
- Gardens and landscape plants are best placed in islands to reduce the potential that flames will spread to your home.
- Create fire-safe zones with stone walls, patios, or driveways to act as effective fire breaks.
- For your flower beds and gardens select high-moisture, open-structured plants that grow close to the ground and have a low sap or resin content.
- Keep in mind that there are no “fire-proof” plants. It is more about the “right plant, right place” concept. Regardless of your plant choices, maintenance is key to reduce woody development and manage dead growth.
- Many native plants, if maintained, can be excellent choices in your defensible space zone.
- Hardwood trees are less flammable than conifers. Make sure the trees in the yard do not overhang your house, and that you can manage the leaf and needle litter that trees drop.
- Check your local nursery, landscape contractor, or your county’s University of California Cooperative Extension service for advice on plants that are suited for your area.

Remember, any plant can burn under the right conditions. For all plants, maintenance is the key. Regularly trim back and remove any dead vegetation and litter.

The moisture content of plants is important because high levels of plant moisture can lower fire risk and act as a heat sink, reducing the intensity and spread of fire. Consider removing plants from your property and avoid purchasing new plants that tend to retain large amounts of dead material within the plant, produce a large volume of litter, and contain volatile substances such as oils, resins, wax, or pitch.
**Preparation Tips**

**Household Evacuation Plan**
1. Meet with your family and discuss the type of disasters that could occur.
2. Determine how you would transport your family and pets.
3. Designate an out of the area contact point in case you are separated.
4. Review your emergency travel routes on a map.

**Assemble a “Go Bag”**
- 3-day supply of non-perishable food and three gallons of water per person
- Map marked with at least 2 evacuation routes
- Prescriptions or special medications
- Copies of documents (insurance policies, deeds, birth certificates, drivers license... etc)
- Change of clothing and blankets
- Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses
- An extra set of car keys, credit cards, and cash
- First aid kit
- Flashlight

Always keep a sturdy pair of shoes and a flashlight near your bed and handy in case of a sudden evacuation at night.

**Advisories**

**Evacuation Warning:** Residents in your community will be advised of a potential threat to life and property.

**Evacuation Order:** This requires residents to immediately move out of an affected area due to an immediate threat.

**Shelter In Place:** Advises residents to stay secure at their current location. This is used only if evacuation will cause a higher potential for loss of life.

**Rescue:** Emergency actions taken within the affected area to recover and help injured or trapped citizens.

For more fire-safe information visit: www.firesafemendocino.org
If you have an emergency, call 911

---

**Evacuation Procedures**

**Wildfire approaching? If time....**
1. Locate your “Go Bag” and put the items in your vehicle.
2. Park your vehicle facing outward, carry your keys with you.
3. Locate your pets and family, stay together.
4. Cover up, wear long pants and long sleeved shirt, and walking shoes.
5. Leave your outside light on and unlock your doors.
6. Move propane BBQ equipment away from structures.
7. Turn off the main valve to your gas or propane.
8. Place garden hoses and buckets of water around the house.
9. Place ladder outside for roof access.
10. Clean out gutters and plug up downspouts, fill them with water.

Why it is important to evacuate early
Once you receive an evacuation order, it is imperative that you evacuate as soon as possible. If you notice smoke, call 911 to report a fire and seek more information about your safety and what action should be taken. Don’t wait until the last moment to evacuate. Many wildfire casualties were the result of people getting stuck in their cars while trying to evacuate during unsafe conditions. It is not recommended that you stay and defend your home.

What to do if you become trapped?

**While in vehicle:**
Park your car in an area clear of vegetation
Close windows and vents
Cover yourself with a jacket or blanket
Lie on the vehicle’s floor
Alert official by calling 911 from your cell phone

**While on foot:**
Go to an area clear of vegetation, if possible a ditch or depression
Lie face down and cover up
Alert official by calling 911 whenever possible

**While in your home:**
Call 911 and alert authorities of your location
Fill sinks and bathtubs with cold water
Keep doors and windows closed, but not locked
Stay inside your home
Stay away from outside walls and windows