

My Personal Wildland Fire ACTION GUIDE



Ready



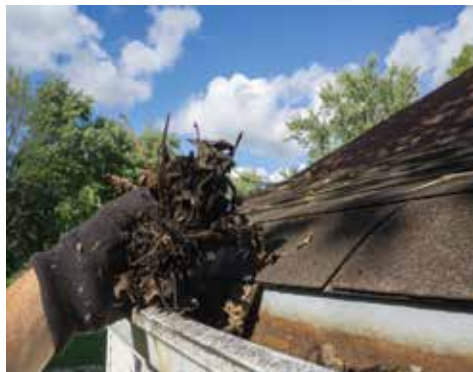
Set



Go!



Ready, Set, Go!



Saving Lives and Property through Advanced Planning and Action

This publication was prepared by the International Association of Fire Chiefs' RSG! Program and supported by the USDA Forest Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the U.S. Fire Administration.

Inside

Understanding the Risk.....	3
Creating Defensible Space	4
Making Your Home Fire Resistant	5
A Wildland Fire Prepared Home.....	6-7
Ready – Prepare Your Household Checklist	8
Set – As the Fire Approaches Checklist ..	9
Go – Leave Early Checklist.....	10
Your Wildland Fire Action Plan	11

The wildland fire season is a year-round reality in the United States. This strains firefighting resources and emphasizes the need for residents to be proactive and prepared for the threat of wildland fire.

Wildland fire is, and always has been, a natural occurrence. Hills, canyons, grasslands, and forests burn periodically as part of a healthy ecosystem. Wildland fires are fueled by dry vegetation, driven by increasing seasonal temperatures and fanned by dry winds. Wildland fires have become increasingly dangerous with the inclusion of built environments in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), an area or zone where human development meets or mixes with natural vegetation.

Studies show as many as 80 percent of homes lost to wildland fires could have been saved if their owners had followed simple risk-reduction practices. In addition, wildland fire related deaths can occur because people wait too long to leave their homes.

Proactive mitigation around your property and safe and early evacuation can help protect you, your household, and your property. This Action Guide provides tips and tools you need to prepare for wildland fire threat, gain situational awareness when a fire starts, and act early as directed by local officials.

Remember, all efforts to improve defensible space on your property can decrease property damage and help firefighters with suppression efforts. Taking advanced personal action can result in improved safety for all involved.

The Ready, Set, Go! Program works in collaboration with the public education efforts administered by the Los Alamos Fire Department to promote and amplify wildland fire preparedness.

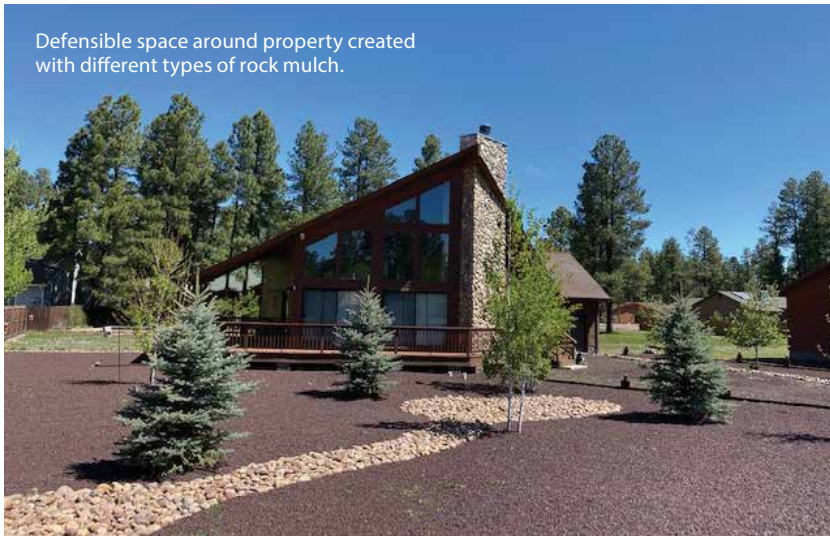
The tips on the following pages are designed to help guide your actions to create a safer environment for you, your household, and first responders.

It is not a question of if, but when, the next major wildland fire will occur. Use this Action Guide to help you become wildland fire ready!

Visit us at wildlandfireRSG.org to learn more about becoming prepared.

Ready begins with property owners taking action.

Defensible space around property created with different types of rock mulch.



Defensible space works with well-maintained, fire-resistant vegetation.



Photo credit: Kari Greer

Red Flag Warning



Defensible Space and Fire-Resistant Landscaping Can Protect Your Home

If you live next to a densely vegetated area, you can slow or stop the spread of wildfires that threaten your residence by creating defensible space around your home. Removing weeds, dried grass, brush, and other vegetation reduces the risk of ignition from flying embers. It also provides a safe area for firefighters to operate if they have the capacity to defend your home.

Consider This

Unmanaged and overgrown vegetation between and around homes increases the risk of wildland fire spreading throughout the community and endangering lives and property. Pre-fire planning through mitigation and vegetation management allows firefighters the ability to fight wildland fires more safely. The work you complete today may save your home and protect a firefighter tomorrow.

Ember Zone

An ember is a small, glowing fragment from a wildland fire that is carried by the wind. Embers are light enough to travel long distances and are the primary reason homes ignite, often at significant distances from the actual flame front of a wildland fire. Embers travel inside your home through vents, windows, and other openings.

Homes on the Wildland Boundary are at Risk

If your home is within one mile of a natural area, it may be considered part of an ember zone. Keep in mind, embers can destroy homes or neighborhoods far from the actual front of the fire. Use the information in this Guide to help you prepare your property.

Red Flag Warning

A Red Flag Warning is issued by the National Weather Service when low humidity, warm temperatures, dry fuels, and strong winds could combine to produce extreme fire behavior. Fires occurring during a Red Flag day can be very dangerous and spread rapidly. You should always follow the instructions provided by your local emergency response organizations and be prepared to take immediate action.

Ready Create Defensible Space

Defensible space is the area around your home in which vegetation, debris, and other combustible fuels have been removed to slow the spread of fire to and from the home.

It prevents vegetation from igniting due to direct flame contact and spreading to your home.

Defensible space is essential to help protect a structure and create a safer area for firefighters during a wildland fire.

You should create defensible space by removing weeds, brush, and firewood, and by spacing out vegetation around your property.

Although this might seem like a daunting task, we recommend starting in Zone 1 and working your way out. Follow the considerations below for each zone and your property can become safer with each step.



ZONE 1

0-5 feet around your home or to property line

- Use hard scape such as concrete or noncombustible rock mulch around your home.
- Clean roofs and gutters of dead leaves, debris, and pine needles.
- Store firewood and other combustible materials away from your home, garage, or attached deck.
- Prune away touching or over-hanging branches from the roof to a distance of at least 10 feet.
- Replace or repair any loose or missing shingles or roof tiles to prevent ember penetration.
- Rake and remove flammable vegetation, such as leaves and needles or wood mulch, from underneath your deck and away from your home.
- Use non-wood, low-growing herbaceous vegetation. Succulents, or other fire-resistant plants, are recommended choices.

ZONE 2

5-30 feet around your home or to property line

- Create vegetation groups or islands to break up continuous fuels around your home.
- Remove ladder fuels to create a separation between low-level vegetation and tree canopies to keep fire from climbing into trees.
- Remove leaf and needle debris from the yard.
- Keep lawns, native grasses, and wildflowers less than four inches in height.
- Store firewood and other combustible materials away from outbuildings such as a shed or barn.
- Move trailers, recreational vehicles, storage sheds, and other combustible structures out of this zone and into Zone 3. If unable to move, create defensible space around them as if they were a part of your home.

ZONE 3

30-200 feet around your home or to property line

- Create and maintain a minimum of 10 feet between the tops of trees.
- Safely remove ladder fuels up to a height of 10 feet, while retaining at least 75 percent of the foliage, to create separation between the ground and tree branches. This keeps fire from climbing into the tree canopies.
- Store firewood in this area, keeping it a safe distance from your structure.
- Create space between shrubs and trees to eliminate a continuous fuel bed at the ground level.
- Remove dead trees, shrubs, and all other dead or dry vegetation.
- Create separation between your property and your neighbors. Consider that your trees may pose a greater risk to your neighbor's home than to your own.

Remember the Ember Zone

Embers are burning pieces of airborne material that can be carried more than a mile by the wind. Research points to embers and small flames as the main ways homes ignite in wildland fires.



Ready Make Your Home Fire Resistant - Harden Your Home

Fire retardant construction materials and the quality of the defensible space surrounding the structure are what increases the chance of survival in a wildland fire. Embers from a wildland fire will find the weak spot in your home's fire protection scheme and can easily lodge in small, overlooked, or seemingly inconsequential areas. Look at where snow drifts form on your roof and deck and around your home - these are the areas where embers will collect. Below are some home hardening measures you can take to safeguard your home.



Balconies and Decks

Construct your balconies or decks with **noncombustible materials**, and do not store combustible items underneath them. If there is a fire threat, bring any **furniture** into your home. Embers can collect in or on combustible surfaces, or beneath decks and balconies, igniting the material and giving a path for the fire to enter your home. **Remove pine needles, leaves, grass**, or any other flammable materials from underneath your deck.



Roofs

Roofs are vulnerable to embers that become lodged and can start a fire, especially anywhere on the roof with litter buildup. **Roof valleys**, open ends of **barrel tiles**, and **rain gutters** are all points of entry. Block off all open spaces, and regularly inspect these areas. Remove any combustible material.



Eaves

Embers can gather under open eaves and ignite combustible material. Enclose your eaves with **noncombustible or ignition-resistant materials** to prevent ember intrusion, and regularly clear away debris that collects here.



Vents

Embers can enter the attic or other concealed spaces and ignite combustible materials through open and unscreened vents. Vents in eaves, gables and cornices are particularly vulnerable if not properly screened with wire mesh. Use **corrosion resistant metal mesh** to screen all vents, and check them regularly to remove any debris that collects in front of the screen.



Walls and Fencing

Combustible siding or fencing provides surfaces and crevices for embers to nestle and ignite. Ensure wooden fences do not connect directly to the house. Create a **break in the fence** by using a gate or noncombustible substitute to connect to the house. Build or remodel with **noncombustible or ignition-resistant materials** wherever possible, regularly clear away debris from any crevices, and perform annual upkeep.



Windows and Doors

Embers can enter gaps in doors, including garage doors. Install **weather proofing** around your garage door; and if your garage is attached to your home, make sure the interior door is solid and on **self-closing hinges**.

Plants or combustible storage near windows can be ignited from embers and generate heat that can break windows and/or melt combustible frames. Wherever possible, use **dual-paned windows with tempered glass**, as they are less likely to shatter from radiant heat.

Tour a Wildland Fire Prepared Home

Home Site and Yard: Ensure all vegetation within 200 feet around your home or to your property line is well-managed. This area may need to be enlarged in severe fire hazard areas due to topographic conditions. This may mean considering the impact a common slope or neighbor's yard may have on your wildland fire risk. Remember the importance of routine maintenance: creating defensible space is not something you do just once, it's continual. Maintain your defensible space and remove any regrowth. Keep woodpiles, propane tanks, and combustible materials away from your home and other structures such as detached garages, barns, and sheds. Ensure trees are away from power lines.

Inside: Keep working fire extinguishers on hand. Install smoke alarms on each level of your home and near bedrooms. Test them monthly and change the batteries twice a year.

Address: Make sure your address is clearly visible from the road and constructed of noncombustible materials. Reflective numbering is recommended. Check with your local fire department to see if they offer reflective address signs.

Roof: Use a Class A fire-rated roof covering, such as composition shingles, metal, or tile, when roofing or re-roofing. Block any spaces between roof decking by using a noncombustible underlayment covering to minimize ember intrusion. Clear pine needles, leaves, and other debris from your roof and gutters. Prune tree branches within 10 feet of your roof.

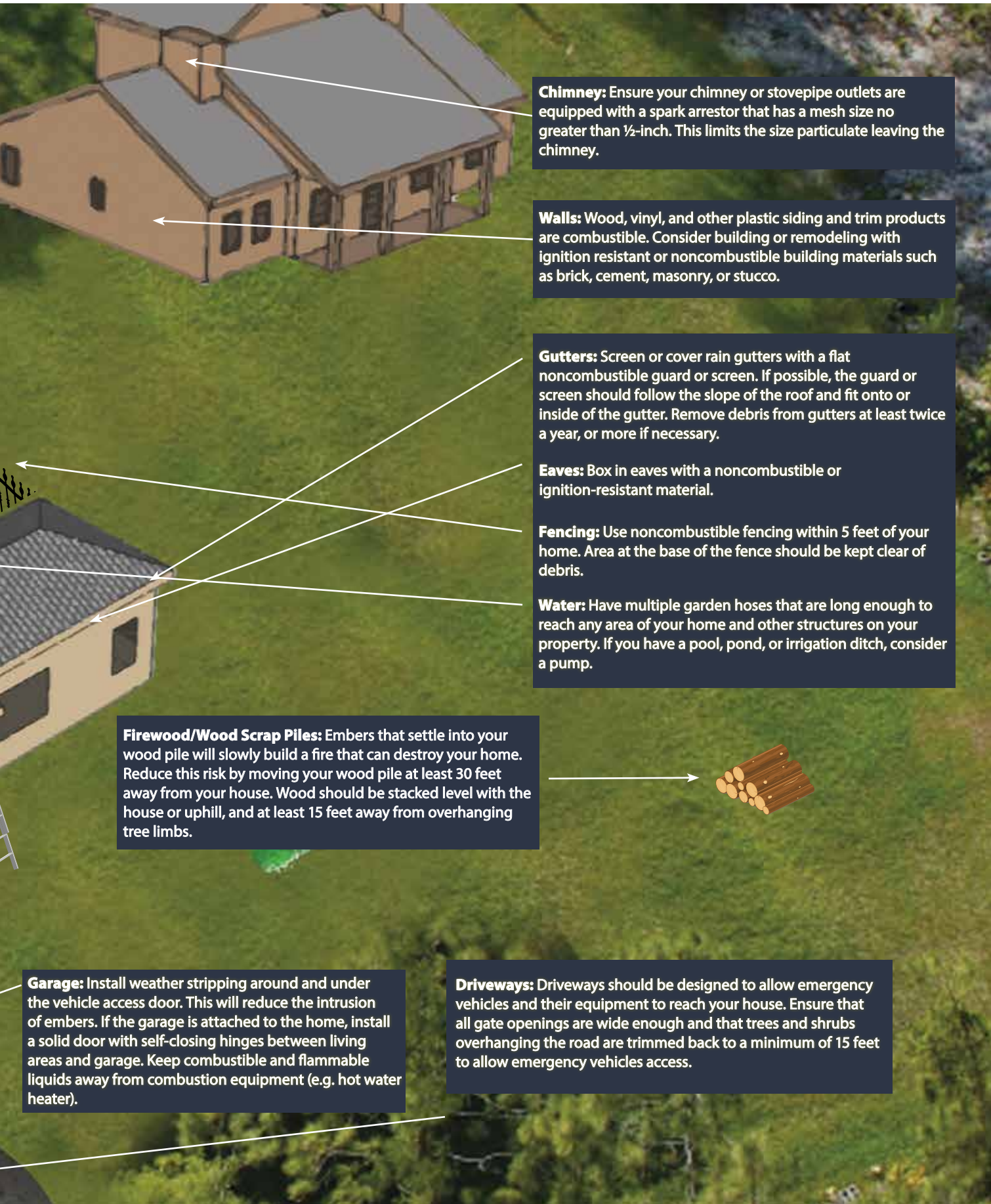
Deck/Patio Cover: Use heavy timber or noncombustible construction material for decks.

Keep your deck clear of combustible items, such as baskets, flower arrangements, and other material. Combustible materials should not be stored under your deck.

Ladders: Having a ladder readily accessible could assist responders in protecting your home during a wildland fire.

Vents: At a minimum, all vent openings should be covered with 1/8-inch corrosion resistant metal mesh.

Windows: Radiant heat from burning vegetation or a nearby structure can cause the glass in windows to break. This will allow flames to enter your home and start internal fires. Single-pane and large picture windows are particularly vulnerable to glass breakage. Install dual-pane windows with a minimum of one pane being tempered glass to reduce the chance of breakage during a fire. Metal blinds are best to protect the interior from radiant heat.



Chimney: Ensure your chimney or stovepipe outlets are equipped with a spark arrestor that has a mesh size no greater than ½-inch. This limits the size particulate leaving the chimney.

Walls: Wood, vinyl, and other plastic siding and trim products are combustible. Consider building or remodeling with ignition resistant or noncombustible building materials such as brick, cement, masonry, or stucco.

Gutters: Screen or cover rain gutters with a flat noncombustible guard or screen. If possible, the guard or screen should follow the slope of the roof and fit onto or inside of the gutter. Remove debris from gutters at least twice a year, or more if necessary.

Eaves: Box in eaves with a noncombustible or ignition-resistant material.

Fencing: Use noncombustible fencing within 5 feet of your home. Area at the base of the fence should be kept clear of debris.

Water: Have multiple garden hoses that are long enough to reach any area of your home and other structures on your property. If you have a pool, pond, or irrigation ditch, consider a pump.

Firewood/Wood Scrap Piles: Embers that settle into your wood pile will slowly build a fire that can destroy your home. Reduce this risk by moving your wood pile at least 30 feet away from your house. Wood should be stacked level with the house or uphill, and at least 15 feet away from overhanging tree limbs.



Garage: Install weather stripping around and under the vehicle access door. This will reduce the intrusion of embers. If the garage is attached to the home, install a solid door with self-closing hinges between living areas and garage. Keep combustible and flammable liquids away from combustion equipment (e.g. hot water heater).

Driveways: Driveways should be designed to allow emergency vehicles and their equipment to reach your house. Ensure that all gate openings are wide enough and that trees and shrubs overhanging the road are trimmed back to a minimum of 15 feet to allow emergency vehicles access.

Create Your Own Action Plan

Your Wildland Fire Action Plan must be prepared with all members of your household well in advance of a wildland fire. Use these checklists to help you get Ready and Set with situational awareness in the threat of wildland fire.

Ready Get Ready

- Create an Action Plan that includes evacuation meeting locations and communication plans - rehearse it regularly. Include the evacuation of all pets and large animals, which may include horses and livestock, in your plan.
- Sign up for the Los Alamos County local emergency notification system (also called CodeRED) by texting LOSALAMOS to 99411 or visit the county webpage at lacnm.com/Alerts.
- Designate an emergency meeting location outside the wildland fire hazard area.
- Plan and practice several different evacuation routes. Remember that there are few roads available for evacuation purposes in Los Alamos County. Include in your Action Plan the possibility of evacuating on unpaved roads, should circumstances require it.
- Have fire extinguishers on hand and teach your household how to use them.
- Assemble a Go Kit as recommended by the American Red Cross. Keep an extra kit in your vehicle.
- Check this page for a list of recommended emergency supplies.
- Have a portable radio or scanner so you can stay updated on the fire and weather emergency announcements. Tune in to the 1610AM emergency radio station for updates from the Los Alamos County Emergency Management Office.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES LIST FOR GO KIT

The American Red Cross recommends every household have an emergency supply kit assembled long before a wildland fire or other emergency occurs. Use the checklist below to help assemble yours. For more information on emergency supplies visit redcross.org/get-help.

- Three-day supply of water (one gallon per person, per day) and non-perishable food for household members (3 day supply).
- First aid kit and sanitation supplies, including toilet paper and baby wipes.
- Flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries.
- An extra set of car keys, credit cards, cash, or traveler's checks.
- Extra eyeglasses, contact lenses, prescriptions, and medications.
- Important household member documents and contact numbers, including insurance documents.
- Map marked with evacuation routes. It is important to have a printed map in case your phone dies. It may also be easier to see the printed map than a phone screen under smokey conditions.
- Easily carried valuables and irreplaceable items.
- Personal electronic devices and chargers.
- Keep a pair of old shoes and a flashlight handy in case of a sudden evacuation at night.

Set Prepare and Be Aware

- Monitor fire weather conditions and fire status. Check NMFireinfo.com, social media accounts, the LAFD and LAC emergency management websites for wildland fire information. Stay tuned to your TV or local radio stations (such as 1610AM) for updates, including Red Flag Warnings in your area.
- Alert household and neighbors.
- Dress appropriately (clothing made from natural fibers and work boots). Have goggles, a dry bandana or particle mask handy.
- Ensure Go Kits have the essentials: battery-powered radio, spare batteries, emergency contact numbers, and drinking water.
- Remain close to your house, stay hydrated, and ensure your household members and pets are accounted for and ready to leave.
- Consider evacuating family members with special needs and large animals to a safe, predetermined location early, to reduce stress should an evacuation order be issued.

INSIDE CHECKLIST, IF TIME ALLOWS

- Close all windows and doors.
- Remove all shades and curtains from windows and ensure non-metal blinds remain open. Close all metal blinds.
- Move furniture to the center of the room, away from windows and doors.
- Turn off air conditioning units.
- Leave your lights on so firefighters can see your house in smoky conditions.

OUTSIDE CHECKLIST, IF TIME ALLOWS

- Move combustible items to a safe distance from the house's exterior (e.g., patio furniture, children's toys, door mats, etc.) or place them indoors to reduce hazards, if time permits.

- Be prepared to take your propane tank with you when evacuating, if you own one; if you can't, move it to a space that is outdoors, far from the home, and visible to firefighters.
- Don't leave sprinklers or water running as they can affect critical water pressure.
- Leave exterior lights on.
- Back your car into the driveway with doors and windows shut for a quick departure.
- Keep a ladder handy to cover attic vents safely if time allows. Use pre-cut plywood or commercial seals to cover vents (attic/ground).
- Patrol your property and extinguish small fires, if you can do so safely, until you leave.

IF YOU ARE TRAPPED: SURVIVAL TIPS

- If you have become trapped and cannot evacuate, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Stay in your home, sheltering away from walls, until the fire passes or emergency personnel tell you differently. Follow their instructions and commands.
- Look for spot fires and extinguish if found inside house.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants, and a bandana made of natural fibers, such as cotton.
- Stay hydrated.
- Ensure you can exit the home if it catches fire. Remember, if it's hot inside the house, it is four to five times hotter outside. Be prepared.
- Fill sinks and tubs for an emergency water supply.
- Place wet towels under doors to keep smoke and embers out.
- After the fire has passed, check your roof and extinguish any fires, sparks, or embers if you are able to safely do so. Check the attic as well.

Go! Act Early

Leaving early gives you and your household members the best chance of surviving a wildland fire. You also help firefighters by keeping roads clear of congestion, enabling them to move more freely and do their job in a safer environment. Be sure to follow the direction of your local authorities.

WHEN TO LEAVE

Do not wait to be advised to leave if there is a possible threat to your home or evacuation route. Leave early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke, or road congestion. If you are advised to leave by local authorities, do not hesitate!

WHERE TO GO

Go to a predetermined, low-risk area such as a relative's house, a Red Cross shelter or evacuation center, motel, etc.

HOW TO GET THERE

Follow the instructions from Los Alamos County Emergency Management Office and the Police Department on which roads to take when evacuating. Information may be provided to you through the emergency alert system (CodeRED), the 1610AM emergency radio station, local news, the Los Alamos County webpage losalamosnm.us and social media platforms.

WHAT TO TAKE

Take your Go Kit containing your household members' and pets' necessary items.

REMEMBER THE 8 P'S!

- People & Pets
- Pictures & Photo Albums
- PC's
- Papers (important)
- Prescriptions & Medications (for your pets too)
- Plastics (credit cards)
- Personal Devices (phones and chargers)
- Passports & IDs



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My Personal Wildland Fire ACTION PLAN

Write up your Wildland Fire Action Plan and post it in a location where every member of your household can see it. Rehearse it with your household.

During high-fire-danger days in your area, monitor your local media for information and be ready to implement your plan. Hot, dry, and windy conditions create the perfect environment for a wildland fire.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Out-of-Area Contact _____ Phone: _____

Work _____

School _____

Other _____

EVACUATION ROUTES

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

WHERE TO GO

LOCATION OF GO KIT(S)

NOTES

Contact your local fire department for more tips on preparing before a wildland fire, lacnm.com/Wildland-Fires.



My Personal Wildland Fire ACTION PLAN

Ready

Get Ready

- Sign up for your local emergency notification system. Text LOSALAMOS to 99411 or visit lacnm.com/Alerts for instructions.
- Dispose of or relocate combustible material from around your home.
- Trim trees and bushes allowing ample space between your home and landscape vegetation.
- Assemble your Go Kit with prescription medication, emergency supplies, important documents, and other essential items.

Set

Prepare and Be Aware

- Make sure you have your Go Kit on hand in an accessible place.
- Alert household and neighbors of your action plan. Ensure your household members and pets are accounted for and ready to leave.
- Monitor local fire weather conditions and listen to emergency notification systems.

Go!

Act Early

- Get your Go Kit and leave well before the threat approaches using a planned, accessible route.
- Stay aware of the situation and follow your plan.
- Cooperate with local authorities during evacuation and re-entry processes.



wildlandfireRSG.org

