



# Kitsap County Fire Marshal's Office

## FIREWISE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

### **WILDFIRE: ARE YOU PREPARED?**



*More and more people are making their homes in woodland settings — in or near forests, rural areas or remote mountain sites. There, homeowners enjoy the beauty of the environment, but face the very real danger of wildfire.*



**Wildfires often begin unnoticed. They spread quickly, igniting brush, trees and homes. Reduce your risk by preparing now — before wildfire strikes. Meet with your family to decide what to do and where to go if wildfires threaten your area. Follow the steps listed in this brochure to protect your family, home and property.**

#### **BEFORE WILDFIRE THREATENS**

Design and landscape your home with wildfire safety in mind. Select materials and plants that can help contain fire rather than fuel it. Use fire resistant or non-combustible materials on the roof and exterior structure of the dwelling. Treat wood or combustible material used in roofs, siding, decking or trim with UL-approved fire-retardant chemicals. Plant fire-resistant shrubs and trees. For example, hardwood trees are less flammable than pine, evergreen, or fir trees

#### **CREATE A SAFETY ZONE**

A 30 - 100 foot safety zone around your home can help save it. Within this area, you can take steps to reduce potential exposure to flames and radiant heat. Homes built in pine forests should have a minimum safety zone of 100 feet. If your home sits on a steep slope, standard protective measures may not suffice. Contact your local fire department or forestry office for additional information.

- Rake leaves, dead limbs and twigs. Clear all flammable vegetation.
- Remove leaves and rubbish from under structures.
- Thin a 15-foot space between tree crowns, and remove limbs within 15 feet of the ground.
- Remove dead branches that extend over the roof.
- Prune tree branches and shrubs within 15 feet of a stovepipe or chimney outlet.
- Ask the power company to clear branches from power lines.
- Remove vines from the walls of the home.
- Mow grass regularly.

- Clear a 10-foot area around propane tanks and the barbecue. Place a screen over the grill — use non-flammable material with mesh no coarser than one-quarter inch.
- Regularly dispose of newspapers and rubbish at an approved site. Follow local burning regulations.
- Place stove, fireplace and grill ashes in a metal bucket, soak in water for two days, then bury the cold ashes in mineral soil.
- Store gasoline, oily rags and other flammable materials in approved safety cans. Place cans in a safe location away from the base of buildings.
- Stack firewood away and uphill from your home. Clear combustible material within 20 feet. Use only UL-approved wood burning devices.

#### **PROTECT YOUR HOME**

- Regularly clean roof and gutters.
- Inspect chimneys at least twice a year. Clean them at least once a year. Keep the dampers in good working order. Equip chimneys and stovepipes with a spark arrester.
- Consider installing a residential fire sprinkler system.
- Use 1/2-inch mesh screen beneath porches, decks, floor areas and the home itself. Also, screen openings to floors, roof and attic.
- Install a smoke detector on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms; test monthly and change the batteries once each year.
- Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type) and show them where it's kept.



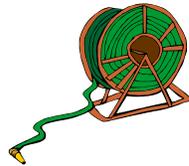


- Keep a ladder that will reach the roof.
- Consider installing protective shutters or heavy fire-resistant drapes.
- Keep handy household items that can be used as fire tools: a rake, axe, handsaw or chainsaw, bucket and shovel.

- Prepare a disaster kit.

### PLAN YOUR WATER NEEDS

- Identify and maintain an adequate outside water source such as a small pond, cistern, well, swimming pool or hydrant.
- Have a garden hose that is long enough to reach any area of the home and other structures on the property.
- Install freeze-proof exterior water outlets on at least two sides of the home and near other structures on the property. Install additional outlets at least 50 feet from the home.
- Consider obtaining a portable gasoline powered pump in case electrical power is cutoff.



### PRACTICE WILDFIRE SAFETY

- Contact your local fire department, health department or forestry office for information on fire laws. Make sure that fire vehicles can get to your home. Clearly mark all driveway entrances and display your address.
- Report hazardous conditions that could cause a wildfire.



- Teach children about fire safety. Keep matches out of their reach.
- Post emergency telephone numbers.
- Plan several escape routes away from your home — by car and by foot.

- Talk to your neighbors about wildfire safety. Plan how the neighborhood could work together after a wildfire. Make a list of your neighbors' skills such as medical or technical. Consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs such as elderly or disabled persons. Make plans to take care of children who may be on their own if parents can't get home.

### WHEN WILDFIRE THREATENS

- If you are warned that a wildfire is threatening your area, listen to your battery-operated radio for reports and evacuation information. *Follow the instructions of local officials.*
- Back your car into the garage or park it in an open space facing the direction of escape. Shut doors and roll up windows. Leave the key in the ignition. Close garage windows and doors, but leave them unlocked. Disconnect automatic garage door openers.
- Confine pets to one room. Make plans to care for your pets in case you must evacuate.
- Arrange temporary housing at a friend or relative's home outside the threatened area.

### IF YOU'RE SURE YOU HAVE TIME TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR HOME

- Close windows, vents, doors, Venetian blinds or non-combustible window coverings and heavy drapes. Remove lightweight curtains.
- Shut off gas at the meter. Turnoff pilot lights.
- Open fireplace damper. Close fireplace screens.
- Move flammable furniture into the center of the home away from windows and sliding-glass doors.
- Turn on a light in each room to increase the visibility of your home in heavy smoke.
- Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Place combustible patio furniture inside.
- Connect the garden hose to outside taps.
- Set up the portable gasoline-powered pump.
- Place lawn sprinklers on the roof and near above-ground fuel tanks. Wet the roof.
- Wet or remove shrubs within 15 feet of the home.
- Gather fire tools.



### IF ADVISED TO EVACUATE, DO SO IMMEDIATELY

- Wear protective clothing, take your disaster kit, lock your home, tell someone when you left & where you are going.
- Choose a route away from fire hazards. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of fire and smoke.