

REDUCE YOUR WILDFIRE RISK

Wildfire Community Preparedness Day and America's PrepareAthon! Project Ideas

MITIGATE ■ COMMUNICATE ■ EVACUATE

Wildfires can occur anywhere with the potential to destroy homes, businesses, infrastructure, natural resources, and agriculture. Participating in Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, an America's PrepareAthon! partner event, will help you prepare before wildfires happen. You can prepare your home, your neighborhood, and your community by reducing the risk factors for wildfire around buildings, creating emergency communication plans, and practicing for evacuations. Choose one or more of the activities below, register your action at ready.gov/prepare and practice for wildfire safety!

MITIGATE

Reduce the amount of materials that can burn near your home or business and the surrounding area by clearing away debris and other flammable materials, and by using fire-resistant landscaping and construction materials. Here are some actions that will help you reduce the impacts of wildfire:

- Rake and remove pine needles and dry leaves within a minimum of five feet of a building's foundation. As time permits – continue up to a 30-foot distance around the structure. Dispose of collected debris in appropriate trash receptacles.
- Get out your measuring tape and see how close wood piles are located to buildings. If closer than 30 feet, they need to be relocated. Move wood piles at least 30 feet away from structures.
- Sweep porches and decks, clearing them of leaves and pine needles. Rake under decks, porches, sheds and play structures and dispose of debris.
- Mow grass to a height of four inches or less.
- On mature trees, use hand pruners and loppers to remove low-hanging tree branches up to a height of four feet from the ground (specific height depends on the type and size of tree).
- Collect downed tree limbs and broken branches and take them to a disposal site.
- Remove items stored under decks and porches. Relocate them to a storage shed, garage, or basement.
- Join forces with neighbors and pool your resources to pay for a chipper service to remove slash.
- Screen-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh no larger than 1/8-inch to help keep embers out during a fire.
- Update your gardens and other outdoor plants to align with Firewise landscaping recommendations for your area. Find a list of recommended plants at www.firewise.org.

AMERICA'S
PrepareAthon!SM

www.ready.gov/prepare

www.WildfirePrepDay.org



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COMMUNICATE

Being informed ahead of a wildfire can make all the difference in keeping you and your family safe. Receiving timely information about weather conditions and other factors affecting your community's risk for wildfire, and knowing how to communicate with your loved ones during a crisis, are essential for surviving and thriving after the unexpected. Here are some actions that will help you prepare to communicate during a wildfire:

- Sign up for emergency notifications in your county to receive alerts for watches, warnings, and evacuation notices. To find out how, do an online search for your county's emergency notification system or download the **Be Smart. Know Your Alerts and Warnings** guide at [ready.gov/prepare](https://www.ready.gov/prepare). Once you've signed up for emergency alerts, work with neighbors to develop a phone or text message tree that can be used to alert everyone about a fire or evacuation.
- Create a family communication plan and practice how you will communicate with each other in the event that you're not together when an evacuation is ordered. Visit [ready.gov/make-a-plan](https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan) to learn how and to download free templates.
- Discuss emergency plans with your child's school, child or elder care providers, and your workplace. Find out how these facilities will communicate during a wildfire evacuation and help lead an activity to create or practice a communication plan.

Distribute wildfire safety information to neighbors or staff a table at a local store. Distribute Firewise preparedness materials and help your neighbors complete their own family communication plans. Family communication plan templates can be downloaded at [ready.gov/make-a-plan](https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan) and Firewise materials can be ordered at www.firewise.org/Catalog.aspx?ss0=0.

- Purchase a battery-operated radio, extra batteries and a solar-powered cell phone charger for your home so that you can continue to receive alerts and monitor news reports in the event of a power outage in your neighborhood.
- Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) All Hazards receiver, which receives broadcast alerts directly from the National Weather Service. You can purchase these at retail outlets, such as electronics and big box stores, or online. For more information visit www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/index.php.

EVACUATE

When a wildfire threatens your area, the best action to protect yourself and your family is to evacuate early to avoid becoming trapped. You can prepare your family for evacuation by creating an emergency kit, a list of important items that can be packed quickly, planning ahead for evacuating pets and livestock, identifying neighborhood evacuation routes, and practicing your evacuation plan. Here are some actions that will help you prepare for a wildfire evacuation:

- As a family, identify your main evacuation route and two alternate routes out of your neighborhood. Practice leaving your neighborhood using all three routes and think about how reduced visibility, blocked roads, and fleeing wildlife or livestock could impact your drive. Don't forget to incorporate additional steps for evacuating family members or neighbors with access and functional needs, as well as pets, service animals, and livestock.
- Identify a place away from home where you could stay if you have to be evacuated for an extended period of time. If you expect to go to a shelter during an evacuation, download the American Red Cross Shelter Finder App at www.redcross.org. Keep this app on your mobile devices for easy access during an emergency.
- Build or update a 72-hour emergency kit, which can help ease the inconvenience of an evacuation and provide items you need. For information and guidance on what to include in your kit, visit [ready.gov/build-a-kit](https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit). Don't forget your pets and livestock have special needs during an evacuation as well – build an emergency kit for your animals too. For information and guidance on what to include in your animals' emergency kits, visit [ready.gov/caring-animals](https://www.ready.gov/caring-animals).
- Prepare for your financial wellbeing by making copies of drivers' licenses, birth certificates, passports, medical and financial account numbers, and other important documents. For guidance on gathering critical documents and important personal items like family keepsakes and photographs, download the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Financial First Aid Kit or the Be Smart. Protect Your Critical Documents and Valuables guide at [ready.gov/prepare](https://www.ready.gov/prepare).
- Visit the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association website at www.rmiia.org for free home inventory software.