

CAUGHT IN A WILDFIRE

If your home is threatened by a wildfire, you may be contacted by a fire or law enforcement official and advised to evacuate. However, if you are not contacted in time, or if you decide to stay with your home, we offer the following suggestions:

- If you are able, evacuate your pets and all family members who are not essential to protecting the home, but do not jeopardize your life.
- Be properly dressed to survive the fire. Cotton and wool fabrics are preferable to synthetics. Wear long pants and boots, and carry with you for protection a long sleeved shirt or jacket, gloves, a dry handkerchief to shield your face, and goggles. Wear a hard hat if available.

OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSE

- Remove combustible items from around the house. This includes lawn and poolside furniture, umbrellas, and tarp coverings. If they catch fire, the added heat could ignite your home.
- If possible, close outside attic, eave, and basement vents. This will eliminate the possibility of sparks blowing into hidden areas within the house. Close window shutters.
- Locate garden hoses so they will reach any place on the house. Use the spray-gun type nozzle, adjusted to spray. Turn the hose faucet on so that it is ready to go when it is needed.
- Place large plastic trash cans or buckets around the perimeter of the house and fill them with water. Soak burlap sacks, small rugs, and large rags. They can be helpful in beating out burning embers or small fires.
- Place a ladder against the roof of the house opposite the side of the approaching fire. If you have a combustible roof, set a lawn sprinkler on it. This will be more effective than a hose. However, do not turn water on ahead of time, as wood shingles will dry quickly and you will have wasted water.
- If you have a portable gasoline-powered pump to take water from a swimming pool or tank, make sure it is operating and is in place.

INSIDE YOUR HOUSE

- Close all windows and doors to prevent sparks from blowing inside, but do not lock them. If firefighters arrive to help save your home, they may need instant access.
- Close all doors inside the house to block the circulation of air and movement of fire from room to room.
- Open the damper on your fireplace to help stabilize outside/inside pressure, but close the fireplace screen so sparks will not ignite the room.
- Turn on a light in each room of the house, on the porch, in the garden and in the yard. This will make the house more visible in heavy smoke at night.
- Fill bathtubs, sinks and other water containers with water. Toilet tanks and water heaters are important water reservoirs.
- Shut off gas at the meter.
- If you have time, take down flammable drapes and curtains. If you don't have time to take them down, leave them open. Close all Venetian blinds or fire resistant window coverings to reduce the amount of heat radiating into your home.
- Move overstuffed furniture away from windows and sliding glass doors and into the center of the room.
- Park your car in the garage, heading out; close car windows; leave keys in the ignition.
- Close garage door but leave it unlocked. Disconnect the automatic garage door opener.
- Place valuable documents and mementos inside the car in the garage for quick departure, if necessary. Any pets still with you should also be put in the car.

WHEN THE FIRE IS AT YOUR HOUSE

- Enter your home with your family, closing but not locking the doors. Keep the entire family together and remain calm. Stay inside the house as the fire passes. It takes time for a fire to burn from the outside into the interior of the house. Leave the house if it becomes apparent that the fire is burning inside the house. Consider using the house to block you from outside radiant heat.

AFTER THE FIRE PASSES

- Check the roof immediately. Extinguish any sparks or embers using a gardenhose, barrels of water and small rugs. Then, check inside the attic for hidden sparks. Still keep the windows and doors closed in the house. Continue checking for at least six to ten hours after the fire is thought to be out.