

WILDFIRES

Are you prepared for Wildfires? If you are a Manatee County resident living in a potential wildfire area, please consider the following information:

Wildfires often begin unnoticed.

They spread quickly, igniting brush, trees and homes.

Meet with your family to decide **what to do** and **where to go** if wildfires threaten your area.

Practice Wildfire Safety

People start most wildfires...find out how you can promote and practice wildfire safety.

Contact your local fire department or forestry office for information on fire laws.

Make sure that fire vehicles can get to your home.

Report hazardous conditions that could cause a wildfire.

Teach children about fire safety. Keep matches out of their reach.

Post fire emergency telephone numbers.

Plan several escape routes - by car and by foot



Before Wildfire Threatens

Protect your home

Design and landscape your home with wildfire safety in mind. Select materials and plants that can help contain fire rather than fuel it.

Regularly clean roof and gutters.

Inspect chimneys at least twice a year. Clean them at least once a year.

Install a smoke alarm on each level of your home.

Test monthly and change the batteries two times a year.

Teach family members how to use the fire extinguisher.



Rake leaves, dead limbs and twigs.

Clear all flammable vegetation.

Remove all dead branches that extend over the roof.

Ask the power company to clear branches from power lines.

Mow grass regularly.

Store gasoline, oily rags, and other flammable materials in approved safety cans.

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.

Consider obtaining a portable gasoline powered pump in case electrical power is cut off.

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 your garage or park it in an open space facing the direction of escape. Shut doors and roll up windows. Make sure the key is readily available. 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 advised to Evacuate, do so Immediately.

Wear protective clothing-sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothing, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves and a handkerchief to protect your face.

Take your Disaster Supplies Kit.

Lock your home.

Tell someone when you leaving and where you are going.

Choose a route away from fire hazards. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of fire and smoke.

If you're sure you have time, take steps to protect your home

Inside

Close windows, vents, doors, Venetian blinds and heavy drapes. Remove lightweight curtains.

Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off 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.

Outside

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 tap.

Set up 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.

The Manatee County Fire Chiefs Association states, "All wildfires will be thoroughly investigated and if arson is the cause, the individuals will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law". The Association also conducts educational programs on wildfires presented in the local schools before summer vacation.

Wildfire and other types of disasters can strike quickly and without warning. You can cope by preparing in advance and working with your family to devise a Family Disaster Plan which includes a Disaster Supplies Kit. Discuss with your family why it is important to have a plan and practice your plan frequently.

For more information on wildfire and disaster prevention, please contact the Department of Forestry, your local Fire Department or The Manatee County Fire Chiefs Association.