



The Napa Fire Department Urges Homeowners to Prepare for Wildland Fires Now

The Napa Valley is one of the most beautiful places to live but living in an urban interface area (places where structures and vegetation intermix) doesn't come without its risks. Each summer wildland fires char thousands of acres across California. These wildfires destroy and damage homes, injure civilians and firefighters and cost millions of tax dollars to control and suppress.

The Napa Fire Department is well-trained in wildland fire suppression and will make every effort to protect you and your property in the event of a wildland fire. However, the reality is that in a major wildland fire there will not be enough fire engines or suppression personnel to defend every home in the early stages of the incident. This means it is up to you the homeowner to take personal responsibility for protecting your family and property. Our objective is to provide you with information to prepare your home and property from wildfire before a fire occurs. It will give you guidance on creating defensible space and retrofitting your home with fire resistive features. While this information may provide a means for you to minimize the impact of a wildland fire nothing is fireproof.

Many vulnerable areas in our community have limited means of access and egress, which means early evacuation in a fast-moving wildland fire where you may be threatened is essential. If you have never experienced a significant wildland fire it is difficult to know or completely understand the potential consequences of choosing not to evacuate or ignoring an evacuation order. Plan, prepare and follow the instructions of Fire and Law Enforcement professionals in the event of an evacuation order.

Are you doing the right thing the wrong way – for example, trying to eliminate the fire hazards around your home and in the process starting a wildland fire? Each year Fire Departments respond to thousands of fires started by Californians using equipment the wrong way.

Whether working to create a defensible space around your home or just mowing the lawn, if you live in a wildland area you need to use all equipment responsibly. Lawn mowers, weed eaters, chain saws, grinders, welders, tractors, and trimmers can all spark a wildland fire. Do your part, the right way, to keep your community fire safe.

Here's how to do it the Right Way:

- Do all yard maintenance that requires a gas or electrical motor before 10 a.m. **Not in the heat of the day, or when the wind is blowing!**
- Lawn mowers are designed to mow lawns. **Never** use lawn mowers in dry vegetation.
- Use a weed trimmer to cut down dry weeds and grass.

- Remove rocks in the area before you begin operating any equipment. A rock hidden in grass or weeds is enough to start a fire when struck by a metal blade.
- In wildland areas, spark arresters are required on all portable gasoline powered equipment including tractors, harvesters, chain saws, weed eaters, mowers, motorcycles, and All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).
- Keep the exhaust system, spark arresters and mower in proper working order and free of carbon buildup. Use the recommended grade of fuel and don't top off.
- Keep the engine free of oil and dust and keep the mower free of flammable materials.
- Hot exhaust pipes and mufflers can start fires you won't even see, until it's too late! **Don't pull off into dry grass or brush.**
- Always keep a **Fire Extinguisher** and/or **water hose** readily accessible when cutting in dry vegetation.
- Whenever possible, have a second person available as a helper/spotter in case a fire does break out.

Keep a cell phone nearby and call 9-1-1 immediately in case of a fire.