

WILDFIRES

There are approximately 8,000 wildfires in Canada each year. The regions most at risk are British Columbia, and the Boreal forest zones of Ontario, Quebec, the Prairie Provinces, and the Yukon and Northwest Territories. Wildfires usually occur from May to September and can cause extensive damage and put lives in danger.



Wildfires often begin unnoticed. They spread quickly, igniting brush, trees and homes. In a wildfire, every second counts!

Learn how to plan and prepare before, during and after a wildfire to be Red Cross ready.

Before

- Know the fire risk situation and response plans for your community.
- Know and practice your fire evacuation plan, including evacuation routes.
- Set aside household items that can be used as fire tools: a rake, ax, hand saw or chain saw, bucket and shovel. Keep fire extinguishers accessible. You may need to fight small fires before emergency responders arrive.
- Select building materials and plants that resist fire.
- Regularly clean roofs and gutters.
- Learn fire safety techniques and teach them to your family regularly. Everyone should be familiar with the technique “STOP, DROP, AND ROLL” in case clothing catches on fire.

During

- Be ready to leave at a moment’s notice and follow evacuation orders.
- Check your emergency kit supplies.
- Listen to local radio and television stations for updated emergency information.
- Always back your car into the garage or park it in an open space facing the direction of escape.
- Confine pets to one room so that you can find them if you need to evacuate quickly.
- Arrange for temporary housing at a friend or relative’s home outside the threatened area.
- Limit your exposure to smoke and dust. Close all windows and doors in your house. If you have time, cover vents, windows, and other openings of the house with duct tape and/or pieces of plywood. Pack your valuables and park your car positioned forward out of the driveway.
- Turn off propane or natural gas.
- Turn on the lights in the house, porch, garage and yard. Inside the house, move materials that light easily on fire such as curtains and furniture away from the windows.

After

- Let your family know you are safe.
- Do not enter your home until fire officials say it is safe.
- Be prepared for stress in yourself and others, particularly children.
- Contact your local government office for help in finding temporary housing if you cannot stay in your home due to fire damage.
- Contact your insurance company, if necessary.
- Check with local authorities to see if you are eligible for disaster financial assistance.
- Wear protective gear, including boots, safety glasses and rubber gloves when cleaning up.
- Get a copy of the [Red Cross Guide to Fire Recovery](#).

