

Living With Nature: Focus on Wildfire Awareness

Source: Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office

Wildfire Awareness Week was May 6-11, 2007, and home and building owners in wildfire prone areas are encouraged to take steps to protect themselves through prevention and structural risk reduction. With increased construction in rural areas, more homes and structures are vulnerable to wildfires. The Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office encourages homeowners to take steps to prepare their property in case of wildfires.

By using non-combustible building materials and fire-resistant plants in landscaping, homeowners can increase the chances of their home surviving a

wildfire. By taking action now, homeowners can prepare themselves before fire season begins.

Steps to increase fire resistance in and around your home include:

- Enclose eaves, fascias, soffits and sub-floor vents using 1/8" or smaller non-corrosive metal mesh.
- Remove debris, firewood and other stored items from under decking and enclose decking with 1/8" screen mesh to keep out burning embers.
- Keep your roof and gutters free of needles, leaves and other debris.

- Install metal, tile, concrete or Class A fire-resistant materials like stucco, stone or brick. Vinyl siding can melt and is not recommended.
- Use double-paned or tempered glass for all exterior windows.
- Consider installing a residential sprinkler system.

Sublimity Fire District has the needed resources to provide wildland protection within its boundaries. With these resources and strong mutual aid partners, such as Oregon Department of Forestry and other county fire districts, we can muster additional units when required.

Preparing Your Business for the Unthinkable

Source: American Red Cross

Disasters can happen anywhere, often with little or no warning. Is your business prepared? What can you do to protect your business, employees and customers? Where should you begin?

No business should risk operating without a disaster plan. As many as 40% of small businesses do not reopen after a major disaster like a flood, tornado or earthquake. These shuttered businesses were unprepared for a disaster.

When you start to develop a disaster plan, consider three subjects: human resources, physical resources and business continuity. Think about how a disaster could affect your employees, customers and workplace. Think about how you could continue doing business if the area around your facility is closed or streets are impassable. Think about what you would need to serve your customers even if your facility is closed.

Develop a Plan

Start building your plan now. Here are some suggestions:

- Keep phone lists of your key employees and customers with you, and provide copies to key staff members.
- If you may not be able to get to your business quickly after an emergency, leave keys and alarm codes with a trusted employee or friend who is closer.

- Install emergency lights that turn on when the power's out. They're inexpensive and available at bldg. supply stores.
- Back up computer data frequently and keep a backup tape off site.
- Use UL-listed surge protectors and battery backup systems. They will add protection for sensitive equipment and help prevent a computer crash if the power goes out.
- Stock a minimum supply of the goods, materials and equipment you would need for business continuity.
- Consult with your insurance agent about special precautions to take for disasters that may directly impact your business. Remember, most policies don't cover earthquake and flood damage. Protect valuable property and equipment with special riders. Discuss business continuity insur. with your agent.

- Keep emergency supplies handy, including:

- Flashlights w/extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Tools
- Food and water for employees and customers to use during a period of unexpected confinement at your business

Reduce Potential Damage

Prevent or reduce disaster damage in your facility by taking precautions:

- Bolting tall bookcases or display cases to wall studs.
- Protecting breakable objects by securing them to a stand or shelf using hook-and-loop fasteners.
- Moving to lower shelves large objects that could fall and break or injure someone.
- Installing latches to keep drawers and cabinets from flying open and dumping their contents.
- Using closed screw eyes and wire to securely attach framed pictures and mirrors to walls.
- Using plumber's tape or strap iron to wrap around a hot water heater to secure it to wall studs.

You should also consider having a professional install:

- Flexible connectors to appliances and equipment fueled by natural gas.
- Automatic fire sprinklers.

You may want to get a copy of the *Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry* from your Red Cross Chapter or <http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared>.

Fire Safety Checklist for Older Adults

Source: FEMA FA-221

Older people are at special risk for death and injury from fires.

To protect yourself and those you care about, follow these seven tips:

•**Install and Maintain Smoke Alarms.** Install working smoke alarms on every level of your home, especially in sleeping areas. Test and dust each alarm monthly, and change the batteries at least once a year.

•**Use Smoking Materials Safely.** Never smoke in bed, while drowsy, or while under the influence of medication or alcohol. Use large, deep ashtrays for smoking debris, and let the contents cool before you dispose of them.

•**Pay Attention to Your Cooking.** Keep pot handles turned inward, and keep cooking surfaces and surrounding areas free from clutter and grease buildup. Use pot holders and oven mitts.

Never lean over a hot burner and avoid wearing loose clothing with flowing sleeves while cooking. Take a reminder with you (or set a timer) if you must leave the kitchen with food cooking on the range top.

•**Heat Your Home Safely.** Have a professional service all heating equipment annually. Keep combustibles and anything that can burn or melt away from all heaters, furnaces, fireplaces and water heaters. Never use a range or oven to heat your home.

•**Practice Electrical Safety.** Have a professional electrician inspect your home's electrical wiring system at least every 10 years, and make recommended repairs. Never overload the electrical system. Plug each appliance directly into its own outlet and avoid using extension cords. Have an electrician install ground fault

circuit interrupters (GFCIs) in rooms where water may be present. Install and maintain electrical appliances according to the manufacturers' instructions.

•**Keep Matches and Lighters Away from Children.** Store matches and lighters in a locked drawer or a high cabinet away from the reach of grandchildren or other youngsters. Make sure lighters are child-resistant.

•**Know What to Do in Case of Fire.** Practice two ways out of every room in your home. Get out as soon as you discover a fire; do not try to fight the fire. Once out of the house, stay out; do not attempt to enter a burning home to gather possessions left behind. Immediately dial 9-1-1 or your local emergency number for help, preferably from a neighbor's phone.

Address Signs Help Us Get There Faster

Failure to provide clear address markings may be inviting disaster in the event of an emergency where seconds might make the difference.

Depending on the location of your home (rural or residential), fire departments suggest the following methods of marking your address:

RURAL

*For a single driveway off a main road, affix your address to a post at the entrance to your driveway.

RESIDENTIAL

*Paint four-inch numbers on the curbing in front of your home.

*Place numbers that are at least four

inches tall near the front entrance (or a location easily visible from the street) in a color in contrast to the color of your home (i.e., light numbers on a dark background.)

*For apartments and other buildings with multiple occupancies, mark each separate occupant's number.

*For a single driveway leading to multiple driveways for individual residences, affix the addresses of all residences to a post at the entrance of the main driveway. At the intersection of individual driveways, affix addresses with arrows pointing toward individual residences.

Remember, next time the emergency might be yours. Proper addressing will assist the fire department in dealing with your emergency more quickly.

The fire district provides reflective address signs for a fee of \$15. Included in the price is the cost of the materials to make the sign, a signpost, and installation of the sign by qualified district personnel at an appropriate spot.

If you are interested in obtaining a reflective address sign, please call the fire district at (503) 769-3282. Help us help you.