



# Be Prepared: 8 Tips When Fire Is Coming

Wildfires can spread at 14 mph, and can go from spark to blaze in seconds.

Take these steps now and be prepared.



1

## Post a contact list.

Include local emergency numbers, contact information for a friend or relative who lives outside your area, and information for getting in touch with your insurance agent. Be sure to add the emergency numbers to the contact list on your cell phone.



2

## Know the emergency warnings.

The National Weather Service (NWS) issues red flag alerts when weather patterns are identified that could contribute to extreme fire danger.

- **A fire weather watch** is issued when critical fire weather conditions are possible but not imminent.
- **A red flag warning** urges residents to take extreme caution because fires are ongoing or expected to occur shortly.
- **An extreme fire behavior** alert indicates that a wildfire is likely to rage out of control.



3

## Stay informed.

Start by downloading "[Be Smart Find Your Alerts and Warnings](#)" document at [ready.gov/prepare](https://ready.gov/prepare). You can also tune in to local news for up-to-the-minute coverage of the weather. Some communities offer text or email alerting systems, or you can purchase a NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) to receive broadcast alerts directly from the NWS.



4

## Gather important documents & belongings.

In addition to the items listed below, don't forget easy access to your car keys, driver's license, cell phone (and charger), and credit cards or cash.

- Medications and prescriptions
- Eyeglasses, hearing aids, and any medical equipment.
- Hard drives or portable flash drives with important documents
- Irreplaceable items, such as photos, mementos, and jewelry.



5

## Plan your evacuation routes.

Be familiar with at least two ways to exit your neighborhood in case roads are blocked. Make sure your vehicle has plenty of gas at all times. Your community may have an evacuation plan of its own, which could include information for people with disabilities, pets, service animals, and livestock.



6

## Arrange for temporary housing.

Identify a place to stay if you have to leave your home. Find emergency shelters ahead of time, or contact the American Red Cross for additional information.



7

## Take care of pets.

You may need to find your furry friends in a hurry, so don't let them wander off. Shelters typically accept service animals, but they don't always accommodate pets. Call ahead so you know the rules.



8

## Plan communication with loved ones.

Because you can't assume that your entire family will be together when a wildfire strikes, it's important to agree on how you will communicate and where you will meet. Texting is often faster than calling someone, but phone batteries can die, so record important numbers on paper and stash it in your wallet.



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