

How to Prepare Your Home When a Wildfire Is Approaching (If Time Allows)

When a wildfire is threatening your area, every minute counts. If you have some time before evacuating, taking key steps to prepare your home can help reduce fire risk and improve safety for you, your family, and firefighters.

Here's a step-by-step guide to securing your property before leaving:

Inside Your Home

- **1. Shut All Windows and Doors**

Close all exterior and interior doors, windows, vents, and pet doors.

This helps slow the spread of fire and prevents embers from entering your home.

- **2. Close Curtains and Remove Flammable Materials**

Remove lightweight curtains and move flammable furniture (like couches or chairs) away from windows and glass doors.

Fire generates intense radiant heat that can ignite materials without direct contact.

- **3. Shut Fireplace Dampers and Interior Vents**

Close chimneys, fireplace dampers, and interior air vents to prevent smoke or embers from entering.

- **4. Turn On Interior and Exterior Lights**

Increases visibility through smoke so firefighters can locate your home.

Outside Your Home

- **5. Remove Flammable Items Near the House**

Clear a 50-foot zone around your home. Remove patio cushions, rugs, doormats, firewood, propane tanks, toys, and furniture. Trim low branches and dry brush.

- **6. Shut Off Gas and Propane**

Turn off gas at the meter and close propane valves to reduce explosion risk.

- **7. Connect Garden Hoses to Spigots**

Leave hoses connected and stretched out. Place buckets of water and shovels around for spot fires.

- **8. Seal Attic and Crawl Space Vents (if time allows)**

Use metal mesh screens or temporarily seal vents with foil and duct tape to block embers.

Prepare for a Fast Exit

Park your car facing outward with keys inside or nearby. Load pets early. Keep the go-bag in the car and doors unlocked until departure.

Final Checklist Before You Leave

- Windows/doors closed
- Gas & propane off
- Hoses out and water ready
- Go-bag in car
- Lights on
- Pets loaded
- House marked as “EVACUATED” (optional for firefighters)

⚠ Important Reminder: These steps do not make your home fireproof, but they improve its chances of survival and assist firefighters. Never delay evacuation once orders are given—your safety comes first.