

# Missoula County Wildfire Preparedness Guide



## Preparing **BEFORE**, **DURING** and **AFTER** Wildfires in Missoula County



# What To Do BEFORE WILDFIRES: Prepare Your Home, Family and Property

## In and Around Your Home

### Prepare Your Home and Property: Know Your Risk and HIZ

Do you know how defensible your home is to wildfire? Do you know your Home Ignition Zone (HIZ)? Do you know if you live in a high wildfire risk area? Learn about each and take steps now to reduce your risk to wildfire. For more information on your home ignition zone, visit [NFPA.org](https://www.nfpa.org).

### Receive a Home Wildfire Risk Assessment

Consult with your local fire department or fire prevention specialist on how to mitigate your property. Become aware of resources available to help accomplish mitigation and what specific actions you can take.

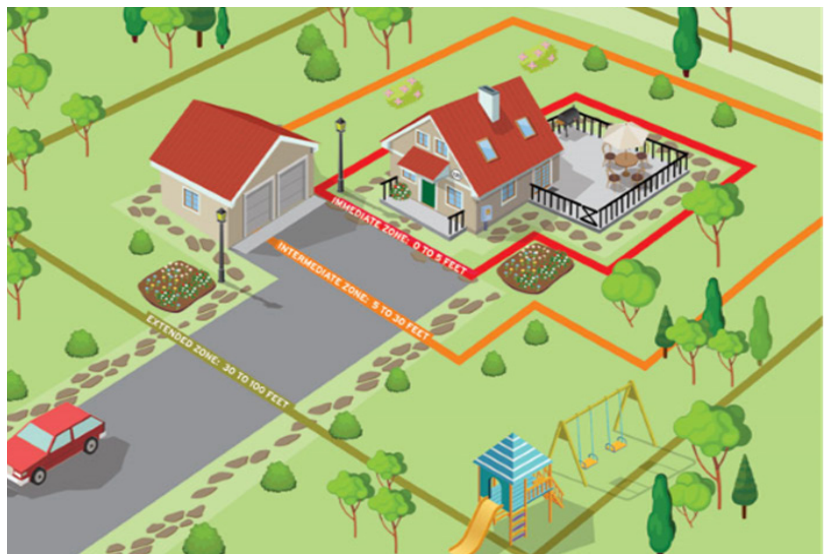
To sign up for a FREE wildfire risk assessment: Visit [dnrc.mt.gov/free-visit](https://dnrc.mt.gov/free-visit), call **258-3633** or scan the QR Code below with your phone.

### Receive Emergency Notifications

Sign up to receive free emergency alerts at [Smart911.com](https://Smart911.com). This is the primary method for notifying you on evacuation warnings and orders in Missoula County.

### Ensure Emergency Responder Access

Ensure your home and neighborhood have clearly marked and legible street names. Driveways should be at least 13 feet wide, with 15 feet of clearance. Use reflective address signs for your home so first responders can easily identify your property in dark/smoky conditions.



Source: [NFPA.org](https://www.nfpa.org)

# Missoula County Wildfire Preparedness Guide

## Be Prepared: What to Do BEFORE Fire Season

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### Prepare for Smoke: Create a Clean Air Room

Designate a room that can be closed off from outside air. Close all doors and windows. Use a portable air cleaner and true HEPA filter inside your home.

### Make an Evacuation Plan

It is important to have a plan for what you will do in the event of an evacuation. Even small wildfires can necessitate an evacuation. Now is the time to think about your family, pets, livestock, and valuables to bring during an evacuation.

- Identify two or more evacuation routes from your home.
- Prepare a Go Bag and Remember the 5 P's:
  1. People
  2. Prescriptions
  3. Pets
  4. Papers
  5. Priceless items/personal needs
- Create a livestock evacuation plan if applicable.
- Establish an emergency meeting location outside of the fire area.
- For disaster preparedness for people with disabilities, visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for more information.

## In Your Community

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### Attend or Organize a Wildfire Preparedness Workshop

Learn about evacuation prep, home ignition zone mitigation, land management resources and more. Contact **258-3633** or [mrebholz@missoulacounty.us](mailto:mrebholz@missoulacounty.us) to schedule a workshop.

### Become a Neighborhood Ambassador

Learn how to become a neighborhood ambassador and be a leader within your fire adapted community. Call **258-3633** for information.

### Follow Local Burning Rules

Obtain a burn permit by visiting your local fire dept. or visit [app.mt.gov/burnpermit](https://app.mt.gov/burnpermit). Know when it is OK to burn and more information by visiting Missoula City-County Health Dept webpage.



# DURING FIRE SEASON: Actions to Take When Fire Danger is High

*Maintain a high level of situational awareness. Try to understand the fire conditions around you and the possible impacts from a fire. If there is a fire, be able to keep yourself and others informed on conditions.*

## During Fire Season...

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### Monitor Local Weather Reports

Be aware of current fire danger ratings, conditions and warnings. Follow MCFPA on Facebook and Twitter for current burn restrictions and local fire information. For local and national fire information: [inciweb.nwcg.org](http://inciweb.nwcg.org).

### Red Flag Warnings

These are issued for weather events which may contribute to extreme fire behavior that will occur within 24 hours. A Red Flag Warning is the highest alert. During these times, extreme caution is urged by all residents.

### Stay Informed

Follow social media and/or websites for Missoula County Office of Emergency Management, your local fire department, MCFPA, Missoula County Sheriff's Office and other trusted media outlets for information on current fire conditions in Missoula County.

### Be Familiar with Evacuation Procedures and Documents

Contact your local fire department or Missoula County Office of Emergency Management for more tips and procedures during a wildfire event.

## FOLLOW US!

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### Missoula County Fire Protection Association



@mcfpa



@mcfpa

# Fire In Your Community: Evacuation Preparedness

## During an Evacuation Warning

### Stay Informed

Listen to TV/radio broadcasts for current weather and emergency instructions. Follow trusted media outlets and attend Public Information meetings. This is the best source for information of current fire conditions and status of nearby wildfires.

### Evacuate Early

Bring your Go Bag. By leaving early you give your family the best chance of surviving a wildfire. If there is a threat to your home or evacuation route, leave early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke, or road congestion.

### Evacuation Steps

Sign up for Smart 911 at [Smart911.com](http://Smart911.com) or at [missoulacounty.us/oem](http://missoulacounty.us/oem). Every effort will be made to issue an Evacuation **WARNING** first. Due to rapidly changing events, an Evacuation **ORDER** may be sent with no prior warning.

**EVACUATION WARNING**

You are **WARNED** that current or projected hazards associated with an emergency in this area **may** require immediate evacuation.

- This is the time for final preparations, precautionary movement of persons with special needs, mobile property, and perhaps even pets and livestock.
- Authorities will make every attempt to advise the public as conditions change. Area media outlets have been asked to broadcast updates as they are given.
- If you are not enrolled in **SMART 911**, now is the perfect time to do so. Log on to [smart911.com](http://smart911.com) and create your safety profile. This service will enhance your ability to receive alerts and provide information to responders to enhance your family's safety.
- DO NOT WAIT** for authorities to give an evacuation order for your area. Early self-evacuation ensures the safety of you and your family.
- Please do not remove any exterior flagging or markings that have been placed outside of your home. These markings help emergency responders to identify who has or hasn't received notification.

*If a slow moving emergency vehicle with lights and alternating siren tones is moving through the area, it is time to evacuate! See reverse for EVACUATION ORDER instructions.*

Evacuation Warning  
Issued on:  
Issued By:

**EVACUATION ORDER**

You are **ORDERED** to immediately leave the area. Incident conditions present an immediate threat to persons within this area. A slow moving emergency vehicle with lights and alternating siren tones, loudspeaker announcements, and/or personal contact from a responder all indicate to evacuate immediately!

- Law enforcement and other emergency responders are working in this area to provide accurate information about routes to take out of the area.
- This is the time for you and your family to **GET OUT** of the area immediately for safety reasons! This is **NOT THE TIME** to move personal property or livestock.
- If you choose to ignore this order, you must understand that emergency responders **MAY NOT BE ABLE** to assist you and no other persons will be allowed into the area.
- For evacuation information call 728-RNO (4636) THERE MAY BE A CHECK IN CENTER FOR EVACUATED PERSONS, LOOK AND LISTEN FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THIS.
- Drive in a safe and orderly fashion on designated routes only. Be on the lookout for fast moving emergency vehicles. Remaining calm and getting your pre-planned actions in motion will be the best way to keep you and your family safe.
- Please do not remove any exterior flagging or markings that have been placed outside of your home. These markings help emergency responders to identify who has or hasn't received notification.

Evacuation Order  
Issued on:  
Issued By:

### Before You Leave

If time allows, close and protect your home's openings including windows, garage doors, etc. Remove curtains from windows. Shut off any natural gas, propane or fuel oil supplies at the source. Provide water resources by connecting garden hoses, exterior sprinkler systems and providing buckets of water.

### Wear Protective Clothing

Wear protective clothing when outside, such as sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothes, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves, and a bandanna to protect your face.

### Identify a Shelter

If you are ordered to evacuate and need to relocate for an extended period of time, make arrangements to do so now. Do not forget to make a plan for your pets/livestock. Call 258-INFO(4636) for shelter information during an evacuation.

# Fire In Your Community: Evacuation Preparedness

## During an Evacuation Order

### Evacuate Immediately

If you are ordered to evacuate, do so immediately. Roads can become congested quickly if you delay. Smoke, embers and debris can cause low visibility.

A slow moving emergency vehicle with lights and alternating siren tones, loudspeaker announcements, and/or personal contact from a responder all indicate the need to evacuate immediately!

### Shelter Information

There may be a check-in center for evacuated persons. Look and listen for information regarding this. Stay alert for media releases and receive accurate and timely info by calling **258-INFO(4636)** during an evacuation.

### Driving Safely

Drive in a safe and orderly fashion on designated routes only. Be on the lookout for fast moving emergency vehicles. Remaining calm and putting your pre-planned actions in motion will be the best way to keep you and your family safe.

### If You Choose to Stay

Understand that emergency responders may not be able to assist you and no other persons are allowed in the area.





# Fire In Your Community: Returning After the Fire

## After the Fire

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### When to Return Home?

Only when authorities say it is safe to return.

### Floods After Wildfire

Wildfires can dramatically change soil infiltration. Flooding after a wildfire can be a possibility. Consult Missoula County Office of Emergency Management webpage for more information about preparing for floods.

### Prior to Re-Entry

Utilities must be repaired and in service; sewer and sanitation must be repaired; running water must be available and essential services (gas, medical services and food must be available before re-entry). Authorities will release timely info when it is safe to return.

### Before Beginning Any Cleanup Effort

Document any damage with photographs and contact your insurance carrier.



# Homeowner Resources

## Missoula County Programs:

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### Wildfire Risk Assessment: Free

Receive specific recommendations on preparing your property for wildfire. Visit [dnrc.mt.gov/free-visit](http://dnrc.mt.gov/free-visit) or call your local fire department or **258-3633** to get scheduled.

### Missoula County Home Ignition Zone Program

Missoula Rural Fire Department and Frenchtown Rural Fire's Department offer defensible space mitigation programs within their response jurisdiction. First determine which jurisdiction you reside in, then call MRFD or FRFD to learn more.

### Natural Resource Conservation Services

Ideal for large acreage landowners (>5 acres) that wish to reduce their wildfire hazard and improve their forests. Call the NRCS Missoula Field Office at **406-829-3395** for more info.

### DNRC Forest Stewardship

The stewardship program provides private forest owners with technical and financial assistance to plan and implement long-term stewardship or management goals on their property. Call your local DNRC Service Forester to learn more. To find your local Service Forester, please visit [dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry](http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry).



## Useful Links and Resources

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**Missoula County Fire Protection Association:** [mcfpa.org](http://mcfpa.org)

**Current Fire Conditions:** [gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/](http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/)

**Montana Air Quality:** [svc.mt.gov/dew/todaysair](http://svc.mt.gov/dew/todaysair)

**Info on Smoke and Health:** [www.montanawildfiresmoke.org](http://www.montanawildfiresmoke.org)

**For Emergency Info:** [www.missoulacounty.us/OEM](http://www.missoulacounty.us/OEM)  
[Ready.mt.gov](http://Ready.mt.gov)  
[Firesafemt.org](http://Firesafemt.org)

**For More Wildfire Preparedness Information:**  
Go to [www.wildfirepartnersmissoula.org](http://www.wildfirepartnersmissoula.org)