

# Preparing for Wildfires and Smoke Events

Wildfires can happen at any time in the year. Climate change has increased the risk of drought and destructive wildfires, with smoke from large wildfires affecting areas dozens of miles away. Preparing for wildfire evacuations and smoke impacts will help protect your health.

## Know How to Get Information

Having good quality information is critical to making informed decisions during an emergency. Setting up your information sources before a wildfire will help you get the timely information you need when a wildfire happens.

### Emergency Alerts

- Make sure your smartphone has emergency alerts enabled. This is typically found in your Settings > Notifications > Emergency Alerts. For more information on emergency alerts, [please see here for iOS](#) and [here for Android phones](#).
- Sign up for Landline, Email, or TTY alerts: [across California](#) or [Nationally](#) (US, free text or email alerts, monthly fee for landline alerts).

### Fire Locations

- Sign up for fire location alerts in your area using [the Watch Duty app](#), a wildfire tracking app that provides real-time updates about wildfires.

### Air Quality

- Check your local air quality using the [EPA Fire and Smoke map](#).
- Follow [outdoor activity guidance for children](#).

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## Prepare Your Home and Supplies

Getting your home and supplies ready will help you be prepared for power outages (which may occur during wildfires), evacuation, and smoke events. Additionally, making changes to your home and yard can help reduce the chances of fire damage.

### Emergency Kit

- Create a “Go Bag”, an emergency kit you can grab if you need to evacuate. Be sure to include important documents and prescription medications. [Suggested kit contents can be found here](#).

### Air Filters

- If you have an A/C system, have an extra filter (MERV-13 rating or higher) on hand and practice installing the filter. Portable room air purifiers with HEPA filters will also help reduce smoke exposures. [More information about air filters can be found here](#).

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## Air Filters (ctd.)

- DIY air cleaners have been found to be reasonably effective in removing smoke particles. [Here are some instructions on how to make a DIY air cleaner.](#)

## Home Weatherization & Hardening

- Seal off cracks and gaps around your doors, garage door, to keep embers and smoke out. [See detailed instructions here.](#)
- Use noncombustable materials for your roof, walls, decks, fences, etc. Install chimney and window screens to help keep embers out: [More information here](#) and [here](#).

## Clear Brush on Your Property

- Clear away flammable brush in your yard, including cleaning out gutters, sweeping up leaves, and trimming back trees and shrubs. [Create and maintain defensible zones around your home.](#)

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## Make Your Household Wildfire Action Plan

Having a plan and practicing it with your family/household members will keep everyone calmer and more coordinated. Develop a plan with your family/household before an emergency happens.

### Communication Plan

- Write down your emergency contacts. Make a plan with your family to have a central contact person who lives outside the area; all family members should contact this person if you get separated and local communication systems are jammed. Make plans for where your family and pets might go in case of evacuation. A [sample plan template can be found here](#) and [a fillable template here](#).

### Evacuation Plan

- Define multiple escape routes from your home. If you don't have your own transportation, make arrangements with someone who lives nearby who can help drive you to your evacuation location. [This plan template](#) includes a place to specify transportation to the evacuation location.