



Considerations for Wildfire Planning

There is an increasing rate of wildfires across the US each year. This puts more organizations at real risk. It is estimated that more than 72,000 US communities are now at risk. Organizations in areas at reasonable risk of wildfire must prepare and plan for this traumatic event. Safe-Wise Consulting has prepared this document to assist nonprofit organizations plan for this emergency and also identify available resources.

Before a wildfire starts:

- Create a plan for response, communication, evacuation and transportation
- Gather equipment and supplies needed in an emergency.
- Post evacuation plans, identify assembly areas and run emergency drills.
- Prepare properties by clearing yards, gutters, eaves, porches and decks. Remove dead vegetation and flammable materials around buildings; create buffer zones of [defensible space](#).
- Prune trees so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground and keep lawns hydrated.
- Develop contingency arrangements for evacuations and shelter in place.
- Communicate with the local fire department about how to prepare, when to evacuate, and proper response in the event of a wildfire.
- Identify water sources and utility shut-offs on a written site map for larger facilities.

During a wildfire is in the area:

- Stay aware of the latest news and updates from local media and fire department.
- Communicate your plan to all staff, participants and other effected parties such as families and transportation vendors.
- Follow the directions of fire officials and respond quickly to evacuation directives.

After a wildfire:

- Continue to listen to news updates for information about the fire. Return to facilities only after having been notified by authorities.
- Execute your crisis communication and media plan.
- Contact insurance representatives.

Resources for Planning:

Developing a plan for schools, child care centers and workplaces From the Federal Emergency Management Agency ([FEMA](#)) at [Ready.gov](#)

Preparation information from the Federal Emergency Management Agency ([FEMA](#)):
[Wildfire: Are You Prepared?](#)
[Wildfire Safety](#) – handouts for the community

Preparation information from the American Camp Association ([ACA](#)):
[Wildfire Evacuations](#)
[Are you Ready? Severe Weather](#)

Preparation information from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):
[Firewise](#) preparation programs
[Emergency Planning](#) webpage

Response after wildfires from the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)