

WHEN FIRE THREATENS ...



Fire knows no boundaries, and it doesn't play favourites. A lightning strike, a carelessly discarded cigarette or an abandoned campfire are just some of the ways fire can turn a rural area or a tranquil suburban subdivision into an inferno. That's why wherever you live, it's important to practice fire safety around your home, property and neighbourhood and minimize the risk. Use **Emergency Preparedness Week** to learn more about being prepared for a fire or any other kind of emergency.

What can I do to reduce the risk of fire on my property?

- Start with a general yard cleanup. Remove needles, branches and underbrush that could fuel a fire. Get rid of brush, long grass and anything growing under large trees that could cause a fire to spread into those trees and neighbouring trees.
- Prune low-level branches up to at least 2.5 metres above the ground. Replace bark mulch with gravel or decorative rocks.
- Move your woodpile and other flammable materials away from your house or other buildings. Flammable materials should be at least 10 metres away and uphill from your home.
- If your home is on a slope, pay particular attention to the downhill side of your property. Fire can race uphill and burn trees, brush, grass or other flammable materials.

What can I do to help fight a fire on my property?

- Never put your life at risk when faced with a fire. Call the fire department immediately if it is a serious blaze.
- For less serious fires, keep a hose and nozzle permanently connected and clearly visible. Make sure you have enough hose to reach your roof and all exterior walls.
- If water pressure is a concern, have a full barrel of water and a 10-litre pail.
- Have a shovel or grubbing tool available to use to prevent a ground fire from spreading.
- Check your roads and driveways. Can you get out easily? Can emergency vehicles get in? Review and practice fire safety procedures with your family. Make sure they know where fire fighting equipment, including a ladder, is located, and be sure you have emergency numbers clearly posted in your home.

I'm building a new home in a forested area. What do I need to do?

- Fire-safe building materials are an important part of protecting your home. For example, wood siding and shake roofs are popular, but they leave forest homes vulnerable to fire.
- There are building products that will give your home a rustic look while helping to protect it from fire. Consider some of the new metal shingles that look like asphalt, as well as the cement siding products that look like wood. Refer to BC Forest Service publications or consult a building supply store for more information.

What about my neighbours?

- Working together with your neighbours is essential. Get together and talk about a fire protection plan for your area, and schedule a neighbourhood work bee.

Further Information:

For further information on protecting your home from fire, contact your local **Forest Service Protection Program** office in the blue pages of your phone book or the:

Protection Program Headquarters

Second Floor - 2957 Jutland Road

Victoria BC V8W 9C1

Phone: (250) 387-5965 Fax: (250) 387-5685.

Web site: <http://bcwildfire.ca/> also has additional fire safety information.

To report a wildfire, call:

B.C. Forest Service

toll free at 1-800-663-5555 or,

*5555 on the Telus and Rogers cellular networks.