Wildfires can occur anywhere and at anytime. Preparing your family for wildfire situations can help you avoid or minimize injury and speed the recovery process.

**Before a Wildfire**

- **Determine the risk of wildfire in your area.**
  - Fire weather and forecasts, current hazards and fire situations at [https://fsapps.nwcg.gov/amf/](https://fsapps.nwcg.gov/amf/).
  - Favorable conditions for wildfires include:
    - High winds, low humidity/dewpoint, above normal temperatures, dormant vegetation, drought conditions.

- **Know the terminology.**
  - A Fire Weather Watch is issued when the potential for severe fire weather exists in the near future – usually between 12 and 24 hours in the future, though they can be issued for days in advance.
  - A Red Flag Warning is issued to indicate the imminent danger of severe fire weather with a relatively high probability of occurrence.

- **Sign-up for local emergency alerts.**
  - Check with your local emergency management agency or fire department for local emergency alert programs that can be sent directly to your phone, tablet, or other device.

- **Prepare an emergency kit:**
  - Food, water and necessities for all members of the family to last 3 to 5 days
  - Any medications needed for family members
  - First aid kit, flashlight, solar, battery-powered, or crank radio, batteries, fire extinguisher
  - Important family documents (e.g., insurance policies, emergency contact numbers)

- **Develop an evacuation plan.**
  - Learn the evacuation routes and locations of emergency shelters in your area.
  - Identify several escape routes for your location, in case roads are blocked.
  - Have your vehicles loaded and full of fuel, facing the direction of travel.

- **Create a family communication plan.**
  - Determine where you will go and how you will communicate if a fire occurs and an evacuation is ordered.
  - Designate an out-of-state relative or friend as the family contact person.

**During a Wildfire**

- **Stay informed.**
  - Listen to the radio or television for situation developments, evacuation instructions and routes, and road closures.

- **Gather your emergency kit.**

- **If an evacuation order is given, leave immediately.**
  - Do not return for any reason until told it is safe.
  - Let someone know where you are going – a designated emergency shelter, a family member’s home, or other location.
  - If possible, take your family pets with you.

- **Drive carefully when evacuating.**
  - Smoke may reduce visibility.
  - Fleeing wildlife or animals may cross the roadway.
  - Debris from the fire may impede your path.

- **Follow evacuation routes and expect heavy traffic.**

- **Take health precautions.**
  - If you have asthma, emphysema, or other respiratory conditions, avoid smoke inhalation.
  - If you must be outside in a smoke-filled area, use an N-95 mask or a dry cloth over your mouth and nose.

- **If you become trapped,**
  - Crouch in a pond, river or pool.
  - Do not put wet clothing or bandanas over your mouth or nose. Moist air causes more damage to airways than dry air at the same temperature.
  - If there is no body of water:
    - Find shelter in a cleared area or among a bed of rocks.
    - Lie flat, face down, and cover your body with soil.
    - Breathe the air close to the ground to avoid scorching your lungs or inhaling smoke.

**After a Wildfire**

- **Do not return home until authorities tell you it is safe.**

- **Use caution when entering burned areas.**

- **Seek medical attention for injuries as soon as possible.**
  - If you are someone you are with has been burned, call 9-1-1 or seek help immediately.

Development of this educational material was by the Center for Food Security and Public Health and the Multi-State Partnership for Security in Agriculture. September 2017.