

## After the fire front has passed

After the fire front has passed there will still be a lot of smoke and high temperatures outside. You must stay inside in your home if you are not sure that the conditions are safe outside. Widespread electricity can be hanging or ground, so the risk of electrocution will be high.

When you can safely go outside, you must ensure that there are no more flames:

- Inside the roof.
- Under the wooden floor boards.
- On timber window and door sills.
- In sheds and in wood heaps.

Surviving a wildfire is a stressful experience. It is exhausting and produces different emotional reactions in different people. These reactions are normal in emergency situations. To recover physically and emotionally:

- Stay close to your family and friends.
- Continue with your daily routine when you are able to do so.
- Talk about the forest fire with members of your family, your friends and neighbours.
- Explain to the children what did occur in terms that they can understand.
- Find out more information about the forest fire to understand exactly what happened.

After the passage of a forest fire, the landscape may appear to be like a "black desert" and this situation can increase depressed feelings. However, plants and animals will be recovering. The original vegetation will recover in the form of re-generation after the fire creating a new vegetation re-growth pleasant to look at again within days.



Recovery of vegetation four months after the passage of a low intensity forest fire.

## In case of a forest fire near your home

- **Call at the emergency telephone (112) and warn your neighbours.**
- **Act as the Housing Development Auto protection Plan recommends.**
- **If you are evacuated, turn off the electricity and gas, take your essentials (documents, money and drugs) and go to the emergency services where it is safe.**

<http://fireparadox.org/>

emergències  
**112**

**FIRE PARADOX**



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## Self-protection fire management guide

# SURVIVING A FOREST FIRE



## Be prepared for a forest fire

If you live or work in a forest fire risk area, you must be prepared in order to survive a forest fire.

Knowing whether your property is at risk - and preparing it for such an event - is just a first step towards meeting the threat of forest fires. For more detail about the prevention of forest fires, you can consult the two other leaflets of this Guide: (i) *Preparing your property* and (ii) *Risk awareness*.

Prevention is as important or more important than the decision that you take when a forest fire starts nearby your home.

To avoid risk to your life and your possessions, you must follow authorities' guidelines about when to evacuate or confine yourself to your home. In the case of isolated homes, if authorities have not been able to provide you with such (necessary) instructions, you will have to decide for yourself whether to leave your home or to take refuge in it.

To stay can only be considered when:

- There is adequate protection in the form of pre-treated fire-breaks on the plot and the home is well-prepared for the by-passing of a forest fire (see recommendations in the two other leaflets of this Guide).
- We have the necessary information when staying at homes should be considered.

Things to consider before evacuating:

- Do I know which safety zone I want to reach, and where it is?
- Do I have enough time to get to the safety zone?
- Are evacuation roads clear and safe?

**Remember:** All family members have to know which actions must be taken in case of evacuating your house. It is essential to organise and set up the population of fire risk areas in order to be prepared for a forest fire. Try out the recommendations listed in this leaflet to be prepared over a fire

## If you decide to confine yourself at home

If you decide to stay behind at your home or dwelling, you must be fully aware of your physical and emotional state-of-mind. If you decide to stay at home during a forest fire, you must:

- Confinement should not be carried out in a wood building. If you live in a wood building, you must take refuge in the neighbour's homes.
- Try to advise the authorities of the situation and where you are.
- Seal your home, close doors and windows and put wet towels under them.
- Remove the curtains from the windows.
- Scroll down just the fireproof blinds. If your blinds are not fireproof, you must let them raised.
- Turn off the supply of butane gas, natural gas, gasoil, etc. and disconnect automatic opening systems of garage doors.
- Ensure that you have basic medicines for members of your family that need them.
- Ensure an adequate water supply (tank, pump, etc). Do not ever use the fire hydrants or taps as water points for a secure flow, often fail over a fire. Fill the bath, sink and other containers with water.
- Provide your house with buckets to carry water.
- Remove all combustible objects around the house including garden furniture.
- Provide your home with a battery-powered radio or television.
- If smoke is dense, leave the lights on, lie on the floor and breathe at floor level. If you must leave your home because of smoke concentration, look for an opened place without smoke, or near dwelling walls. Protect your body with cotton clothes (jeans, long sleeved shirt, a hat, gloves and boots), your airway with a wet cloth or a mask, and your eyes.

## If you decide to evacuate your house

If the forest fire is getting closer and you decide to leave the house, the following should be done:

- Know and understand evacuation routes and safe areas. For more detailed information, you can consult the Housing Development Auto-protection Plan, or contact the nearest fire station.
- If fire-fighters are in the area, ask them where the fire is and how you must evacuate your house
- Avoid alternative routes to the safe areas, because routes could be blocked by trees or faulty electricity lines or the position of fire fighting vehicles, etc. Dense smoke can reduce visibility of routes that you would otherwise recognise.
- Cover your face with a handkerchief to avoid inhaling smoke.
- Do not take refuge in caves or wells.
- Escape in the direction opposite the direction of the wind, and if possible go into in an area already burned.

**Remember:** Evacuation has to be a workable decision. Evaluate the time it will take to follow the evacuation route from the safe areas and where you want to arrive. Taking the "evacuation-decision" at the last moment without considering all pro's and con's carefully before hand can carry a very high risk, with sometimes fatal consequences.

## During a forest fire

### What to expect during a wildfire?

- High temperature
- Wind
- Emerge disconnected flames from the front.
- A lot of smoke and noise
- Loose of power, water and phone
- Fire trucks and aircraft nearby

**Remember:** Surviving a forest fire can be a stressful and an exhausting experience. During this period you might have to take care of other people (e.g. the kids, the elderly, and the sick).