

Big Sky Wildfire Action Guide



PLAN

PREVENT

PREPARE



PLAN – Before a Wildfire

The best time to plan for an emergency is long before disaster strikes.

Take time today to plan for a wildfire.

1

Sign up for
emergency alerts

1. Sign up for emergency alerts.

To receive emergency alerts while you are in the Big Sky area, sign up for free notifications, provided by the Gallatin County Community Notification System and powered by Everbridge. Scan the code at right or visit readygallatin.com.



SCAN for
ALERTS

2. Make a family emergency plan.

- Meet with household members and work together to make a plan.
- Post emergency telephone numbers somewhere accessible.
- Designate a meet-up location. Choose a place right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency. Choose a location outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home.
- Make a communications plan. Make sure everyone has contact information for family members, including work and school. Identify an out-of-area friend or relative to be your contact in the event of a disaster. Everyone must know the contact's phone number.
- Learn how to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at your home.
- Identify escape routes and safe places. In a fire, you may need to evacuate very quickly. Be sure everyone in your family knows the best escape routes out of your home and your neighborhood. (See the Big Sky Evacuation Map on the back cover.)
- If you have pets:
 - The most important thing you can do for your pets in a disaster is to evacuate them. If you are away from your home when your neighborhood is evacuated you may not be allowed back to retrieve your pet, so make arrangements with neighbors before a disaster strikes.
 - Make sure pet vaccinations are current. Pet shelters may require proof of vaccines, so keep vaccination paperwork with other important documents.

2

Make a family
emergency plan

3

Inventory
your home

3. Inventory your home.

- Inventory the exterior and interior of your home with videos, photographs, or lists.
- Document the value and keep receipts for more significant items.
- Store the inventory online or off-site so you can access it in the event of a disaster.

4

Pack a
to-go bag

4. Pack a to-go bag. Store enough supplies for yourself, your family, and your pets to last at least three days. Keep the supplies somewhere handy and include:

- Enough clothing for 3-5 days
- Important documents (financial information, insurance policies, birth certificates, medical records)
- Identification (driver's licenses, passports)
- ATM, credit, and debit cards
- Personal toiletries
- Medications
- Extra glasses or contact lenses
- Computer backup files
- Address book
- Cell phone chargers
- Family photos, valuables, and heirlooms that are easy to carry

PREVENT – Before a Wildfire

To give your home the best chance of survival, take time to make your home more wildfire resistant.



1. Manage vegetation around your home, extending from your home's foundation out 100 feet.

This essential step will help slow or stop the spread of wildfire and help protect your home from igniting from embers, direct flame contact, or radiant heat. Vegetation management also provides firefighters with a safe area to work in to defend your home.

Defensible space requirements are typically subdivided into three zones, whereby the highest priorities and most restrictive measures are incorporated in the area closest to the structure or home. The most common zones are as follows:

Zone 0 (0 – 5') = “Ember-resistant zone” or “Immediate Zone”*

Zone 1 (5 – 30') = “Intermediate Zone” or
“Lean, Clean, and Green Zone”

Zone 2 (30 – 100') = “Extended Zone” or “Reduced Fuel Zone”

Design and implement defensible space.

- Create fuel breaks surrounding the house and within the HIZ.
- Create space vertically and horizontally via plant placement and pruning.
- Use non-combustible mulches near the house.
- Use hardscape and non-combustible materials around structures and to separate individual plants and groups of plants.
- Use the right plants in the right places.

Maintain landscaping.

- Keep landscaping free of dry and dead wood, dry grasses, and leaf litter, especially near any structures.
- Provide horizontal and vertical space throughout.
- Eliminate ladder fuel conditions. A grass fire can move up into shrubs and then into trees.

2. Harden your home's exterior.

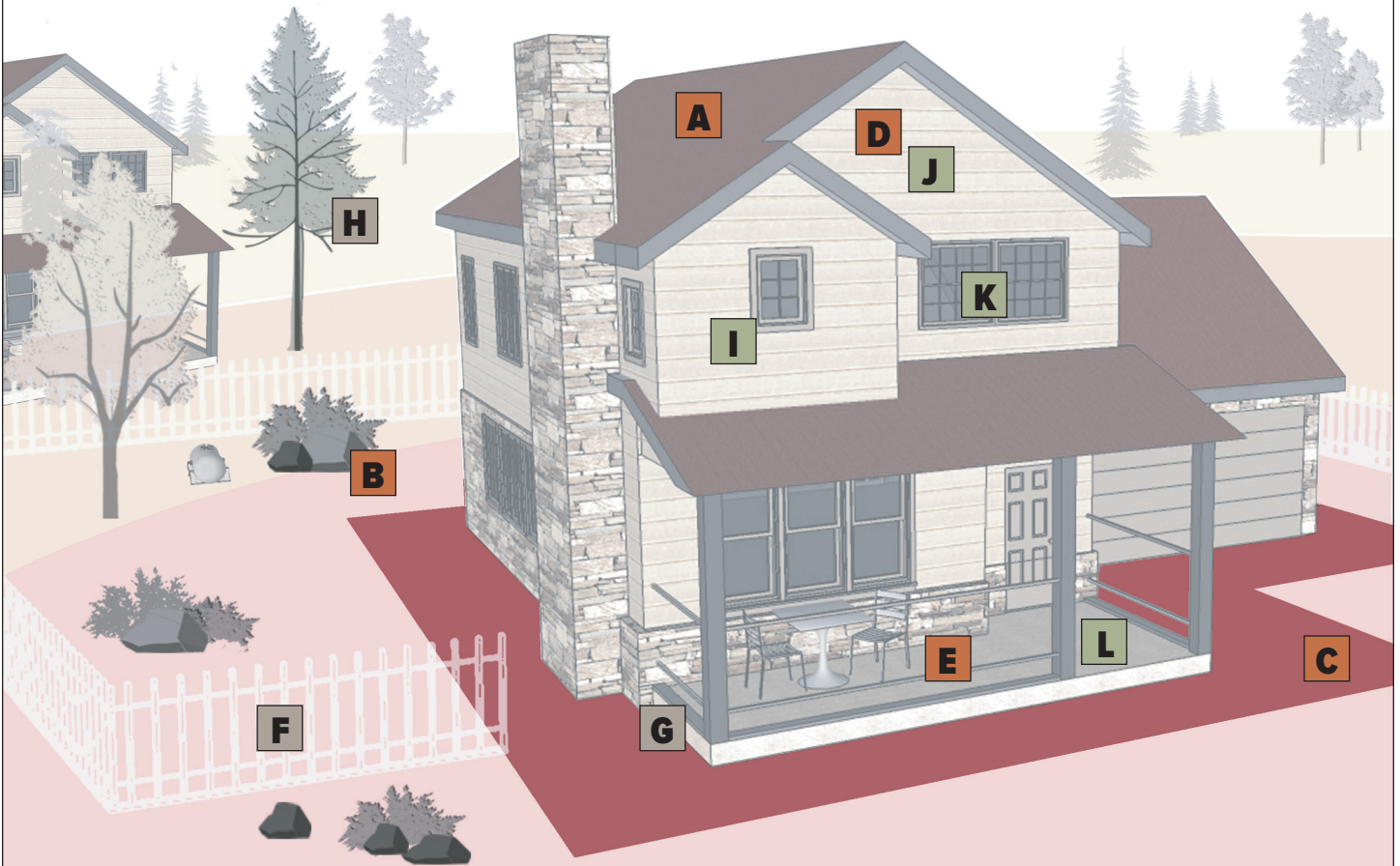
Many components of a home can be modified to resist heat, flames, and flying embers. Some modifications are do-it-yourself weekend projects while others may require more time and money. By reducing the flammability of your home, you can improve the likelihood of your home's survival.

Fire hardened means your home is prepared for a wildfire and an ember storm. It does not mean fireproof. Home hardening addresses the most vulnerable parts of your home with building materials and installation methods that increase resistance to heat, flames, and embers that come with most wildfires. Fire hardening means taking steps to make a home or business more resistant to damage from a wildfire, including:

1. Using materials for siding and roofing that resist ignition during a wildfire.
2. Installing fire-resistant windows to protect openings.
3. Using attic ventilation devices that help reduce ember intrusion embers – the hot glowing fragments of wood – are responsible for most damage during wildfires. They can collect on your home, deck, or porch and ignite combustible materials (those that catch fire and burn easily). Embers can also be forced into gaps in the home (attic vents or windows) and burn the home from the inside out. When this happens, there can be little damage to the nearby plants and trees, leaving people puzzled as to what caused their home to burn.

Fire hardening makes the community more resistant to the spread of wildfire. Slowing down a fire, may create more time and opportunity for emergency responders to protect life and property from a fire. Part of learning to live with wildfire is understanding that we have some control in how we prepare for and address this hazard, and how we manage fire in our own homes and communities.

Own Your Zone – Exterior Home Protection



1ST PRIORITY

A	Roof	Install a Class A-rated roof such as asphalt fiberglass shingles or metal panels.	\$\$\$
B	Roof and yard debris	Clear leaves, pine needles, and other flammable material from the roof, gutters, and areas around fences.	DIY
C	Buffer zone	Clear vegetation and other combustible materials to create a 5-foot buffer zone around the home.	\$\$
D	Vents	Install flame- and ember-resistant vents.	\$
E	Deck	Remove vegetation, firewood, and other combustible materials from on top and under decks.	DIY

2ND PRIORITY

F	Fencing	Replace wood or plastic fences attached to the home with noncombustible metal fencing.	\$\$
G	Enclose decks	Enclose low decks and areas under bay windows with mesh screening or ventilated noncombustible material.	\$
H	Trees	Remove branches that overhang the roof and gutters.	\$

3RD PRIORITY

I	Siding	Replace at least the lower foot of wood or vinyl siding with fiber cement, stucco, brick, or stone siding.	\$\$
J	Eaves	Enclose open eaves with noncombustible soffit material.	\$\$
K	Windows	Use dual-paned, tempered glass in windows and doors.	\$\$\$
L	Deck surface	Replace wooden decking with fire-rated composite material, metal, or lightweight concrete.	\$\$\$

DIY - Do it yourself (sweat and labor) **\$** - Inexpensive **\$\$** - Moderately expensive (may need a contractor) **\$\$\$** - Investment (professional install)

PREPARE – When a Wildfire Strikes

If there is a wildfire in the area, be prepared to leave in a moment's notice. Stay alert and follow emergency orders.



LEVEL 1: GET READY

LEVEL 2: GET SET

LEVEL 3: GO!

► LEVEL 1: GET READY

Evacuations are voluntary. Start making arrangements to leave.

1. Prepare your to-go bag.

Make sure your emergency supply to-go bag is ready and includes items listed on page 2.

2. Prepare family members.

- If possible, evacuate all family members not essential to preparing the house for wildfire.
- Family members who are elderly, have medical conditions, or have certain disabilities may have additional needs to plan for, including medication or equipment. Shelters will not have additional medication or medical equipment available. Documentation about insurance and medical conditions should also accompany the person. If the family member has special dietary needs, bring these special foods and supplements with you.
- Plan ahead for transportation needs, especially for family members with mobility challenges or disabilities. Transportation for the general public in an emergency evacuation may not be suitable for their situation. Consider evacuating sooner than others.

3. Prepare vehicle.

- If you can lift your garage door manually, place vehicle in the garage pointing out with the keys in the ignition. Disconnect the electric garage door opener. If you can't open your garage door manually, park in your driveway facing out with keys in the ignition.
- Roll up the car windows.
- Place to-go bag and essential items in the car.

4. Prepare pets.

- Plan for shelter for your pets if you must evacuate. Pets are not allowed at most public shelters for health and space reasons, so arrangements must be made in advance for pets. Pets might not be allowed in hotels or motels.
- Keep a collar with identification on your pet.
- If possible, have a properly sized pet carrier for each animal.
- Pack a supply of pet food, water, leashes, and any required medications. If your pet goes to a shelter, you will likely need vaccination documentation and proper identification on all pet belongings.

▶ LEVEL 2: GET SET

There is significant danger to your area. Leave voluntarily or be ready at a moment's notice.

- Monitor fire status. Stay tuned to emergency alerts, websites, and local TV/radio.**
- Put your to-go bag in your vehicle.**
- Cover up to protect against heat and flying embers. Wear long pants, long-sleeve shirt, heavy shoes/boots, hat, dry bandana for face cover, and goggles or glasses.**
- Locate your pets and have them ready to evacuate.**

If time allows, follow these steps to give your home the best chance of surviving a wildfire:

Outside the House:

- Gather up flammable items from the exterior of the house and bring them inside (patio furniture, children's toys, door mats, trash cans, etc.) or place them away from house.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Move propane BBQ appliances away from structures.
- Connect garden hoses to outside water valves or spigots for use by firefighters.
- Don't leave sprinklers on or water running; they can affect critical water pressures.
- Leave exterior lights on so your home is visible to firefighters in smoke or darkness of night.
- Check on neighbors and make sure they are preparing to leave.

Inside the House:

- Shut all windows and doors.
- Remove flammable window shades and curtains. Close metal shutters.
- Move flammable furniture to the center of the room, away from windows and doors.
- Shut off propane at the meter or valve.
- Shut off the air conditioning.
- Close fireplace damper.
- Close or block off any doggie-doors.

▶ LEVEL 3: GO! LEAVE IMMEDIATELY

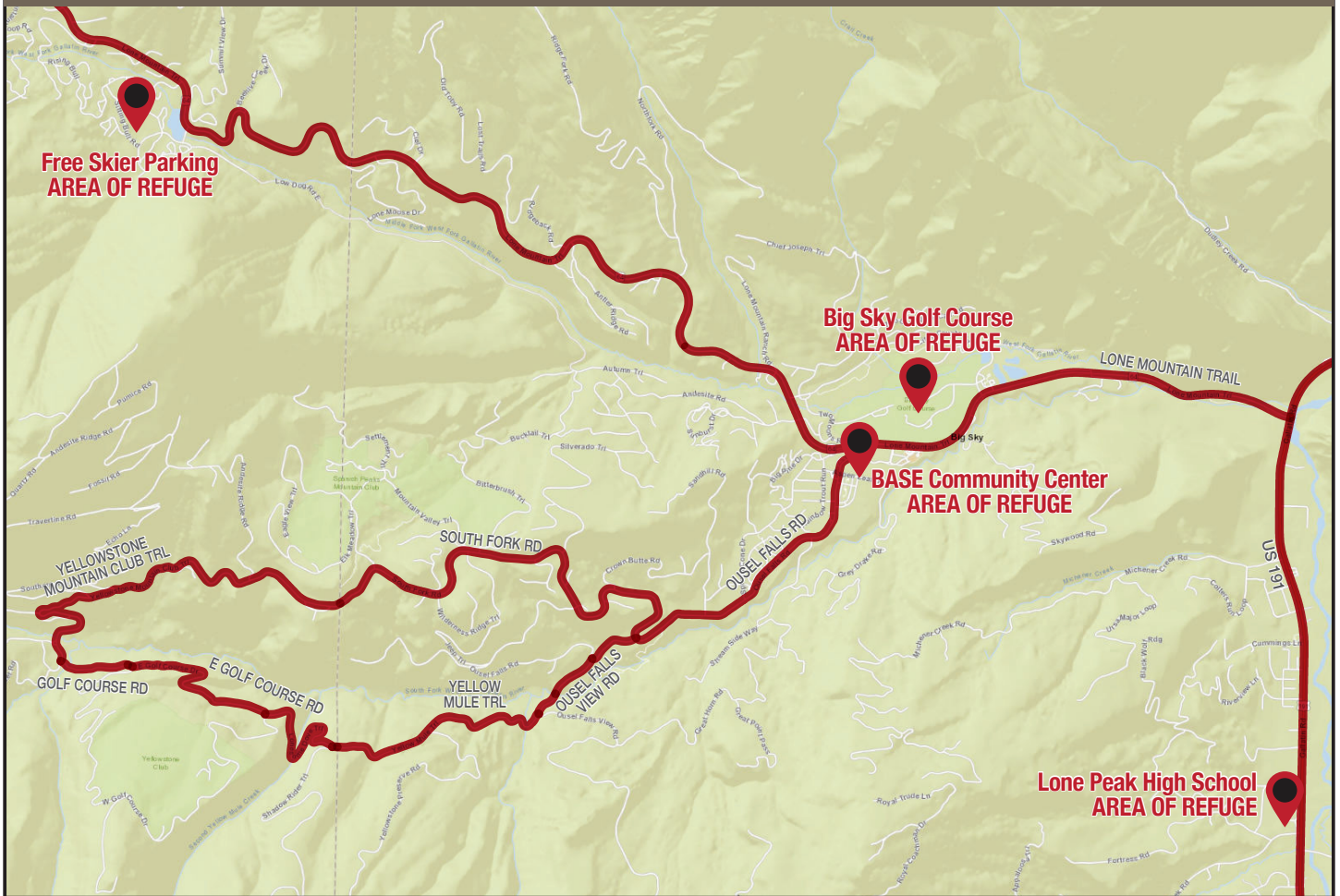
Danger to your area is current or imminent. Leave immediately. Don't wait to be told to leave by an official.

- Leave as soon as evacuation is recommended by fire officials to avoid being caught in fire, smoke or road congestion. Don't wait to be ordered by authorities to leave. Evacuating early also helps firefighters keep roads clear of congestion and lets them move more freely to do their job.
- Be prepared! It will likely be dark, smoky, windy, and hot. There may be airborne burning embers, no power or telephone, and poor water pressure.
- Officials will determine the areas to be evacuated and escape routes to use depending upon the fire's location, behavior, winds, terrain, etc.
- You will be advised of potential evacuations as early as possible. You must take the initiative to stay informed and aware. Review social media, phone alerts and/or listen to radio/TV for announcements from law enforcement and emergency personnel.
- Orient yourselves to the roads in your neighborhood and the major road names around you that may serve as Egress Routes. (See map on back cover.)
- Orient yourselves to potential Areas of Refuge around Big Sky that you could be directed towards. (See map on back cover.)



Always follow evacuation orders, but DON'T WAIT if you feel threatened or if your family needs extra time. Be alert and stay aware of the danger in your area.

Big Sky Area Evacuation Map



For More Information



Big Sky Fire Department
bigskyfire.org
 406-995-2100



Ready Gallatin
www.readygallatin.com
 406-548-0111



Gallatin County Sherriff's Office
gallatincomt.virtualtownhall.net/sheriffs-office
 406-582-2100



**SCAN for
ALERTS**



**SCAN for
Big Sky
Wildfire
Hub**

Other Important Numbers
