Before, During and After a Wildfire

What to do BEFORE a wildland fire:
- Create defensible space to separate your home from flammable vegetation and materials (minimum 100ft PRC 4291).
- Adhere to all local fire and building codes and weed abatement ordinances.
- Keep all trees and shrub limbs trimmed so they do not come into contact with electrical wires or overhang your chimney. (Do not trim around live power lines yourself, call a professional).
- Prune all lower branches 8 feet from the ground.
- Keep trees adjacent to buildings free of dead or dying branches.
- Stack firewood away from your home and other buildings. (Keep clearance around your piles).
- Keep roof surfaces clear of pine needles, leaves and debris at all times.
- Install spark arresters for each chimney (PRC 4291).
- Clean chimneys and check and maintain spark arresters twice a year.
- Keep rain gutters clear of debris at all times.
- Use approved fire resistant materials when building, renovating or retrofitting structures.
- Install electrical lines underground if possible.
- Be sure your house numbers show clearly from the street, both day and night.
- Store combustible or flammable materials in approved containers.
- Store all important papers in a fireproof container or keep copies at another location.
- Make evacuation plans with family members. Include several options with an outside meeting place and contact person. Practice regularly.
- Keep battery operated radios and flashlights with additional fresh batteries on hand.

What to do DURING a wildland fire:
- Turn on a battery operated radio to get latest emergency information.
- If you have a ladder, prop it against the house so you and firefighters have access to roof.
- If hoses and adequate water are available set them up. Fill buckets with water.
- Remove combustible materials from the area surrounding your house. (Lawnchairs, tables, etc.)
- Turn a light on in each room for visibility in case of smoke.
Close all doors and windows, but do not lock them.
Open or take down flammable drape and curtains.
Close all venetian blinds and non-flammable window coverings.
Move upholstered furniture away from windows and sliding glass doors.
Be ready to evacuate all family members and pets when requested to do so.
Turn off air conditioning/air circulation systems.
Detach electrical garage doors. Back in your car and leave the keys in the ignition.
Secure your pets if possible.

What to do AFTER a wildland fire:
- Check with fire officials before attempting to return to your home.
- Use caution when re-entering a burned area - flare-ups can occur.
- Check grounds for hot spots smoldering stumps and vegetation. Use your buckets of water.
- Check the roof and exterior areas for sparks and embers.
- Check the attic and throughout the house for hidden burning sparks and embers.
- Continue to check for problem areas for several days.
- Contact 911 if any danger is perceived.
- If burning outside your home was extensive, watch for soil erosion.
- Consult local experts on the best way to restore and replant your land with fire safe landscaping.

www.fire.ca.gov