

# WILDFIRE ACTION PLAN

## self storage property risk management guide

sage



know them  
before you  
need them

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FIRE DEPT PHONE

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POLICE DEPT PHONE

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INSURANCE AGENT PHONE

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BUILDING OWNER PHONE

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HVAC CONTRACTOR PHONE

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ELECTRICIAN PHONE

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PLUMBER PHONE

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OTHER

## because your business shouldn't go up in flames when nature does...

Let's face it- mother nature isn't always very motherly. Unpredictable weather can mean unexpected and disastrous damage for self storage facility owners and tenants alike. Therefore, it's imperative to have a crisis management plan in place to protect your facilities, employees, clients and business reputation. Your response, under the stressful circumstances will speak the most to your character and business ethic.

Wildfires can be devastating, causing those affected to lose their business, inventory, property and lives. Wildfires can start abruptly and burn for days or weeks, spreading over vast expanses of land. Wildfires are a reality of nature. It is wise to be as prepared as possible in the event that a wildfire threatens your business or your employees.

## pre-wildfire preparation

### STEP 1: SECURE SUPPLIES + INFORMATION

Ensure that emergency supplies and equipment are on hand and ready for the on-site emergency action team. Obtain cash for post-wildfire needs, such as buying food and supplies or paying employees and contractors.

### wildfire emergency kit

- **first aid kit:** over-the-counter painkillers, bandages, rubbing alcohol, eye rinse + burn kits, vomit-inducing medicine (for poisoning)
- **emergency lighting:** flashlights + extra batteries
- **more batteries:** you never know what you might need them for
- **shelter:** plastic covers and tarps
- **nourishment:** drinking water, non-perishable food + can opener (3-day supply)
- **whistles:** to signal or direct attention during or after a wildfire
- **communication:** battery-powered radio, walkie-talkies, cell phones + spare batteries
- **warmth:** heavy or heated blankets + extra clothing
- **miscellaneous:** portable pumps, hoses, and hand or power tools
- **backups:** have all vital business records + contacts backed up off-site

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### STEP 2: INSPECTION + FORTIFICATION OF FACILITY

To prepare your facility for a wildfire, check the following items. They will minimize further damage and help you stay up and running during or after a disaster.

- **check:** check your procedure for restoring electrical services on an item-by-item basis
- **non-critical:** shut down all non-critical and non-essential electrical equipment
- **phones:** during evacuation, consider phone lines- redirection to cell phones or an answering service could be critical
- **inventory:** maintain an inventory of all equipment and assets for your business in the event of structural damage
- **power:** maintain and test standby electrical generator(s) for emergency power. Determine if portable heaters or equipment are needed
- **access:** determine if there are alternative ways to enter your premises if fire prohibits access to your business
- **fire protection:** verify that all fire protection equipment is in service
- **fuel:** fill fuel tanks of generators, fire pumps, and all company-owned vehicles
- **sprinklers:** maintain automatic sprinkler protection in idle buildings, promptly handle sprinkler system impairments, and notify local fire department regarding any issues
- **protect:** determine which equipment needs to be protected from fire damage (e.g. computers, telecommunications, manufacturing, etc.)
- **walls:** cover exterior walls with fire-resistant materials such as stucco, stone or brick
- **windows:** use double-paned or tempered glass for all exterior windows
- **seal:** identify spaces where smoke could enter and seal all openings with caulking and insulation
- **roofs:** use fire-resistant or noncombustible materials on the roof and exterior dwelling structure, or treat wood/combustible materials used in roofs, siding, decking or trim with UL-approved fire-retardant chemicals
- **inspect & repair:** repair walls & roofs to prevent drafts, inspect and clean roof drains and gutters. inspect chimneys at least twice a year and clean them at least once a year. Keep dampers in good working order. Equip chimneys and stovepipes with spark arresters
- **landscaping:** plant fire-resistant shrubs and trees- for example, hardwood trees are less flammable than pine, evergreen, eucalyptus or fir
- **repair service:** identify which outside vendors or repair services you will need after a wildfire- find some outside your local area that are less likely to be affected by the same wildfire as your facility
- **contingency:** ensure the contingency plan is up to date in the event that a wildfire disrupts production or other business operations

### STEP 3: CREATE A SAFETY ZONE AROUND YOUR PLACE OF BUSINESS

Reduce your risk for total loss and minimize damages by following these steps to create a fire safe area surrounding your physical place of business.

- **remove:** remove loose yard debris (leaves, branches, etc.) & rubbish close to buildings, in addition to dead branches that hang over roof
- **relocate:** move non-essential yard equipment to a safe indoor location- furniture, trash receptacles, portable planters, portable signs, etc
- **trim:** trim a 15-foot space between tree crowns and remove limbs within 15 feet of the ground, prune tree branches and shrubs within 15 feet of a stovepipe or chimney, ask power company to clear branches from power lines, and mow grass regularly
- **fencing:** do not connect wooden fencing directly to your building
- **flammable tanks:** clear a 10-foot area around propane tanks, store gasoline, oily rags and other flammable materials in approved safety cans. place safety cans in a safe location away from the base of the building
- **clear:** clear combustible material within 20 feet of buildings



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## mid-wildfire procedures

### STEP 1: IMMEDIATE ACTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT ORDERED TO EVACUATE

Keep names and phone numbers of your electrician, heating contractor, plumber, fire department, and building owner easily accessible.

- **persons:** make sure employees and on-site customers are accounted for and safe
- **boilers:** constantly monitor any boilers that must remain on line
- **patrol:** patrol the property when safe, to watch for leaks, pipe breakage, fire, or structural damage
- **protective clothing:** wear protective clothing when outside- sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothes, long pants, long sleeved shirts, gloves and a handkerchief to protect your face
- **lights:** turn on outside lights and leave lights on to make building visible in heavy smoke
- **disconnect:** disconnect any automatic door openers so that doors can still be opened
- **gas:** shut off gas at meters, turn off pilot lights, turn off propane tanks
- **drain:** drain all idle pumps and compressors, making sure jackets are vented

### STEP 2: ONGOING ACTIONS

- **personnel safety:** continue ensuring employee and customer safety, maintaining fire-safe conditions and controlling smoke
- **indoor safety:** do not use electric generator indoors, inside a garage, or near building air intakes- of risk of carbon monoxide poisoning
- **gas:** do not store gasoline or flammable liquids indoors- fumes could ignite
- **cords:** use individual heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords to plug in other appliances



## know the facts

About **90%** of wildfires are caused by **humans**, only **10%** result from natural causes.

**human causes:**  
unsafe fires, arson, sparks from equipment, power arc lines & accidents

**major natural causes:**  
lightning, volcanic eruption, sparks from rockfalls, & spontaneous combustion

## post-wildfire procedures

### STEP 1: IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

Do not move seriously injured individuals. If high-rise buildings are in the general area, falling debris may make open areas more dangerous than remaining inside. Watch out for fallen power lines and broken gas lines.

- **missing:** provide search & rescue team with last known location of any missing persons
- **avoid:** stay away from power lines, buildings or objects that might fall
- **secure:** secure the site and hire guard service if necessary
- **essentials:** make sure heating systems and water pipes are working
- **visual check:** look for open bus bars, conductors and exposed insulators before re-energizing electrical systems
- **clear:** clear roof drains and debris from roofs
- **special needs:** determine how you will assist individuals with special needs or disabilities

### STEP 2: RECOVERY ACTIONS

- **damage:** survey facilities for damage. take photos of any damage that has occurred
- **hazards:** look for safety hazards such as live electrical wires, leaking gas, flammable liquids, corrosive/toxic materials, and damage to foundations or underground piping
- **fire protection:** repair automatic sprinkler protection &/or water supplies to get fire protection back in service as soon as possible
- **notify:** after assessing the damage, notify critical people (management, contractors, etc.)
- **test:** conduct 2-inch main drain and alarm tests on automatic fire protection sprinkler system to verify public water supply availability
- **cover:** cover broken windows and damaged roof coverings immediately
- **damages:** separate damaged goods, check refrigerated items for spoilage

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## wildfire information

### WILDFIRE ECOLOGICAL + SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT

Wildfires have potential long-term (or secondary) impacts such as:

- **erosions & landslides:** as fires burn they destroy plant material and litter layer that once helped break up the intensity of severe rainfall
- **invasive species:** plant species whose seeds survive or die before fire season, recolonize and grow in place of destroyed native vegetation, decreasing biodiversity and providing fuel for future wildfires
- **water quality:** during fires, ash can settle on lakes & reservoirs used to supply drinking water. after fires, erosion leads to accumulation of more sediment in rivers, streams and reservoirs, from runoff during storms
- **flood risk:** with burned ground unable to absorb rain, runoff and flooding following fires is more likely and extensive than pre-fire
- **loss of vegetation:** source of food, income, and home to animal wildlife, vegetation is rendered obsolete after a fire
- **health problems:** without trees to produce fresh oxygen, smoke & pollutants can travel beyond the immediate area of the fire
- **infrastructure:** destruction of community infrastructure disrupts local business, drains community health and safety resources
- **resources:** destruction of cultural and economical resources such as archaeological or historical features or artifacts

## wildfire safety

### PREVENTING OR MINIMIZING UNNECESSARY WILDFIRES

Since most wildfires are caused by humans rather than natural causes, practicing the following wildfire safety precautions can reduce the number of avoidable wildfires as well as the extent of their damage:

- **laws:** follow local burning laws- do not start fires in unauthorized or undesignated fire areas such as fire pits
- **notify:** make sure to notify local authorities and obtain a burning permit before burning debris in a wooded area
- **litter:** do not drop cigarettes or matches in unapproved and unsafe locations
- **awareness:** be aware of your surroundings and potential fire hazards
- **cover:** use an approved incinerator with a safety lid or covering with holes no larger than 3/4 inch
- **extinguish:** have a fire extinguisher or garden hose on hand when burning debris

### EXTRA PREVENTION MEASURES FOR EVERYDAY FIRE SAFETY

Further preventative measures for everyday fire safety and prevention:

- **access:** ensure that fire vehicles can get to your place of business
- **visibility:** clearly mark all driveway entrances. display your name and address. install noncombustible street signs
- **emergency contact:** keep fire emergency telephone numbers posted for all to see
- **plan:** plan several escape routes away from your business site- both by car and by foot
- **share:** talk to your neighbors and/or landlord about wildfire safety and preventative measures



### additional winter storm resources

- [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)
- [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)
- [www.ready.gov/wildfires](http://www.ready.gov/wildfires)
- [www.disastersafety.org/wildfire](http://www.disastersafety.org/wildfire)
- [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires)