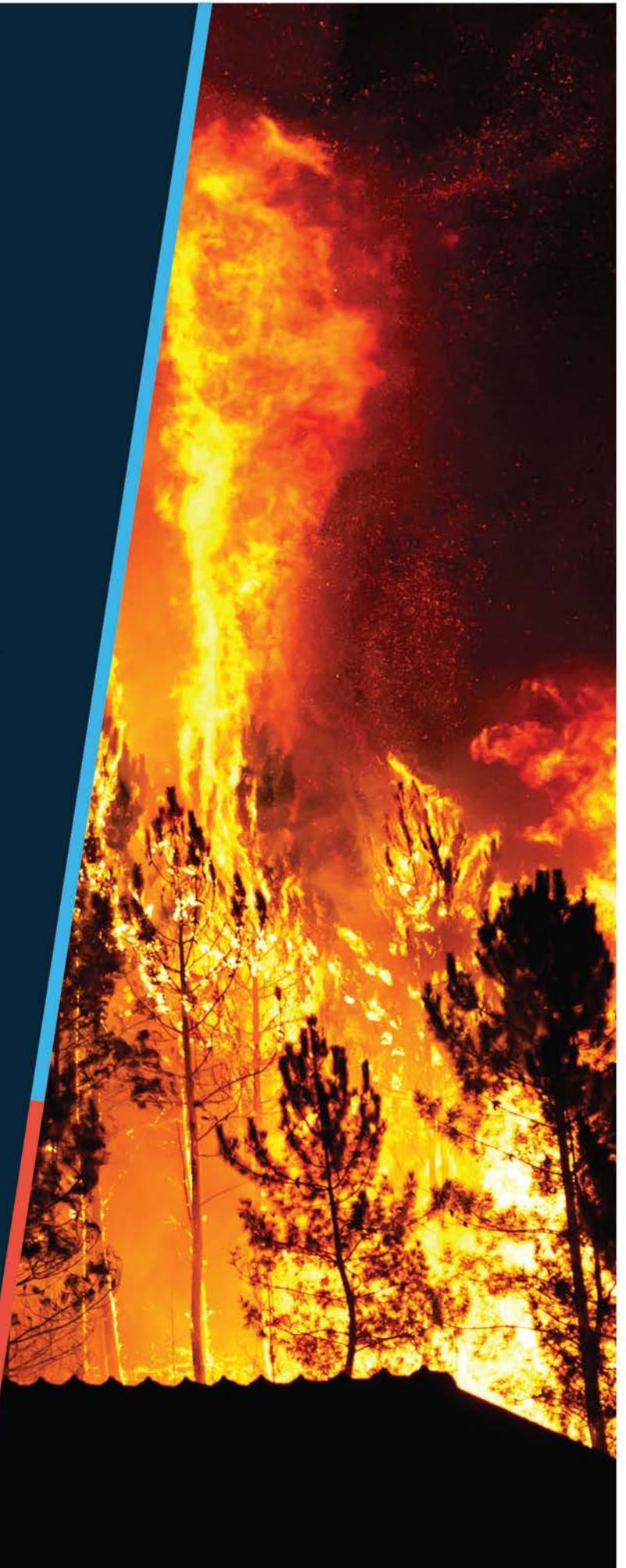


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Wildfire:

**PREPARATION AND  
RECOVERY**

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## Introduction

This handbook contains articles for those who were impacted by a wildfire, including information on cleaning up and coping with the aftermath of trauma. These and other disaster-management articles are also available on Achieve Solutions ([www.achievesolutions.net/ngc](http://www.achievesolutions.net/ngc)).

## Disaster Supplies Kit

Your family will cope best by preparing for disaster before it strikes. One way to prepare is by assembling a disaster supplies kit. Once disaster hits, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. But if you've gathered supplies in advance, your family can endure an evacuation or home confinement.

### Prepare your kit

Review the checklist below. Gather the supplies that are listed and store them in a large, covered trash container; a camping backpack or a duffel bag.

### Water

- Store water in plastic containers.
- Keep at least a 3-day supply of water per person (2 quarts per day for drinking and 2 quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation). Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need more.

### Food

- Store at least a 3-day supply of nonperishable foods that are compact and lightweight. Items should require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Include ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables.

### First-aid kit (1 for home and 1 for each car)

assorted sizes of safety pins	triangular bandages (3)	needle
cleansing agent/soap	nonprescription drugs	moistened towelettes
latex or nonlatex gloves (2 pairs)	2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)	antiseptic
petroleum jelly or other lubricant	3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)	thermometer
2-inch sterile gauze pads (4 to 6)	scissors	tongue blades (2)
4-inch sterile gauze pads (4 to 6)	tweezers	sunscreen

### Nonprescription drugs

aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever	Syrup of ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
antidiarrhea medication	laxative
antacid (for stomach upset)	activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

### Tools and supplies

mess kits or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils	matches in a waterproof container	map of the area (for locating shelters)
emergency preparedness manual	tape	medicine dropper
battery-operated radio and extra batteries	fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type	shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
flashlight and extra batteries	pliers	whistle
cash or traveler's checks, change	aluminum foil	plastic sheeting
nonelectric can opener, utility knife	plastic storage containers	needles, thread
compass	signal flare	
tube tent	paper, pencil	

### Sanitation

toilet paper, towelettes	plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation)
soap, liquid detergent	plastic bucket with tight lid
feminine supplies	disinfectant
personal hygiene items	household chlorine bleach

### Clothing and bedding

at least 1 complete change of clothing and footwear per person	
sturdy shoes or work boots	thermal underwear
rain gear	sunglasses
blankets or sleeping bags	hat and gloves

### For baby

formula	diapers	bottles	powdered milk	medications
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### For adults

heart and high blood pressure medication	prescription drugs	insulin
contact lenses and supplies	denture needs	extra eye glasses

### Entertainment

games and books
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### Important family documents (keep in a waterproof, portable container)

will, insurance policies, contracts deeds, stocks and bonds	credit-card account numbers and companies
passports, Social-Security cards, immunization records	inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
bank account numbers	family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

### Tips to remember

- Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of the disaster supplies kit in the trunk of your car.
- Keep items in airtight plastic bags.
- Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh.
- Replace your stored food every six months.
- Rethink your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.
- Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency

## Wildfires: Before, During and After

### Basic safety tips

- ❑ If you see a wildfire and haven't received evacuation orders yet, call 9-1-1. Don't assume that someone else has already called.
- ❑ If ordered to evacuate during a wildfire, do it immediately. Tell someone where you are going and when you have arrived.
- ❑ Many communities have text or email alerting systems for emergency notifications. To find out what alerts are available in your area, search the Internet with your town, city, or county name and the word "alerts."
- ❑ If you or someone you are with has been burned, call 9-1-1 or seek help immediately; cool and cover burns to reduce chance of further injury or infection.

### Fire weather watch

**Fire weather watch** = dangerous fire weather conditions are possible over the next 12 to 72 hours

#### *Steps to take*

- ❑ Turn on your TV/radio. You'll get the latest weather updates and emergency instructions.
- ❑ Know where to go. If you are ordered to evacuate, know the route to take and have plan of where you will go. Check in with your friends and family.
- ❑ Keep your car fueled, in good condition, and stocked with emergency supplies and a change of clothes.

#### *Prepare your home*

- ❑ Regularly clean the roof and gutters.
- ❑ Maintain an area approximately 30 feet away from your home that is free of anything that will burn, such as wood piles, dried leaves, newspapers, and other brush.
- ❑ Connect garden hoses long enough to reach any area of the home and fill garbage cans, tubs, or other large containers with water.
- ❑ Review your homeowner's insurance policy and also prepare/update a list of your home's contents.

### After a wildfire

#### *Returning home*

- ❑ Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- ❑ For several hours after the fire, maintain a "fire watch." Check and re-check for smoke, sparks, or hidden embers throughout the house, including the roof and the attic.
- ❑ Use caution when entering burned areas as hazards may still exist, including hot spots, which can flare up without warning. Evacuate immediately if you smell smoke.

#### *Cleaning your home*

- ❑ Wear a NIOSH certified-respirator (dust mask) and wet debris down to minimize breathing dust particles.
- ❑ Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke, or soot.
- ❑ Do *not* use water that you think may be contaminated to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, wash hands, or to make ice or baby formula.
- ❑ Photograph damage to your property for insurance purposes.

### **Before wildfire season—make a wildfire plan**

- ❑ Know your wildfire risk.
- ❑ Make a wildfire emergency plan.
- ❑ Build or restock your emergency preparedness kit, including a flashlight, batteries, cash, and first aid supplies.
- ❑ Familiarize yourself with local emergency plans. Know where to go and how to get there should you need to evacuate.
- ❑ Stay tuned to your phone alerts, TV, or radio, for weather updates, emergency instructions, or evacuation orders.

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency

## Pets and Animals and Disasters

### Make a plan

- ❑ Create a buddy system in case you're not home. Ask a trusted neighbor to check on your animals.
- ❑ Identify shelters. For public health reasons, many emergency shelters cannot accept pets.
  - Find [pet friendly hotels](#) along your evacuation route and keep a list in your pet's emergency kit.
  - Locate boarding facilities or animal hospitals near your evacuation shelter.
  - Consider an out-of-town friend or relative.
- ❑ Locate a veterinarian or animal hospital in the area where you may be seeking temporary shelter, in case your pet needs medical care. Add the contact information to your emergency kit.
- ❑ Have your pet microchipped and make sure that you not only keep your address and phone number up-to-date, but that you also include contact info for an emergency contact outside of your immediate area.
- ❑ Call your local emergency management office, animal shelter or animal control office to get advice and information.
- ❑ If you are unable to return to your home right away, you may need to board your pet. Find out where pet boarding facilities are located.
- ❑ Most boarding kennels, veterinarians, and animal shelters will need your pet's medical records to make sure all vaccinations are current.
- ❑ If you have no alternative but to leave your pet at home, there are some precautions you must take, but remember that leaving your pet at home alone can place your animal in great danger!

### Tips for large animals

- ❑ Ensure all animals have some form of identification.
- ❑ Evacuate animals whenever possible. Map out primary and secondary routes in advance.
- ❑ Make available vehicles and trailers needed for transporting and supporting each type of animal. Also make available experienced handlers and drivers.
- ❑ Ensure destinations have food, water, veterinary care, and handling equipment.
- ❑ If evacuation is not possible, animal owners must decide whether to move large animals to shelter or turn them outside.

### Build a kit

- ❑ **Food.** At least a three-day supply in an airtight, waterproof container.
- ❑ **Water.** At least three days of water specifically for your pets.
- ❑ **Medicines** and medical records.
- ❑ **Important documents.** Registration information, adoption papers, and vaccination documents. Talk to your veterinarian about microchipping and enrolling your pet in a recovery database.
- ❑ **First aid kit.** Cotton bandage rolls, bandage tape and scissors; antibiotic ointment; flea and tick prevention; latex gloves, isopropyl alcohol, and saline solution. Including a pet first aid reference book is a good idea too.
- ❑ **Collar or harness with ID tag,** rabies tag, and a leash.
- ❑ **Crate or pet carrier.** Have a sturdy, safe crate or carrier in case you need to evacuate. The carrier should be large enough for your pet to stand, turn around, and lie down.
- ❑ **Sanitation.** Pet litter and litter box if appropriate, newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags, and household chlorine bleach.
- ❑ **A picture of you and your pet together.** If you become separated, a picture of you and your pet together will help you document ownership and allow others to assist you. Add species, breed, age, sex, color and distinguishing characteristics.
- ❑ **Familiar items.** Familiar items, such as treats, toys, and bedding can help reduce stress for your pet.

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency

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## After a Traumatic Event: How to Help Yourself

### 1. Find support.

When a random traumatic event occurs, people may want to turn to their friends and family for support. If your community has been affected, you may need to look elsewhere. Meeting with others in a support group is helpful. Make sure it is led by a trained and experienced counselor. Don't isolate yourself.

Even if you were not directly affected, it's important to protect yourself against "*vicarious trauma*," or "*secondary traumatic stress*." Those are terms for secondhand exposure to others' pain and misfortune. When a community is affected, the scary information can seem to bombard you. If this is your situation, look into support groups for "families of" or "friends of" people who have gone through trauma. Talk with a friend outside of the situation.

Take advantage of any resources like on-the-spot counseling. Look for the people who are helping in this situation. You may need to take advantage of resources that you haven't used before. Social services and aid are there to help. Everyone needs help at some point. Sometimes you will be the helper and, sometimes, the receiver. Both are normal.

Even if you are hurting emotionally or financially from the event, it may make you feel better to give back. Donate time, effort, or money if you can. Don't overextend yourself. There will be times to give back later. You can do *something*; it doesn't have to be *everything*.

### 2. Re-establish your routine.

Get back into your routine as soon as possible. It may be impossible to have the exact routine as before. Get back to work in some capacity. Recreate another home, if needed. Keep small things the same. Can you still have mealtimes at the same time? Exercise? Go out for coffee?

### 3. Educate and prepare yourself.

Do some research. Look into how often these types of events happen where you are. Figure out what aspects of your life you can control at the moment. This is not the time to make major life decisions. Instead develop emergency plans and safety kits.

### 4. Limit media.

Limit where you get news and the amount. Otherwise, you will feel buried in the same topic. Cut back on social media. Things might be posted that could trigger fear or anxiety.

### 5. Practice self-care.

Be gentle with yourself. Practice deep breathing when you feel anxious. List things you are grateful for to improve your outlook. Stay hydrated. Eat well. Get rest. Don't push yourself. As long as you are getting stronger each day, you are making progress.

If feelings of helplessness, despair, or anxiety don't ease, or if it is difficult to get through your day, consider seeing a mental health specialist.

By Jennifer Brick  
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## Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Trauma

### 1. Model a healthy display of emotions.

If parents express a lot of tears, grief, or worry, the child will follow their lead. These feelings of emotions, such as a racing heart or quick breathing, can be scary for children. It can cause them to panic even more. Try to set a calm tone. You don't have to hide all emotions. If your child sees you crying, you can say "Mommy is crying because I feel sad. It's OK to feel sad." If you need to release a lot of emotions, do so around other adults.

Seek other adults to talk to about your feelings. Try to maintain a stance of self-control.

A lot of times, adults try to hide their feelings from children to spare them additional worry. Many children sense when things are being kept from them. It may cause them more anxiety. Share some of your feelings and explain how you cope in a healthy way. The child will learn to do the same. For example, share that you talk to a trusted friend, breathe deeply, exercise, or remind yourself of positive things.

### 2. Talk to the child.

Adults may avoid talking to children about difficult subjects because the adults are afraid of distressing the child by saying the wrong thing. This can isolate the child when she most needs to talk about it. Make it a conversation. Don't be afraid to ask questions to see what your child knows and is curious about.

Help him focus on moments where he felt strong and in control. Use praise: "You were so brave!" Keep your tone upbeat.

A child may express guilt or shame. She may feel like something she said or did caused the events. Tell her it is not her fault. If these feelings remain, remind him that he did not mean for his actions to cause harm and they have not done so.

### 3. Return to a routine as soon as possible.

Home may feel like a safe place, so it may seem best to keep your child home for as long as possible. However, most children benefit from returning to their routines as soon as possible whether it is child care, school, sports practice, or other activities.

When your child goes back to school, speak to the necessary people about adjusting the child's responsibilities for a time. This may include less homework or more time to do it, extra time on tests or postponing tests, and leniency with a child's behavior in the classroom.

A return to routine doesn't mean the child doesn't need any more support or help. Support is needed for months or longer. If it is taken away too soon, the child may struggle and be unable to cope.

### 4. Limit media intake.

Media coverage is available everywhere. Continual access to the graphic details, pictures, or stories isn't helpful to anyone. Limit the amount of coverage that the family consumes. If possible, watch it first. If your child is watching it, be sure to watch along with her. Answer her questions and help her put it in perspective.

### 5. Involve the child.

Involving the child in positive ways gives him a purpose. Making cookies for rescue workers, writing cards to people who have been hurt, and helping with clean-up efforts are all good examples.

If a death has occurred, creating a memorial or having a service can help a child share her grief and feel less alone. When possible, have the child participate in the planning and service. This makes sure it is appropriate for someone her age and relevant to her.

Spend one-on-one time with the child. You can read books or games. The attention will help the child feel safe.

By Jennifer Brick  
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