



**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\***

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Government and Media Relations

State Fire Marshal's Office  
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### State Fire Marshal's Office Recognizes Wildfire Awareness Month

**Olympia** – The Washington State Fire Marshal's Office joins fire agencies around the state in recognizing the importance of being prepared for wildfire season.

In 2020, more than 1,500 wildfires were reported in Washington State, burning over 823,000 acres according to the Northwest Coordination Center (NWCC).

The National Interagency Fire Center predicts a significant potential for wildfires in Washington again this year, due to warmer and dryer conditions anticipated throughout the spring and summer.

Residents are urged to prepare your property now to reduce the chance of embers and flames igniting material on or near your home.

- Clear fallen leaves, pine needles, branches, and other debris from roof valleys and gutters. Be sure to use extra caution when working on ladders.
- Remove any flammable materials on the ground around your home, deck, porch, or patio out to a minimum of 5 feet. This includes mulch, dead leaves or pine needles, shrubs or other plants, wood piles, and material for construction projects.
- Plants that are within 30 feet of your home should be well-watered and spaced to avoid fire moving from plant to plant. Also remove any dead vegetation on or around landscaping.
- Grass and weeds should be mowed to a height no more than 2 to 3 inches.
- When doing home improvements, use fire-resistant materials whenever possible.

The State Fire Marshal's Office is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State including inspections of state licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington States firefighters, and collecting emergency response data.

- Attic and garage vents should be screened with 1/8-inch metal mesh material, or a fire resistive vent design should be used, to prevent ember penetration during the windy conditions of a wildfire.
- Work with neighbors to prepare your community. If one home within a neighborhood ignites, this presents a severe threat to the neighboring homes. Encourage all neighbors within a wildfire risk area to work together to reduce the community risk.

During wildfire season, stay aware of local fire conditions and be ready to leave at a moment's notice.

- Prepare an evacuation plan, including alternate routes out of the area, and prepacked essentials including: medications, family records, credit cards, a change of clothing, and enough food and water for each household member for up to 72 hours.
- Create a family communication plan that designates an out-of-area friend or relative as a point of contact to be a single source of communication among family members in case of separation.
- Be aware of family, friends, or neighbors who have disabilities who require assistance and additional lead-time in order to prepare for a disaster.
- Remember to prepare a plan for pets and other animals.
- If there is a wildfire alert system available in your area, consider signing up to receive notifications.
- When told to evacuate, go promptly. If you feel unsafe, do not wait for an evacuation order - leave immediately. Do not return home until directed by emergency personnel.

For more information, contact the State Fire Marshal's Office at (360) 596-3929.

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