

# REDUCING THE RISK OF WILDFIRES AND EXTREME HEAT



# MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

This resource is intended to help you understand the risks and take actions to protect your home against wildfires and extreme heat events.

## What are mitigation activities?

Mitigation activities refer to actions taken to reduce or prevent the impact of hazard events, such as wildfires, floods, and extreme heat events. These actions may include measures to protect homes and infrastructure, such as installing fire-resistant roofing, clearing vegetation and debris, retrofitting vents and eaves, and implementing flood-proofing measures.

## Why are mitigation activities important?

Mitigation activities are important because they help to reduce the impact of hazard events, protect lives and property, and save homeowners and communities money in the long term. By taking proactive steps to prevent or reduce the impact of hazard events, communities can avoid the costs of recovery and rebuilding after an event occurs.



# UNDERSTAND THE RISKS

The section is to help you understand the risks of wildfires and extreme heat to help you prepare for potential hazard events.

## WILDFIRES

Wildfires are a common natural hazard in many regions of the world, including North America. With climate change affecting extreme weather conditions, wildfires have become increasingly frequent and intense, posing a significant threat to both people and property. It is crucial to take proactive measures to reduce the risk of wildfires and to make homes more resilient to them.

Mitigation activities can include using fire-rated or fire-resistant materials when repairing or installing a roof, siding, fences, and decks, and removing materials that can catch fire within 2 meters of your home such as mulch, plants and trees. By taking these measures you can help protect your home and community from the devastating effects of wildfires.

### **Learn more about home wildfire protection:**

- Learn what to do before, during and after wildfires:  
<https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/types-of-emergencies/wildfires>
- Learn how to protect your home and property - Last minute checklist:  
<https://www.firesmartalberta.ca/>
- Reduce the potential impacts of wildfire on your home: download the FireSmart Begins at Home Guide for Alberta:  
<https://www.firesmartalberta.ca/>

## EXTREME HEAT

Extreme heat can have serious impacts on people's health and well-being, especially the elderly, young children, and those with pre-existing health conditions. As temperatures rise due to climate change, heat waves are becoming more frequent and intense. In addition to personal measures, such as staying hydrated and avoiding prolonged exposure to the sun, there are also ways to make homes and buildings more resilient to extreme heat.

Mitigation activities can include shading windows and in outdoor areas, installing energy-efficient air conditioning systems, and insulating attics and roofs. By taking these measures, we can reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses and improve our community's resilience to extreme heat events.

### **Learn more about home extreme heat protection:**

- Learn what to do before, during, and after heat waves:  
<https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/types-of-emergencies/heat-waves>
- Learn how to make your home more extreme heat resilient:  
[https://www.intactcentreclimateadaptation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/UoW\\_ICCA\\_2022\\_04-Irreversible-Extreme-Heat.pdf](https://www.intactcentreclimateadaptation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/UoW_ICCA_2022_04-Irreversible-Extreme-Heat.pdf)
- Listen to the CBC What on Earth podcast on extreme heat:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptez4ZnTBOI&list=PLQLPkUTudG1rXEYPk-kKQcthKJmUQ45SW&index=7>
- Read the CBC article "Canadians need to do more to prep for 'potentially lethal' extreme heat events: report":  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/extreme-heat-report-university-waterloo-deaths-1.6426392>

# REDUCING RISK IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Whether you rent or own, residents are responsible for managing the risks to privately owned property such as homes, properties and personal belongings.

## Tenants

Tenants are generally responsible for reducing the risk of damage to their personal belongings. Depending on their lease arrangements with the building owner, they may also be responsible for additional maintenance. They may purchase tenant insurance to help replace damaged belongings and cover the cost of emergency accommodations. These costs are not typically covered by landlords.

## Property owners

Property owners are responsible for reducing the risk of damage to their lots, buildings and personal belongings. They may purchase home insurance, to help repair damage, replace belongings and cover the cost of emergency accommodations.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE THE IMPACT

## WILDFIRES

### Annual Maintenance Activities

- Roof maintenance/repairs
- Repair windows and/or exterior doors including caulking and weatherstripping
- Repair cracks, gaps, holes in exterior cladding/siding
- Remove leaves and debris from eavestroughs
- Remove plants and materials that are within 0 - 1.5m from home
- Remove plants and materials that can catch fire from under decks
- Prune coniferous/evergreen trees up to 2 m from the ground

### Property upgrades

- Replace existing roofing with Class A fire-rated roofing materials
- Replace combustible siding materials with fire or ignition-resistant materials
- Install or replace deck materials with fire-rated materials
- Replace exterior doors with ones that are fire-rated and thermally insulated
- Replace single-pan windows with multi-pane windows

## EXTREME HEAT

- Install window film/tint
- Install insulated / blackout curtains or blinds - heat-resistant
- Install portable air conditioning unit
- Replace ceiling light fixtures with ceiling fans
- Install exterior roll shutters or awnings with fire or ignition-resistant materials
- Install double-glazed windows - Low E glazing
- Replace furnace/air conditioner with heat pump
- Install whole home air conditioning unit
- Install a whole home backup generator to ensure you have power, if it goes out

# BE READY

## Know the risks in your community

Taking action to protect your home from flood and wildfire damage can reduce, but not eliminate risks.

For additional resources and to learn more about:

- What to do before, during and after an emergency
- Emergency shelter locations and evacuation routes
- Guidance to assist those with special needs, and more

## Make an emergency plan

Make an emergency plan that includes emergency contacts and evacuation plans to help you be ready to deal with any emergency that comes your way. Be sure to practice your plan.

## Build an emergency kit

Buy or make an emergency kit with enough supplies to meet your family's needs for at least 72 hours. This kit should be easy to bring with you if you have to evacuate your home or be helpful if you are told to shelter in place.

Download emergency plan templates and emergency kit checklists here:

[www.redcross.ca/ready](http://www.redcross.ca/ready)

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**Acknowledgements:** The information in this publication is for reference only. It should not be considered as a substitute for consulting with specialists about particular situations. It should not be assumed that all fire, floods and extreme heat recovery measures are contained in this publication; other or additional measures may be required under particular or exceptional circumstances.

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**Disclaimer:** It is important to note that no measure can completely eliminate the risk of damage or loss. Mitigation activities can help reduce the risk and potential impact of natural disasters, but they do not guarantee that homes will not be affected or damaged in the event of a hazard. It is important to always have a plan in place for emergencies and follow any evacuation orders issued by local authorities.