



WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

Recent wildfires in Sonoma County highlight the need for school districts to prepare today for tomorrow's wildfire. This checklist was developed to help RESIG's member districts determine how to prepare for both local wildfires and when a distant wildfire's smoke and ash is brought to Sonoma County.

Local wildfires can impact the school's facilities in three ways:

1. Flying embers blown by the wind can land on and ignite combustible external elements of a building, combustible yard storage, and vegetation/debris.
2. Heat radiating from the flames in close proximity to the building can raise the temperature of the exposed building components causing them to reach their autoignition point.
3. The wildfire can reach the wall of a building resulting in direct flame impingement.

School facility exposure to a nearby wildfire can be mitigated by creating a defensible space around buildings, by developing and implementing protocols to decrease the chance of embers entering the facilities. There are a number of factors to consider such as topography, building design, construction, yard storage, vegetation, and emergency response. Below is a checklist of issues to consider when member districts prepare for a wildfire event and to ensure the safety of staff and facilities.

BEFORE A WILDFIRE

- Develop a written pre-wildfire plan that includes at a minimum the following elements:
 - Develop access and egress paths such as on an evacuation map.
 - Designate rooms to Shelter-in-Place as a last resort.
 - Determine sites to monitor for air quality data, such as [AirNow](#)
 - Protocols for accessing parent and staff communications system.
 - Identify communication channels during the wildfire event such as cell phones and or mobile radio.
 - Address computer server backup.
 - Develop a protocol to shut down HVAC systems.
 - Protocol to close the building envelope including the gas and electric utilities.
 - Develop a Fire Watch protocol if fire alarms are disabled.
 - Develop a protocol for when and how to evacuate employees during a wildfire event. Establish primary and secondary exits out of the building.
 - Plan two evacuation routes out of the area.

- Keep an adequate number of fire extinguishers in strategic locations, such as at exits, and ensure that they are properly maintained.
- Train employees
 - Fire extinguisher use (annually)
 - General fire safety
 - Cal/OSHA Section 5141.1 [Appendix B](#) wildfire training (includes health effects, risks, respirator use and more)
 - Conduct evacuation drills regularly so all employees are familiar with their assigned duties and evacuation routes
- Consult with the appropriate local fire agency(ies) to develop specific mitigation activities for each school facility.
- Maintain good housekeeping. Remove any unnecessary combustible material from inside and around buildings.
- Provide at least 50-feet of separation between any combustible yard storage and buildings.
- [Maintain defensible space.](#)
- Lock all fire protection control valves in the wide-open position and inspect weekly.
- Procure N95 masks for voluntary or required staff use.
- Maintain appropriate emergency supplies including flashlights, battery-powered portable radios, extra batteries, first-aid kits, non-perishable foods, and bottled water.
- Designate one (1) or more people to collect, retain and collate District Expense for presentation to RESIG, CALOES and/or FEMA for possible reimbursement or an insurance claim.

DURING A WILDFIRE

- Implement the district HVAC shutdown protocol. Close windows
- Prepare to evacuate. Evacuation orders are typically rapid for affected areas.
- Use cell phones or battery-operated radios for the latest emergency information.
- If you are unable to evacuate:
 - Shelter-in-Place: stay inside, go to a pre-designated room, away from outside walls. Close doors but leave them unlocked for quick access by firefighters.
 - Ensure rescue workers are aware you are inside a building by marking your position with articles of clothing or bright colored materials placed on the outside of your location.
- Implement District's Fire Watch protocol if fire alarm is disabled and site is not in an evacuation area.
- Provide N95 masks for voluntary staff use when the worksite's Air Quality Index (AQI) Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 >151.

SITE SECURITY

- Limit site access to authorized personnel during any wildfire emergency. Authorized personnel include essential employees and contractors.
- Secure and inspect all potential entrance points to your campus and buildings including external doors, windows, and gates.
- Inspect and test exterior lighting systems weekly.

- Test and maintain security systems. Implement the District's Fire Watch protocol if fire alarm is disabled.
- If the school site is idle and vacant, provide onsite security.

AFTER A WILDFIRE

- Depending on the amount of debris and contamination on each site, hire a remediation company to clean school sites and facilities; contact RESIG for an up-to-date list of local remediation vendors.
- Designees submit District expense to RESIG, CALOES and/or FEMA for possible reimbursement.
- Submit [Incident/Accident Report](#) to RESIG.