



Tips to prepare for wildfire threats:

Mitigation:

- It is important to clear any dry brush or vegetation around the property to help minimize easy spread of a fire. Cut the lawn often. Create a safety zone of 30 feet around the property. Create a secondary hardened zone of at least 100 feet around the property's perimeter.
- Check on insurance policies ahead of time to determine coverage in the event the property is impacted by the fire. Here is a great link to follow: <https://www.fema.gov/pdf/hazard/wildfire/wdfrdam.pdf>

Planning:

- It is important to establish where to evacuate the animals. Cultivate relationships with other shelters, rescues or ranchers outside the impacted area that might have the space and capacity to temporarily care for your animals.
- Contact your local emergency management agencies to identify where to bring animals to during an emergency like a local fairgrounds or stockyard.
- Identify where wildfire evacuation routes are. If there are none, establish various evacuation routes in case of road inaccessibility.
- Understand your capacity with regard to vehicles, equipment, supplies, to move your animals. Identify and procure or partner with others who have additional supplies and vehicles to assist with the physical transport, if needed.
- Make sure neighbors within the vicinity of the shelter have your contact information in the event that wildfires are spotted in the area before you or your colleagues do.
- Ensure that you have enough supplies to help support your animals for up to 72 hours in the event of an evacuation – medication, water, equipment, etc. If you have livestock, make sure to have enough feed for at least 48 hours. Create an Emergency Supply Kit with many of these essential items.
- Have a secondary mechanism to keep you and your team in communication. Local phone lines and cell phones may not be available. Walkie talkie usage may work but check with local authorities to make sure it does not cause interference for them when they are fighting the fire. Try to utilize an out of state contact that all team members know about that can be reached and help keep you each in the loop with one another until you are reunited.

Response:

- Identify actions you need to take in your organization's emergency plan. If a plan for your organization does not yet exist, follow the steps in the [Best Friends Emergency Preparedness Toolkit](#) to get started.
- Evacuate early if there is fear for wildfire spread in your area. If you don't it may be too late.
- Consider pre-staging animals early and calling in support to help move them as soon as possible.

- Cover crates with a light sheet or towel to block the smoke and help them remain calm.
- Make sure all pets are easily identified with a collar and tag. Make sure to label each crate and collar – use masking tape and marker if necessary.
- Have copies of paperwork for all animals including vaccination and medical records. For medication records, make sure it clearly indicates, medication type, dosing and frequency, as well as veterinary information.
- Take photos of each animal in the event of separation.
- Identify all combustible materials in or outside of the property – i.e., oxygen tanks or cannisters for medical purposes or propane tanks in or around your property should be shut off immediately to avoid any secondary hazards.
- If you must leave animals behind, do not leave any of them crated, chained up or caged. Allow them the opportunity to escape if they need to. Do try to leave fresh water and food for a few days. If possible open a faucet to let water drip into a large container or partially fill a sink with water.