

SELF PROTECTION GUIDELINES FOR FOREST FIRES

GETTING PREPARED

If you are in the countryside

- Don't burn litter or dry vegetation and small branches (twigs) during the summer.
- Don't use open-air barbecues in forests or places close to dry vegetation during the summer.
- Avoid open-air activities that may cause fire (i.e. torch weld, wheel or other instruments that create sparks).
- Never throw lit cigarettes in open-air places.
- Don't leave rubbish in the forest. There is danger of ignition.
- Respect the signs prohibiting access in periods of high risk.

If your home lies inside or near a forest or a forest area

- Create a fire break around your home by clearing dry leaves and vegetation, pine-needles, branches etc at least within a 10 meter radius of your house.
- Prune the trees up to the height of 3 meters, according to their age and condition.
- Remove all dry branches from the trees and the bushes.
- Prune the trees within a 5 meter radius from your home so that their branches don't lean on the walls, on the roof or the balconies.
- Space out around the building the woody vegetation so that the branches of one tree are at least 3 meters apart from another. For greater protection, remove the woody and bushy vegetation around the building at a distance of at least 10 meters, provided that the clearing of natural vegetation for the necessary protection of buildings is not contrary to the forest legislation provisions.
- Don't install plastic drain spouts or pipes to the walls of the building.
- Protect the windows and the glass doors by installing shutters from non-flammable materials.
- Cover the chimneys and the ventilation pipes with non-flammable material so that the sparks will not penetrate the interior of the building.
- Don't store flammable objects close to the house.
- Keep the fire-wood in closed and protected places.
- Don't build uncovered fuel tanks close to the house.
- Be equipped with the appropriate fire-extinguishers and take care of their maintenance.
- Be equipped with a water hose with length proportional to the area you want to protect.
- Be equipped with a water tank, a simple non-electric powered pump and a water hose.

If you notice fire

- Call IMMEDIATELY the Fire Service call center (199) and give clear information about:
 - the location and the exact point where you are,
 - the location, the exact point and the direction of fire,
 - the kind of vegetation that is burning.

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If fire is approaching your home

- Stay calm.
- Remove all the flammable materials from around the building to closed and protected places.
- Close all the passages (chimneys, windows, doors etc) to prevent sparks entering the building.
- Shut off all the gas and liquid-fuel supplies inside and outside the building.
- Close the awnings on the balconies and the windows.
- Open the gate of the garden to facilitate the fire fighting vehicle access.
- Put a ladder outside the building so that someone is able to climb immediately on the roof. The ladder should be placed at the opposite side of the fire direction.
- Connect the water hoses with the taps outside the building and spread them so that the perimeter of the building is covered.
- If visibility is reduced, switch on the interior and exterior lights of the building in order to be more visible through smoke.

If fire has reached your home

- Do not abandon the building unless your escape is completely secured.
- Do not take shelter in a car. The possibility of survival in a building constructed by non flammable materials is greater than that inside a vehicle close to smoke and fire.
- If you stay indoors:
 - Close firmly all the doors and windows.
 - Block up all the cracks with wet clothes, in order to prevent smoke penetration.
 - Remove the curtains from the windows.
 - Move any furniture into the center of the residence away from windows and exterior doors.
 - Close all interior doors to slow down the fire spreading in the building.
 - Fill up the bathtub, wash-basins and buckets so that you have spare water.
 - Gather all together in one room.
 - Keep a torch and spare batteries at hand in case of electric power failure.
- If your home is made of wood, seek shelter in a fire-resistant building.
- If evacuation is ordered, strictly follow the instructions and the routes suggested by the Authorities.

After the fire is extinguished

- Get out of the house and at once put out the remaining hot spots.
- Inspect for at least 48 hours, at regular intervals, the perimeter and the exterior of the building for possible re-ignitions.

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