

BRUSH FIRES



DANGER ZONE
**HELPING TO AVOID
DISASTER**

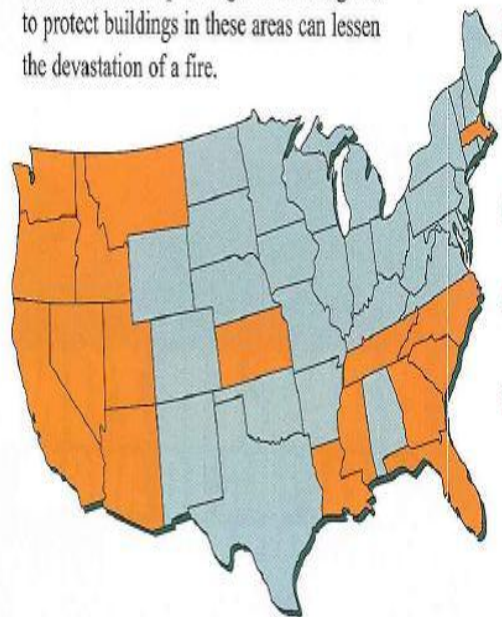
What Is A Brush Fire?

There are three different classes of brush fires.

1. A surface fire is the most common type and burns along the floor of a forest, moving slowly and killing or damaging trees.
2. A ground fire is usually started by lightning and burns on or below the forest floor.
3. Crown fire is spread rapidly by wind and moves quickly by jumping along the tops of trees. Brush fires are usually signaled by dense smoke that fills the area for miles around.

Danger Zones

Danger zones include all wooded, brush, and grassy areas—especially those in Kansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida, the Carolinas, Tennessee, California, Massachusetts, and the national forests of the western United States. The threat of brush fires for people living near brush areas or using recreational facilities in wilderness areas is real. Advanced planning and knowing how to protect buildings in these areas can lessen the devastation of a fire.



Before A Brush Fire

Learn and teach safe fire practices. Build fires away from nearby trees or bushes. Always have a way to extinguish the fire quickly and completely, never leave a fire or even a cigarette—burning unattended. Obtain local building codes and weed abatement ordinances for structures built near wooded areas. Use fire-resistant material when building, renovating, or



retrofitting structures. Create a safety zone to separate the home from combustible plants and vegetation. Stone walls can act as heat shields and deflect flames. Swimming pools and patios can be a safety zone. Install smoke alarms in your home and keep spare batteries on hand.

Plan Ahead

Have disaster supplies on hand:

- Flashlight with extra batteries.
- Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries.
- First aid kit and manual.
- Emergency food and water.
- Non-electric can opener.
- Essential medicines.
- Cash and credit cards.
- Sturdy shoes.



Develop An Emergency Communication Plan!

In case family members are separated from one another during a brush fire (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the “family contact.” After a disaster, it is often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.

Fire-Resistant Building Materials

Avoid using wooden shakes and shingles for a roof. Use tile, stucco, metal siding, brick, concrete block, rock, or other fire-resistant materials. Use only thick, tempered safety glass in large windows and sliding glass doors.

After A Brush Fire

Take care when re-entering a burned brush area. Hot spots can flare up without warning.

- Check the roof immediately and extinguish any sparks or embers.
- Check the attic for hidden burning sparks.
- For several hours afterward, re-check for smoke and sparks throughout the home.

Brush Fires Do's and Don'ts

- Do** Keep your grass and weeds cut and clear of tall dry grass. Provide enough water to keep grass and shrubs healthy and green.
- Don't** Allow rubbish such as old furniture, boxes, pallets, and dead vegetation to pile up around your house. Dispose of them promptly and properly. All of these things become fuel to a fire. Even old cars can burn!
- Do** Prune and trim trees and shrubs of dead and low hanging branches. When brush fires occur, low hanging branches can become "ladders" for the fire to get to the tops of trees.
- Don't** Stack firewood next to your home or any other structure.
- Do** Dispose of cigarettes properly and completely extinguish any flame such as campfires, barbecues, grills, and citronella candles or torches.
- Don't** Allow leaves and needles to build up on your roof and gutters. Wash your roof on a regular basis.
- Don't** Burn trash or rubbish on windy, dry days or close to flammable materials or structures.
- Do** Check with your local township for burning regulations. Also, the National Weather Service issues red flag warnings on high risk days.

Did You Know...

More than four out of every five brush fires are started by people. Negligent human behaviors such as smoking in forested areas, improperly extinguishing campfires, or the burning of trash or rubbish improperly, are the cause of many fires. The other cause of brush fires is lightning.

In 2004, there were 77,534 wild or brush fires causing 1,095 structure fires, 315 of which were primary residences. The cost of fire suppression for federal agencies alone was estimated at more the \$890 million.

Be Aware, Be Prepared, Know The Facts!

For more information on brush fires, contact your local emergency management office.

**ATLAS TOWNSHIP
FIRE DEPARTMENT
IN AN EMERGENCY
DIAL 9-1-1**