



**GRANT COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT URGES CITIZENS TO PREPARE FOR WILDFIRES**

**MOSES LAKE** – Grant County Emergency Management is urging homeowners to prepare their homes to protect them from the coming wildland fire season.

Wildfires are an unfortunate part of the environment in central Washington. Grant County has already experienced several wildfires this year – much earlier than usual. This is attributed to the mild winter and early blooming of ground covering vegetation.

Wildfires often begin unnoticed. They can be ignited by the careless tossing of a cigarette, an unattended campfire or from natural causes like lightning. They spread quickly igniting brush, trees, and homes.

Each year wildfire burns millions of acres across the United States. Homes that survive wildfire almost always do so because their owners had prepared for the eventuality of fire.

Citizens who own a home in a fire-prone area should take a few simple steps to make their property more defensible. It will increase their safety, firefighter safety, and the chance that the home will survive a fire.

**Safety Tips to help protect your home and property from wildfire**

- Clear an area of 30 feet immediately surrounding a home is critical. This area requires the greatest reduction in flammable vegetation.
- Prune trees 8 feet up from the ground.
- Perform a general yard cleanup. Remove old logs, twigs, shrubs, and needles that can add fuel to a ground fire.
- Use fire resistant roofing materials such as metal roofing, clay or concrete tiles, asphalt shingles, or treated wood shakes.
- Remove over-hanging branches, needles, and other combustible debris from the roof.
- Remove accumulated debris from below slotted deck surfaces.
- Use fire resistant siding materials such as stucco, brick, concrete block, poured concrete, rock, or manufactured fire resistant materials.
- Screen vent openings with 1/4" mesh to keep hot embers out.
- Your address numbers must be located at the end of the driveway so fire trucks can find your home.
- Make sure your driveway wide enough and the trees cleared enough so fire trucks can get in.

**Most Importantly—Be Prepared for a Fire.** One of the best ways to protect yourself and your family is to have a working smoke alarm in your home. A smoke alarm greatly reduces your chances of dying in a fire.

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