

# APRIL 2017

## Theme: Only you can prevent forest fires

Week 1 – Outdoor Burning

Week 2 – Wildfire Preparedness

Week 3 – Lightning Safety

Week 4 – Pet Fire Safety

Educator Tip: How do you spread the word about safety efforts? Through Partnerships, teaming up with other departments, agencies and community groups sends your message wide and far. Pooling resources can be beneficial to everyone, that includes time.

### National Fire Service History

- April 25, 1854 - NY Bldg Collapse (11 FF's killed)
- April 9, 1894 - Bldg Collapse, WI (6 FF's Killed)
- April 12, 1908 - 2,800 Bldgs Burn, MA (17,000 homeless)
- April 18, 1924 - Chicago Wall Collapse (8 FF's Killed)
- April 22, 1940 - MS Rhythm Nightclub Fire (200+ deaths)
- April 16, 1947 - Texas Ship & Plant Explosion (27 FF& 39 civilianskilled)
- April 4, 1956 - Wall Collapse, NY (6 FF's Killed)
- April 19, 1995 - Oklahoma City Bombing (168 Killed)
- April 17, 2013 - West Fertilizer Company Explosion (4 citizens, 11 FF'skilled)

### West Virginia Fire Service History

- April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1924 – the town of Franklin burned, devastating the town's business district.

The Pendleton County seat of Franklin has flourished along the South Branch of the Potomac River since the 1790s. But on the evening of April 17, 1924, it suffered a severe setback when the town's business district was devastated by fire.

The blaze started in the offices of the Pendleton Times newspaper and spread quickly after flames reached several barrels of gas and oil. The fire was difficult to fight because the town's reservoir was dry and, to make matters worse, strong winds fanned the flames and kept the fire raging. It's said the winds carried burning debris two and a half miles downriver, starting smaller blazes. The main fire burned out of control for a couple of hours before the winds shifted, forcing the flames towards the river. Some parts of the town continued to burn into the next day.

By the time the fire had been completely extinguished, virtually all of Franklin's business district had been destroyed. None of the town's approximately 500 residents were killed, but 19 families were left homeless. Damages were estimated at a half million dollars. People in surrounding communities flocked to Franklin to view the ruins. There were so many visitors that town officials became concerned about looting and called in the state police for protection.

Within a couple of days, Franklin rebounded. Tents were put up for shelter and one resident allowed his home to be used for public business. The post office was located in the basement of the home and the Farmers' Bank was set up in the living room. The Franklin Bank conducted business in the parsonage of a local church. The fire of 1924 wrought much destruction in Franklin, but within six years, the town's business section had been completely rebuilt. **(From WVCulture.org)**



## OUTDOOR BURNING

*From the WV Division of Forestry:*

The periods of each year between **March 1 and May 31**, inclusive, and **October 1 and December 31**, inclusive, are hereby designated as Forest Fire Seasons.

- No person shall during ANY such fire season, except between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. prevailing time, set on fire or cause to be set on fire any forest land, or any grass, grain, stubble, slash, debris, or other inflammable materials. Any fire set during this time shall be extinguished prior to 7:00 a.m. prevailing time. Such prohibition of fires between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. prevailing time shall not be construed to include (1) small fires set for the purpose of food preparation, or providing light or warmth around which all grass, brush, stubble, or other debris has been removed for a distance of ten feet from the fire, and (2) burning which may be conducted at any time when the ground surrounding the burning site is covered by one inch or more of snow.
- No burning may be done unless all inflammable material has been removed from around the material to be burned as a safety strip for a distance which insures that the fire will not escape and which is not less than 10 feet. If fire escapes beyond the safety strip, the person responsible shall be guilty of misdemeanor.
- Before leaving ANY fire for ANY period of time, it must be totally extinguished.
- Commercial permits to burn during the prohibited periods may be issued by the Division of Forestry.
- All sawmills, power shovels, or an engine or machine capable of throwing sparks must be provided with an adequate spark arrestor if operating on land subject to fire by any cause.
- All inflammable waste disposal areas on ANY land must annually have removed all grass, brush, debris and other inflammable material adjacent to such disposal areas to provide adequate protection to prevent the escape of fire to adjacent lands.
- The State shall recover from the person or persons, firms or corporations whose negligence or whose violations of any provisions of this article cause ANY fire at ANY time on any grass or forest land the amount expended by the State.
- A landowner must take all practicable means to suppress ANY fire on his property. If he fails to do so, the State shall collect from him the amounts expended by the State for such purposes.



## WILDFIRES

### *Facts and figures*

- According to NIFC, 2016 saw more than 67,000 wildfires burn over 5.5 million acres. The south led the nation with nearly 1.6 million acres burned.
- A total of 4,312 structures were destroyed by wildfires in 2016, including more than 3,000 homes and more than 70 commercial buildings. Tennessee accounted for the highest number of structures lost in one state in 2016 with more than 2,000 residences and 53 commercial structures destroyed; California was second with 754 residences and 12 commercial structures destroyed.
- There were 1,251 large or significant wildfires reported in 2016 (40,000 acres or more).
- The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) cites more than 72,000 U.S. communities are at risk from wildfires.
- Many people do not realize how often local (municipal or county) fire departments around the country are called to smaller brush, grass and forest fires.
- During 2007-2011, local fire departments responded to an estimated average of 334,200 brush, grass, and forest fires per year. This translates to 915 such fires per day.
- Only 10% of these fires were coded as forest, woods, or wildland fires;
- Two of every five (41%) were brush or brush and grass mixtures;

- More than one-third (37%) were grass fires; and 13% were unclassified forest, brush or grass fires or unclassified natural vegetation fires.
- In three-quarters (76%) of the brush, grass, and forest fires handled by local fire departments, less than an acre burned. Only 4% burned more than ten acres. Fires in forests tended to be larger than other vegetation fires. Only three-fifths (59%) of the forest fires were less than an acre, while 9% consumed more than ten acres.

*To check out active wildfires happening right now across the United States just go to:*

<http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/wildfire-and-seasonal-fires/wildland-fires/where-are-the-wildfires-burning>

## **Before a wildfire threatens your area...**

### *In and around your home*

- Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
- Remove dead vegetation and other items from under your deck or porch, and within 10 feet of the house. Learn more about the basics of defensible space on the Firewise website.
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- Wildfire can spread to tree tops. Prune trees so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.
- Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire.
- Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
- Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.
- Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.
- Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screens with metal mesh to prevent ember entry.

### *Creating an emergency plan*

- Assemble an emergency supply kit and place it in a safe spot. Remember to include important documents, medications and personal identification.
- Develop an emergency evacuation plan and practice it with everyone in your home.
- Plan two ways out of your neighborhood and designate a meeting place.



# WILDFIRE SAFETY



If you see a wildfire, you should walk or drive away from it immediately and call 911.



Don't approach it. Wildfires spread quickly and can change direction.



Remove yourself from danger first and then seek help.

911

Reporting a forest fire



[www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)  
[www.weather.gov/wildfire](http://www.weather.gov/wildfire)





# Lightning Safety

## LIGHTNING SAFETY

### *Facts & figures*

- During 2007-2011, U.S. local fire departments responded to an estimated average of 22,600 fires per year that were started by lightning. These fires caused an average of nine civilian deaths, 53 civilian injuries, and \$451 million in direct property damage per year.
- Only 19% of reported lightning fires occurred in homes, but these accounted for 86% of the associated lightning fire civilian deaths, 76% of the associated injuries and 68% of the direct property damage.
- Almost two-thirds of the lightning fires reported to local fire departments were outside vegetation fires.
- In addition to the fires reported to local fire departments, federal and state wildland firefighting agencies reported an average of 9,000 wildland fires started by lightning to the National Interagency Fire Center per year in 2008-2012. These fires tended to be larger than fires started by human causes. The average lightning-caused fire burned 402 acres, nine times the average of 45 acres seen in human-caused wildland fires.
- Over the 10 years from 2003-2012, 42 U.S. firefighters were killed as a result of lightning-caused fires. These deaths include fatalities during fireground activities, as well as responding or returning to fires. Four of these deaths occurred at structure fires, and the remaining 38 were killed as the result of wildland fires. Eleven of these deaths occurred in helicopter crashes.
- In addition to causing fires, lightning is dangerous on its own. Data from the National Weather Service show that in 2008-2012, an average of 29 people per year died as a result of lightning strikes. The most common location for these deaths was outside or in an open area. The average number of lightning flashes per square mile varies considerably by state, as does the death rate from lightning incidents. See <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov> for more information.
- In 2003, the last year for which data about fire department responses to non-fire incidents is currently available, 10,200 non-fire lightning strikes were reported to local fire departments. The majority of these, 62%, occurred at home properties.





## LIGHTNING KILLS

### Play It Safe !



#### Lightning Facts...

- ✓ No place outside is safe during a thunderstorm.
- ✓ Lightning kills more people annually than tornadoes or hurricanes.
- ✓ If you hear thunder, you're likely within striking distance of the storm.

#### Outdoors...

- ✓ Plan outdoor activities to avoid thunderstorms.
- ✓ Monitor weather conditions. If you hear thunder, get inside a substantial building immediately.
- ✓ If a substantial building is not available, get inside a hard-topped metal vehicle.
- ✓ Avoid open areas and stay away from isolated tall objects.

#### Indoors...

- ✓ Avoid contact with any equipment connected to electrical power, such as computers or appliances.
- ✓ Avoid contact with water or plumbing.
- ✓ Stay off corded phones.
- ✓ Stay away from windows and doors.
- ✓ Remain inside for 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder is heard.

#### If Someone Is Struck...

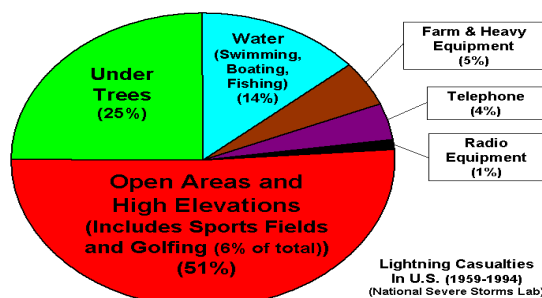
- ✓ Victims do not carry an electrical charge and may need immediate medical attention.
- ✓ Call 911 for help.
- ✓ Monitor the victim and begin CPR or AED, if necessary.



**For more information, visit:**

**[www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov](http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov)**









## PET FIRE SAFETY

According to reports, many fires are caused by pets, especially when are left alone in the house. NFPA's latest numbers show that local fire departments responded to an average of 700 home structure fires per year in which animals, including pets and wild animals, contributed to the fire's start. A few of the causes include:

- Pets bumping into, turning on or knocking over cooking equipment, lamps, candles or space heaters
- Birds, rodents or other animals building nests in chimneys, or in or on top of equipment
- Animals chewing on cords or wiring

As pet owners, we can take steps to help prevent fires and plan for unexpected emergencies. Important actions to consider are:

- Keeping pets (who are naturally curious!) away from stoves and countertops where they can knock over, bump into or turn on cooking equipment
- Using battery-operated, flameless candles that look just as nice as real candles but won't catch fire if knocked over
- Making sure pets stay away from lamps, space heaters and other heat-producing appliances
- Keeping an eye on your pets to make sure they don't chew through electrical cords; inspecting cords regularly and calling a professional if you notice a problem

It's also important to know that in the event of a fire, you should never go back inside for your pets. Instead, tell firefighters that you have a pet trapped inside. They are better equipped and trained to handle these emergency situations.

And what if you live in the wildland/urban interface where forest and wildland fires are more prevalent? And your pets include other animals like horses and cows? Then you know that in the event of a wildfire you may have to quickly evacuate. Planning ahead, like including pets in your family's evacuation plan and creating their own pet evacuation kit is key to helping you stay calm and organized during a stressful time.



## Is Your Cat's Evacuation Kit Ready For an Emergency?

- 
1. Accessible carrier for each pet
  2. A clear, current photo of each pet
  3. Photocopies of ownership documentation
  4. A list of important phone numbers
  5. Water
  6. Food
  7. Harness with a ring for a leash
  8. Medications
  9. Litter box, litter, scoop, and baggies
  10. Paper towels and wipes
  11. Tranquilizers or calming remedies
  12. Comfort items

from your friends at  
**catster**

## Is Your Dog's Evacuation Kit Ready For an Emergency?

- 
1. Accessible carrier for each pet
  2. A clear, current photo of each pet
  3. Photocopies of ownership documentation
  4. A list of important phone numbers
  5. Water
  6. Food
  7. Harness with a ring for a leash
  8. Medications
  9. Pee pads or newspapers
  10. Paper towels and wipes
  11. Tranquilizers or calming remedies
  12. Comfort items

from your friends at  
**dogster**



# PET EVACUATION plan

## IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

- Keep a 'Pet Alert' sticker in a front door or window so emergency crews know how many pets are inside the house.
- Keep your pets on the main level of your house while you are gone, it makes it easier for them to escape and/or be rescued in event of a fire.
- Fire may occur while you are not home, find a neighbor who would be able to evacuate your pets for you. Make sure they are familiar with your house & your pet's favorite hiding places.
- Create a 'Pet Evacuation Kit' including extra collar, leash, tags, bag of food, collapsible water dish, water bottle, waste bags, blanket, and copies of your pet's records & ID tags. Keep this kit close to a door, & time permitting, grab it on your way out of the house so you don't waste precious moments looking for these items.



HE WOULDN'T LEAVE YOU.  
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE HIM.



MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR ANIMALS' CARE  
BEFORE A NATURAL DISASTER OCCURS—DON'T WAIT

PETA