

The FireSmart Cottage

FOCA encourages landowners to be aware of and protect their homes from forest fires and follow safe burning guidelines for brush and campfires. FireSmart your home with a seasonal checklist:

Forest Fires are naturally caused by lightning, and also by human carelessness.

Winter

- plan the activities you want to do this year to make your property safe and encourage others to do the same.
- Check your fire insurance annually to make sure it is adequate to cover a fire loss.

Spring

- Do a home assessment prior to spring fire season to help you prepare for the threat of wildfire.
- Clean dead vegetation out of shrubs and other foundation plantings.
- Connect your garden hose to an outdoor spigot and attach a nozzle. Make sure other firefighting tools like shovels, rakes and buckets are handy.
- Move firewood and lumber piles to at least 10m away from your buildings.

Summer

- Clean gutters and remove and flammable debris from roof.
- Keep grass cut around propane tanks and buildings. This provides a green barrier that fire will not burn.
- Keep area in 10m diameter of buildings relatively clear of combustible materials.
- Enclose soffits and areas under decks. Replace flammable roofing, siding, and foundation enclosures with fire resistant materials.
- Post road signs or house number in reflective materials so they can be clearly seen in the dark.

Fall

- Prune trees after leaves fall. Pruning branches up to 3m above the ground will help prevent fire from climbing branches into tree crowns.
- Prune branches that are overhanging roof and wires.
- Make sure your home is fire safe on the inside. Check chimneys, smoke alarms, and fire extinguishers.

Safe Burning

- Check with your municipality before you burn leaves and debris. You may be required to get a permit, there may be a restricted fire zone (RFZ) in effect, or you may be only allowed to burn at certain times in the day.
- Choose a safe day. Burn during the coolest, calmest, dampest time of day. Do not burn when its windy.
- Never leave your fire unattended.
- A pile to be burnt must be no more than 2 metres in diameter and less than 2 metres in height.

► **Find out how your community can prepare for wildfires...**

Safe Campfires

- Use a fire pit for campfires. Dig a hole, ensure the area around the pit is free of combustible materials, surround your fire pit with rocks or stone slabs, and keep a bucket of water nearby.
- Make sure all glowing embers are extinguished before you leave your fire. In a fire pit add water and stir into ashes. If water is not handy, mineral soil also works well to extinguish fire.

FOCA encourages lake communities to discuss wildfire preparedness and create a community action plan:

Create an action plan by considering the following questions:

- What will you do if a fire is approaching yours or a neighbour's residence?
- Who will you call, and how do you sound an alarm to notify the community?
- Does your community have fire equipment in strategic locations on the lake? Who is in charge of maintaining this equipment, and who has access to it?
- Are there emergency exits clearly marked in community buildings?
- Do you have a home escape plan?
- Have you located fire safe areas in the community such as lakes or other wet areas, rock outcrops, and roads?

Report a Wildfire

- Be prepared to give fire officials the following information; a detailed description of the fire location, how firefighters can access the fire, types of buildings in the area, cutting operations or other activities in the area, and the time fire was discovered.
- Central and South Ontario– call 911 or your local municipal fire department
- Northwestern Ontario– call 1-888-284-FIRE
- Northeastern Ontario– call 1-888-863-FIRE

For more information contact:

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Resources online:

www.foca.on.ca
www.ontario.ca/fireprevention (Click on "Be Fire Smart")
www.ofm.gov.on.ca
www.partnersinprotection.ab.ca

Your local contact:

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