

Rural Fire Safety

The following is a list of fire prevention tips for rural residents. We encourage that you print this page and use it to inspect your property for fire dangers.

- Make a fire-safe zone around your home. Remove flammable vegetation and leaves at least 30 feet from the house.
- Examine your house and yard. What can catch fire or carry it to your home?
- Keep grass (both green and dormant) closely mowed. . Keep tall grass, brush and trees out from under utility lines to protect essential services.
- Leave yard trees and shrubs no closer than 15-20 feet apart. Prune lower limbs 15 feet from the ground.
- Remove limbs overhanging the roof and chimneys.
- Clean gutters and roof of leaves.
- LPG tanks should be far enough away from buildings for valves to be shut off in case of fire. Keep area around the tank clear of flammable vegetation.
- All combustibles such as firewood, wooden picnic tables, boats, stacked lumber, etc. should be kept away from structures.
- Store gasoline in an approved safety can away from occupied buildings.
- Use fire-resistant roofing materials.
- Postpone outdoor burning until your area greens up. Check with your local fire department to determine if all restrictions on outdoor burning have been lifted.
- Keep mufflers and spark arresters on agricultural equipment in proper working order, and watch out for rocks and metal when bush hogging or mowing.
- Monitor hay-baling operations closely. Check for hot bearings or hay caught in rollers. Keep a fire extinguisher handy.
- Watch out for sparks when using welding equipment to build fences or repair equipment.
- Avoid driving or parking vehicles in grassy areas where tall, dry grass can come into contact with hot pollution control equipment under your vehicle.
- Make sure firefighters can find your home. Mark your house location and roads clearly.
- Can fire engines get to your home from the road? Make sure the road is wide enough and any bridges strong enough to permit large fire vehicles to get to your home.
- Develop an external water supply for firefighting, such as cisterns, dry hydrants, and ponds.
- Install a smoke detector on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms; test monthly and change the batteries annually or according to the manufacturer's suggestion.
- Have an escape route and practice it.
- Follow state and local burning laws.
- Burn safely! Attend to outdoor fires until they are completely safe and dead out. Most wildfires are caused by careless people.
- Dispose of wood ashes in a metal bucket. Soak with water before dumping.
- Keep fire tools readily available (garden hose, shovel, rake and ladder). Keep garden hoses hooked to outdoor faucets on both sides of your home.