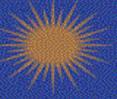


Wildfires

Summer 2012


**Arizona
Department of
Health Services**

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having the Extreme
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YOUR CHILD'S
school!**

Wildfires and Your Health

Greetings, readers! Did you know that extreme changes in the weather can lead to wildfires? Many factors such as a dry, hot climate; forests; mountain ranges; and urban growth make Arizona a high risk environment for wildfires (USFS). Therefore, it is important to know what effects wildfires and smoke have on health and what steps to take before, during, and after a fire.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), increased risk of wildfires presents a potential public health hazard. Older adults, children, and those with respiratory disease are most likely to be affected by wildfire smoke.

Wildfire smoke is a mixture of small particles, gases, and water vapor. Symptoms from exposure to smoke include: burning eyes, running nose, scratchy throat, headaches, and illness (i.e. bronchitis). Smoke can also worsen chronic heart and lung disease (i.e. asthma).

Arizonans should take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and their loved ones from wildfires and wildfire smoke.



How to protect yourself:

- Pay attention to local air quality reports
- Refer to visibility guides if they are available
- If advised to stay indoors, keep indoor air as clean as possible
- Do not add to indoor pollution (ex. burning candles)
- Follow your doctor's advice
- Do not rely on dust masks for protection

Wildfire Facts

- As of June 2012, 704 wildfires have burned over 66,441 acres in Arizona this year
- In 2011, the Wallow Fire became the largest wildfire in Arizona history, burning 538,049 acres
- Many species depend on wildfires to improve habitat, recycle nutrients, and maintain diversity
- Fires can cause secondary effects like erosion, landslides, introduction of invasive species and changes in water quality (NIFC)

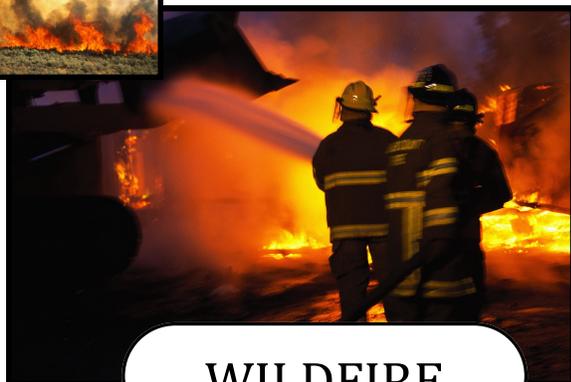
Gladiator Fire

In Crown King, Arizona, the Gladiator fire started May 13, 2012. The fire was started by humans, originating from a structure fire on private property. As of June 2012, the fire had been 100% contained. It burned approximately 16,240 acres and cost \$14 million. To help battle the fire, 115 personnel were on-site. Eight injuries were reported and 6 structures had been destroyed. For more information, visit www.azein.gov.

Protecting Your Home from a Wildfire

Take steps now to protect your home. Five basic steps homeowners should take now to prevent potential disasters:

- 1) Remove dead or overhanging branches.** During the windy conditions that exist during a wildland fire, flames, sparks and firebrands could travel from the tree to the roof of this structure.
- 2) Remove leaf accumulation from your yard.** Leaf accumulation provides fuel for a wildland fire.



WILDFIRE

The majority of wildfires are started by humans. Take steps to prevent wildfires. Protect yourself and loved ones!



Gladiator fire in Crown King, Arizona

- 3) Remove leaf clutter from your roof and gutters.** During a wildland fire, leaves on the roof and/or in the gutters could be ignited by flying embers.
- 4) Remove tall, dry grasses.** Tall, dry grasses provide a path for fire that can lead directly to a house.
- 5) Remove "ladder fuels."** Prune tree limbs so the lowest is between six to ten feet from the ground. A fire burning through tall, dry grass could ignite these limbs and climb to the top of the tree with relative ease.

Prevention is Key

Preventing wildland fires is everyone's responsibility. It's never too early or late to assess wildfire risk at home or exercise fire prevention strategies.

Prevention on Public Lands

- Do not smoke in natural area open space.
- Do not ignite open fires without a permit or following the safety information.
- When camping, abide by U.S. Forest Service campfire safety guidelines. The City of Scottsdale also has a [home safety checklist](#) available for download.

Driving Hazards

- When pulling off a roadway, do not park in grassy areas. Make sure to turn off lights and take foot off the brakes.
- When pulling trailers, attach safety chains securely, loose chains can drag on the pavement and cause sparks, igniting roadside fires.