



## Wildfires: Before, During, and After

### Facts About Wildfires:

- Children are especially susceptible to environmental hazards caused by wildfires including smoke and the byproducts of the materials released into the water and soil by burning structures

### Preparing for a Wildfire:

- Create a wildfire emergency plan and include the 3 factors of wildfires:
  - Before: How to prevent a wildfire from occurring on campus.
  - During: Identifying and taking the protective measures to protect the health of the whole school community (students, faculty, families, visitors) during an active fire.
  - After: Ensuring there is proper site cleanup after a fire.
- Get in touch with local, state, and federal officials to determine what wildfire plans are in place for your school's area.
  - Foster relationships with emergency services.
- Determine your schools risk:
  - Low-Risk Schools - located in a humid climate with a short dry season, flat terrain, limited wildland, and tree exposure, and manmade fuels that are located at least 50 feet from major buildings.
  - Moderate-Risk Schools - more arid climate, dry season of fewer than 3 months, hillier terrain (10-20%), short and dry brush and grass, and small trees around or near the school.
  - High-Risk Schools - a dry season longer than 3 months, steep terrain with a grade of 20% or more, wildlands and forests within 100 feet of the school, trees and fuel within 30 feet of the school, and limited/few fire hydrants.
- Determine the 3 Zones of Survivable Space for the School:
  - Zone 1 - 30-100 feet from the school which has low-growing indigenous plant species. Ensure that roof and gutters are clean and free of leaves and debris.
  - Zone 2 - place only low-growing plants, small shrubs, and carefully spaced trees 10 feet apart from each other. Frequently trim plants to get dead growth, ensuring there are no tree limbs within 10 feet of the school.



- Zone 3 - farthest zone away from the school with the least amount of dry or dead vegetation or shrubs, reducing the ability for fire to spread.

### **During an Active Wildfire:**

- Active Wildfire Emergency Action Plan
- Pay Close attention to emergency notifications and directives from emergency services
  - Evacuation zones
  - Fire responses
- If the school is within 100 miles of the active fire zone, cancel school
  - Wildfires can move up to 14mph through grasslands and 7mph through forested areas
- If the school is within 200 miles of the active fire zone, frequently monitor the fire status and current radius
  - If there is a rapid shift in winds/radius, consider early dismissal or canceling school

### **After a Wildfire:**

- If ash has settled around or on the school:
  - Replace all soil and dirt, discard affected crops
  - Thoroughly clean all outdoor areas where children will be present
  - Thoroughly clean all maintenance bays and facility equipment
    - Including HVAC systems to ensure no ash has entered
    - Have ventilation systems formally inspected
- If ash has gotten and settled in the school
  - Do NOT vacuum
    - Gently wipe with a microfiber cloth that has been saturated with water and mild detergent
    - Sweep up and discard on hard surfaces
    - Shampoo carpets

Resources: [Wildfire Fact Sheet - REMS](#), [Wildfire Smoke Guidance for Schools](#), [What to do when a wildfire is approaching your school](#)