



# Natural Disasters and Severe Weather

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## Stay Safe During a Wildfire



**Stay safe during a fire.** Pay attention to local weather forecasts, especially those that may affect fire conditions, and always follow instructions given by local emergency management officials.

### Protect yourself from smoke.

When wildfires create smoky conditions it's important for everyone to [reduce their exposure to smoke](#). Wildfire smoke irritates your eyes, nose, throat, and lungs. It can make it hard to breathe and make you cough or wheeze. [Children](#) and people with [asthma](#), [COPD](#), heart disease, or who are [pregnant](#) need to be especially careful about breathing wildfire smoke.

#### Keep smoke outside.

- Choose a room you can close off from outside air.
- Set up a portable air cleaner or a [filter](#) to keep the air in this room clean even when it's smoky in the rest of the building and outdoors. If you use a [do-it-yourself box fan](#) filtration unit, never leave it unattended.

**Reduce your smoke exposure** by wearing a [respirator](#) [\[PDF – 329 KB\]](#).

- A respirator is a mask that fits tightly to your face to filter out smoke before you breathe it in.
- You must wear the right respirator and wear it [correctly](#) [\[PDF – 2.7 MB\]](#). *NIOSH has not approved respirators for children.*
- If you have heart or lung disease ask your doctor if it is safe for you to wear a respirator.
- Avoid using candles, gas, propane, wood-burning stoves, fireplaces, or aerosol sprays and don't fry or broil meat, smoke tobacco products, or vacuum.
- If you have a central air conditioning system, use high efficiency filters to capture fine particles from smoke. If your system has a fresh air intake, set the system to recirculate mode or close the outdoor intake damper.

#### Pets and other animals can be affected by wildfire smoke too.

- Learn how to protect [pets](#) and [livestock](#).

- Some evacuation centers do not accept animals. Check [Petfinder's Shelter Center](#) or [RedRover](#) for information on local animal shelters and rescue groups

**Keep track of fires** near you so you can be ready.

- AirNow's "[Fire and Smoke Map](#)" has a map of fires throughout North America.
- NOAA's "[Fire weather outlook](#)" page maps fire watches and warnings.
- Listen to the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio for emergency alerts.

**Pay attention to any health symptoms** if you have [asthma](#), [COPD](#), [heart disease](#), or are [pregnant](#). Get medical help if you need it.

Learn more about protecting yourself from [wildfire smoke](#).

## **Evacuate safely.**

You may be asked by public authorities to evacuate or you may decide to evacuate. Read about how to [evacuate safely](#) and how to [develop a family disaster plan](#), including:

- Finding out what could happen to you
- Making a disaster plan
- Completing the checklist
- Practicing your plan

## **Stay healthy during power outages.**

Large fires can cause long-term power outages. Read about [what to do if your power goes out](#), including:

- Preventing carbon monoxide poisoning
- Food safety
- Safe drinking water
- Power line hazards

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