



# Rural Fire Prevention Checklist

A Factsheet on Rural Fire Safety and Prevention

**S**elf-reliance is the rule for fire safety for many people. If you live in an area where the local fire department is more than a few minutes away because of travel time or distance, or if you are outside the limits of the nearest town, be sure you know how to be self-reliant in a fire emergency.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) encourages you to use this fire safety checklist to help you protect yourself, your home and its surroundings from fire. Remember, fire safety is your personal responsibility... *Fire Stops With You!*

## MAINTAIN HOME HEATING SYSTEMS

- Have your chimney inspected and cleaned annually by a certified specialist.
- Insulate chimneys and place spark arresters on top.
- Extend the chimney at least three feet above the roof.
- Remove branches hanging above and around the chimney.

## HAVE A FIRE SAFETY AND EVACUATION PLAN

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Test them monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.
- Practice fire escape and evacuation plans.
- Mark the entrance to your property with signs that are clearly visible.
- Know which local emergency services are available and have those numbers posted.
- Provide emergency vehicle access through roads and driveways at least 12 feet wide with adequate turnaround space.

## MAKE YOUR HOME FIRE-RESISTANT

- Use fire-resistant and protective roofing and materials like stone, brick and metal to protect your home. Avoid using wood materials that offer the least fire protection.
- Keep roofs and eaves clear of debris.
- Cover all exterior vents, attics and eaves with metal mesh screens no larger than 6 millimeters.
- Install multipane windows, tempered safety glass or fireproof shutters to protect large windows from radiant heat.
- Use fire-resistant draperies for added window protection.
- Keep tools for fire protection nearby: 100 foot garden hose, shovel, rake, ladder and buckets.
- Make sure water sources, such as hydrants and ponds, are accessible to the fire department.

## LET YOUR LANDSCAPE DEFEND YOUR PROPERTY

- Trim grass on a regular basis up to 100 feet surrounding your home.
- Create defensible space by thinning trees and brush within 30 feet around your home.
- Beyond 30 feet, remove dead wood, debris and low tree branches.

- Landscape your property with fire resistant plants and vegetation to prevent fire from spreading quickly.
- Stack firewood at least 30 feet away from your home and other structures.
- Store flammable materials, liquids and solvents in metal containers outside the home, at least 30 feet away from structures and wooden fences.

## FOLLOW LOCAL BURNING LAWS

- Do not burn trash or other debris without proper knowledge of local burning laws, techniques and the safest times of day and year to burn.
- Before burning debris in a wooded area, make sure you notify local authorities and obtain a burning permit.
- Use an approved incinerator with a safety lid or covering with holes no larger than 3/4 inches.
- Create at least a 10 foot clearing around the incinerator before burning debris.

**For More Information Contact:**  
**The United States Fire Administration**  
Office of Fire Management Programs  
16825 South Seton Avenue  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

**Or visit the USFA website:**  
[www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)

