



Last Resort: Sheltering In Place During Wildfire



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Setting the Stage

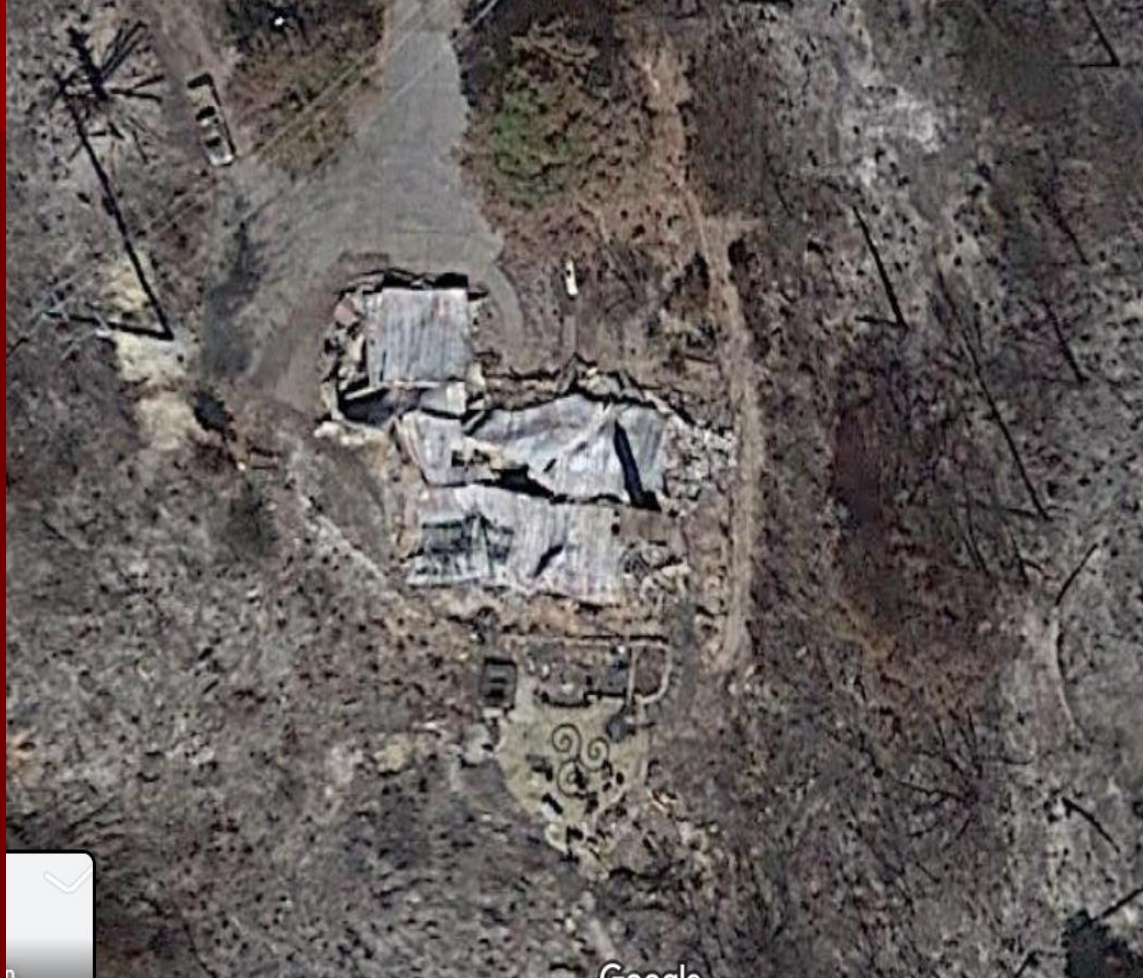


- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAme517Wddc>

Agenda

- Considerations: Best Chance for Surviving
- Survival Tactics if you are Trapped
- Aftermath of Fire Going Through
- Thoughts from our Guests
- Answers to your questions

Part I: Improving your chances of survival



Arial view of metal roof remaining on home after structure burn

Aggressive wildfire is serious business - Very Dangerous

Potential Loss of homes and lives

Always evacuate early if possible (especially children & elderly)

Educate yourself for worst case scenario: being trapped

Shelter in Place (SIP)

Survival Considerations

- SIP is most effective when comprehensive preparation has taken place prior to a wildfire:
 1. Working knowledge of risks and fire behavior
 - awareness of topology and wind which can intensify fire
 2. Advanced home hardening and fuel reduction work done
 3. Planning ahead of time for fire event
 - where & how to shelter, backup plans in case of structure failure, etc.
 4. Survivability after fire front passes
 - knowing what to do to keep safe until help arrives

Improving your chances of survival

- Need physical & mental stamina
 - Be prepared for intense heat, smoke, low visibility and more
 - Proactive vs. passive sheltering considerations
- PPE (heavy-soled boots, hat, goggles, fire-resistant gloves, masks, long pants & sleeves, +)
- Communications devices (Cell phone, MURS radio, Ham radio)



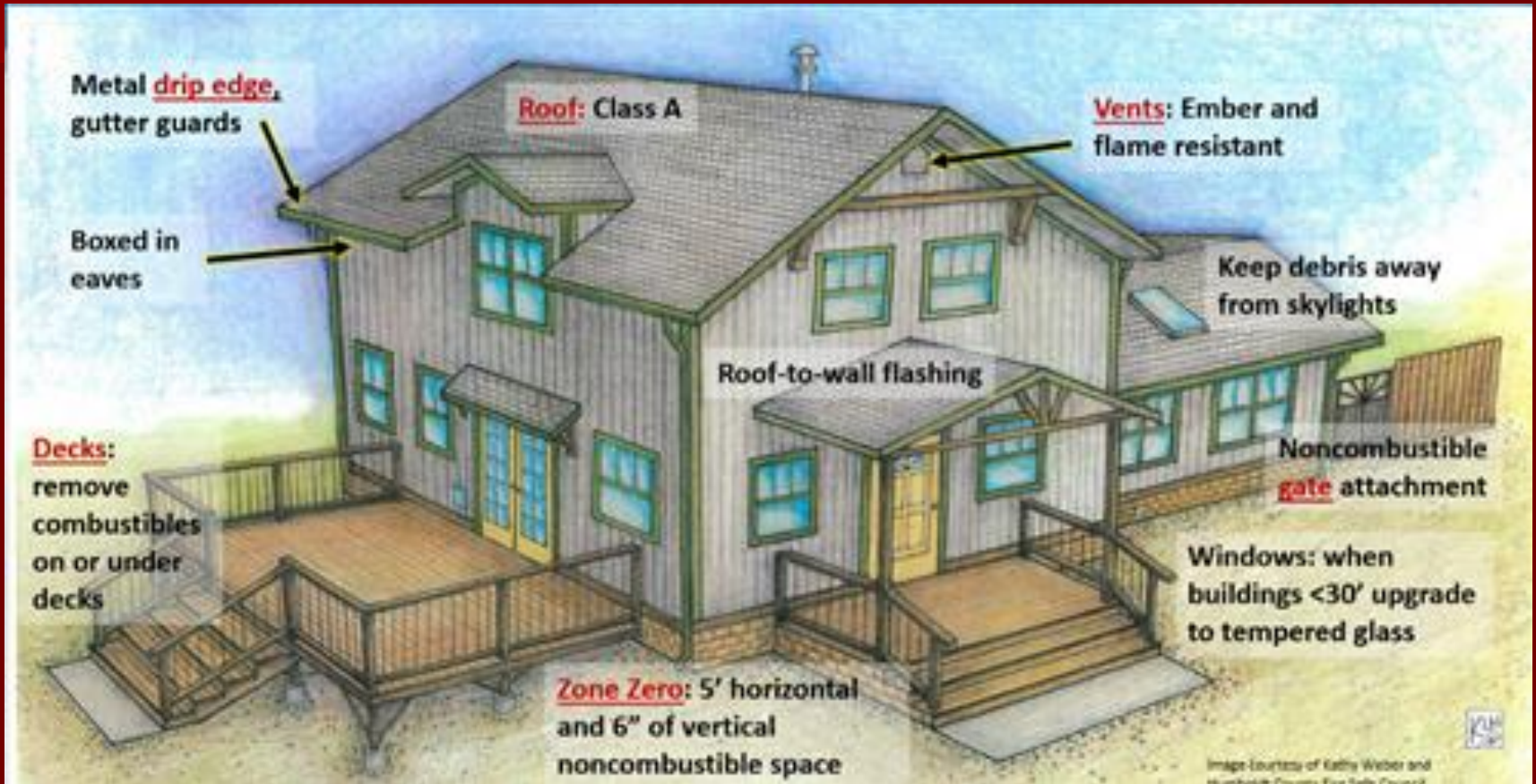
Improving your chances of survival



For your home to survive, it must meet the highest HIZ standards

Which house would you rather shelter in?

Improving your Chances of Survival



Hardscaping and well cleared pathways critical for safer departure after fire front passes

Emergency Communications


- Sign up for emergency alerts and know your zone
 - CruzAware, Alert SCC, Zonehaven
- Call or text 911 (if phone service available)
 - Keywords to use
 - Wildland Fire/Address/Unable to leave (trapped)/Sheltering-in-place
 - What, Where & Who are the most vital info especially if texting
 - Do not hang up unless the 911 operator instructs
- Emergency Radio Communications
 - *Please see backup slides for more details for radio and 911 communications*

Part II: Survival Tactics if you are trapped

- Trapped in Home
- Trapped in Car
- Trapped on Foot

Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County

PREPARED, NOT SCARED


Fire Safe
COUNCIL of
SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY

Wildfire Threat Mitigation
& Preparation Worksheet

A Step-by-Step Guide to Preparing & Protecting
Your family, Pets & Property from the Threat of Wildfire.
Including Evacuation Preparation
& Safety Guidelines

Brought to you by
Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County

Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County
Cut at Fold, Fill Out this Panel, Post in
Front Window in Case of Evacuation
RESIDENT INFORMATION

Contact: _____
Residence address: _____
Phone 1: _____
Phone 2: _____
Contact email: _____

TOTAL # OF RESIDENTS ON PROPERTY: _____
of residents who evacuated: _____
Date: _____ Time: _____
Name: _____
Name: _____
Name: _____
Name: _____
Name: _____

NUMBER OF RESIDENTS WHO STAYED: _____
Name: _____
Name: _____

Total # of pets: _____
Pets we evacuated: _____
Pets we left behind: _____

INTENDED EVACUATION DESTINATION: _____
Name: _____
Location: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

PROPERTY INFORMATION: _____
Propane shut-off location: _____
Natural gas shut-off location: _____
Power/Generator shut-off location: _____
Water access: _____
Other information: _____

Shelter Selection

- House is safer than a car
- A car is safer than on foot
- Select locations with good visibility for monitoring the fire
- Be aware that structural failure can occur while SIP
- Pre-arrange with neighbor if your house is questionable
- Do not shelter in bathrooms or basements which lack exits and fire-monitoring visibility



Trapped in Home (1)

- Stay calm and stay together
- Stay inside, turn on HEPA filter if available
- Collect fire extinguishers
- ***Actively monitor and defend your shelter***
- Put out any spot fires inside

- Put wet towels across door and window bases
- Keep away from outside walls and windows
- Move to end of house farthest from approaching fire



Trapped in Home (2)

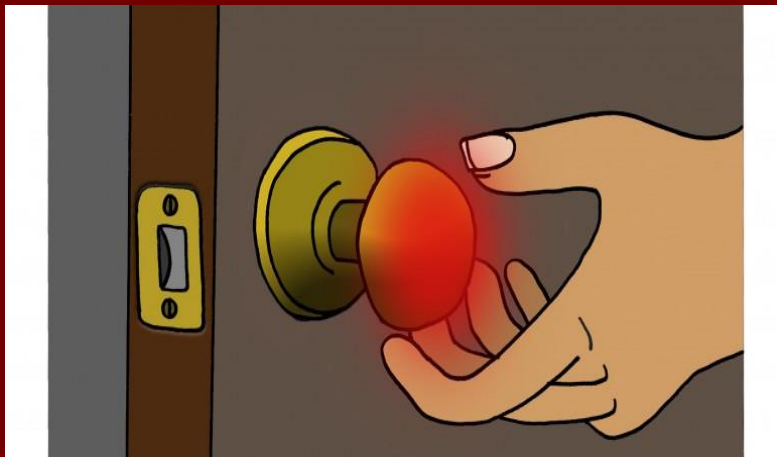
- Fill buckets, sinks & tubs with water. Use wet towels to slap out spot fires
- Have flashlights handy
- Shut off attic fans, heat pumps
- Close inside doors to slow fire spread
- Leave lights on to alert emergency services
- Bring pets inside and put them in carriers



Trapped in Home (3)



- Stay near center of structure, with easy access to exits
- Stay low to keep cool and avoid smoke inhalation
- Test door surface with back of hand before opening
- Shelter in place until fire has passed or forced to leave
- Stay connected with communication devices
- Call 911 if possible



Moving to 2nd Shelter if needed

- Be aware when current shelter is no longer viable (structural collapse & radiant heat biggest danger)



Options to consider:

- Move to another building or shed
- Shelter behind a large physical barrier (wall, large rocks..)
- Shelter in car
- Shelter in water (pool) but be wary of smoke inhalation risk
- Leave carefully and have full PPE (esp: thick-soled shoes)
- Wrap yourself in a wool blanket for extra protection
- Use caution: heat from burnt ground, low visibility, difficult breathing conditions

Trapped in Vehicle (1)

- Stay calm; stay together
- Park vehicle in open area clear of vegetation
- Park vehicle off the road, if possible
- Keep car lights & flashers on so others can find you
- Keep car running if possible
- Close all windows and turn on AC recirculation



Trapped in Vehicle (2)

- Lie on vehicle floor
 - reduce radiant heat
- Protect yourselves with N95 mask, goggles
- Cover yourselves with wool blanket or jacket
- Stay hydrated if possible

- Remain in vehicle until fire has passed



Trapped on Foot

- Stay calm; stay together
- Protect yourselves N95 mask, goggles, thick soled shoes, wool blanket or jacket
- Shelter in building or behind protective barrier
- Or find cleared level space free of combustibles—a depression or ditch is best



Who has the better attire?



Part III: Aftermath of Fire Going Through



House might be lost, and your cars may have burned up

Aftermath of Fire Going Through (2)

- Be wary of hazards
 - trees falling
 - smoke inhalation
 - toxic chemicals
 - downed powerlines
 - explosives (gas cans, propane, ammunition)



- Assess damage or injuries
- Determine if neighbors nearby & get in touch
- Evaluate potential evacuation routes
- Evaluate communications options for help
- Consider ways for signaling: "Need Help!"

Planning Ahead

- Consider:
 - CERT Training for emergency medical triage
 - Neighborhood agreement for meeting location
 - Assess whether your home is a viable shelter
 - Develop written Wildfire Plan (Evacuation / S.I.P.)
 - Familiarity with all possible evacuation routes



Final Thoughts



- Read Reference materials
- Share with your community
- AND now some thoughts from our guests

Our Guests

- CERT Auxilliary of Santa Cruz Co.
 - LizAnne Jensen
- CALFIRE Unit Chief, San Mateo-Santa Cruz (CZU)
 - Chief Nate Armstrong
- Felton Fire
 - Chief Robert Gray
- Los Altos Hills County Fire District
 - Denise Gluhan



Your Questions?

Setting the stage: preserving home water systems

See reference materials and backup slides that follow

Reference Materials

- “Sheltering Practices During BushFire” from the Australian government
- Prepared Not Scared brochure (available from FSCSCC)
- FireSafe Marin Evacuation Resources
 - <https://firesafemarin.org/prepare-yourself/evacuation-guide/#gsc.tab=0>
- Idaho Firewise Evac: If you get trapped
 - <https://idahofirewise.org/evacuation/if-you-get-trapped/>
- UCCE: What to do if Trapped
 - <https://ucanr.edu/sites/fire/Safety/Burnover/>
- Lindroth: Sheltering-in-Place During Wildfire – Is it a Viable Option?
- CERT for Santa Cruz County
 - <https://santacruzcountycert.org/>

Calling 911 – the 5 W's

■ Remember these questions:

– **Where, What, Who, When, Why?**

■ When calling 9-1-1 for assistance, these are questions the dispatcher will ask you.

WHERE?	Where are you? Where is the fire? -In a structure- the address or cross streets if you are in a car or outside
WHAT?	What happened? -Wildland fire and you are unable to leave and are sheltering-in-place
WHO?	Who's involved? Is anyone hurt? -Your name and your phone number
WHEN?	When did it happen? Is it going on right now?
WHY?	Follow-up questions

Emergency Radio Communications

1. Turn on radio and press down the Talk button for one second, then say “**Emergency**” three times
2. **Very important: Speak clearly and slowly. Be brief.**
 - State your name and call number (if you have one)
 - State your emergency (example: I am unable to evacuate. A wildfire is blocking our exit route.)
 - State your location (example: I am at 123 Smith Road in Bonny Doon)
 - State the number of people with you (example: I have three family members here with me)
 - State your request (We need help. Can someone contact the Sherrif’s Dept and CalFire and give them this information?)
3. Then release the talk button and listen for a response. Remember: Only one person can speak at a time.
4. If there is no response, repeat again as needed.