

Protect your home

Fires can occur at any time of year. Some simple steps will improve your home's resistance to fires of any kind.

The home itself

- ❖ Cover attic and sub-floor vents with noncombustible screening (mesh size no greater than 50 mm).
- ❖ Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home because it can catch fire from wind-blown sparks. If you are building a new home or re-roofing your existing house, use roof covering material with a 'Class A' fire-resistive rating.
- ❖ Limit the size and number of windows that face large areas of vegetation. The heat from a wildfire can ignite the furnishings inside your home through these windows.
- ❖ Install tempered glass or multi-layered glazed panels in exterior walls, glass doors and sky-lights. Or install solid exterior shutters.
- ❖ Install and maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- ❖ Have a fire extinguisher on each level of your home.

Outside your home

Create a zone of non-combustible material around your house that will slow down a fire and possibly direct it around your home. To do this, you must view your yard as a fuel source. Fire will only burn if fuel is present. Fuel can include your landscaping, woodpiles, decks, etc. To create your survivable space, take the following steps within 10 m of your home (15 m in heavily treed areas; 30 m if your home is on a hillside).

- ❖ Remove all dry grass, brush, leaves and dead or dying trees from within at least 30 m of your home.
- ❖ Plant native, fire-resistant vegetation whenever possible.
- ❖ Space trees and shrubs at least 3 m apart.
- ❖ Reduce the number of trees in heavily wooded areas.
- ❖ For trees taller than 5 m, prune lower branches within 2 m of the ground to keep ground fires from spreading into treetops. Shrubs planted under trees should be no more than 45 cm high.
- ❖ Remove dead branches overhanging your roof, and all branches within 3 m of chimneys.
- ❖ Enclose the underside of balconies and above-ground decks with fire-resistant or noncombustible materials.
- ❖ Cover chimneys serving fireplaces with noncombustible screening with a mesh size no greater than 50 mm.
- ❖ Store firewood at least 15 metres from any structure.
- ❖ Clearly mark emergency water sources and maintain easy access to them.
- ❖ Maintain an insulated emergency water supply within 300 metres of your home. Check with your local fire department to learn what standards you must meet.
- ❖ Mow your lawn regularly and dispose promptly of cuttings and debris.
- ❖ Clear your roof, gutters and eaves of debris.
- ❖ Do not connect wooden fencing directly to your home.
- ❖ Make sure that the street number of your house is clearly visible from the road.

Protect yourself

You can improve the chances of surviving a wildfire by taking precautions, but these measures do not guarantee your safety.

Become familiar with your community's wildfire management system. Every member of your family should know what to do if an evacuation notice is issued. Learn about disaster safety plans in your workplace and at your children's school and/or childcare centre.

Create a family disaster safety plan. Assemble a disaster safety kit. Together, identify escape routes from your home and neighbourhood. Choose an emergency meeting place for the family. Be prepared!

You'll find detailed family preparedness recommendations on ICLR's website (see http://www.iclr.org/programs/disaster_kit.htm)



Research, the foundation for action

The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR) is a world-class centre for multi-disciplinary disaster prevention research and education. Through research, ICLR is working to strengthen the foundation for effective action to achieve its mission to reduce the loss of life, injuries and property damage due to natural hazards.

Building disaster research capacity

ICLR is an independent, not-for-profit research institute founded by the Canadian insurance industry. It is affiliated with The University of Western Ontario. Institute research networks are building the capacity of the research community. ICLR staff and research associates are internationally known for their expertise in wind and seismic engineering, atmospheric science, risk perception, hydrology, economics, geography, health sciences and public policy.

Many losses are preventable

Worldwide, natural disasters killed more than 650,000 people during the 1990s, and caused more than C\$1 trillion in damage. Disaster damage payments by insurance companies, governments and international aid organizations have been doubling every five to seven years since the 1950s, an alarming international trend. Perhaps the greatest tragedy is that many disaster losses are preventable.

Community and individual safety

Nature's extreme events are remarkable forces. They can be relentless and unforgiving, but they do not need to cause disasters. Hazards deserve respect. They demand that individuals prepare, and that communities invest in resilience. Resilient communities and knowledgeable individuals can best prevent hazards from becoming disasters, but are often not doing so.



building resilient communities

Be prepared.
Disasters can strike at any time.

Visit www.ICLR.org
and learn how to protect your family
and home.

Toronto office

20 Richmond Street East, Suite 210
Toronto, Canada
M5C 2R9
tel: (416) 364-8677
fax: (416) 364-5889
info@iclr.org

London office

1389 Western Road
The University of Western Ontario
London, Canada
N6A 5B9
tel: (519) 661-3234
fax: (519) 661-4273

Wildfires



Be prepared!
Protect yourself
and your home.

Disaster prevention research saves lives.

Disaster prevention research protects property.

www.ICLR.org