

With the recent fires in Payne County and other areas of Oklahoma many people have been asking about how they can help the area fire departments, and help themselves. Here are some recommended tips.

1. **Burn Ban: Do not violate the burn ban**. There is a ban on outdoor burning. Do not burn trash, and do not burn any brush piles. Honor the statewide burn ban. Do not burn!
2. **Defend Your Home:** Read the information at the link below. Follow the instructions **to make your home more fire resistant.** Provide a space of at least 30’ around your house free of materials that burn. Combustible materials provide fuel for the fire. When these are closer than 30’ fire departments cannot “defend” your home from fire. This is called a **defensible space.**
   1. Wood piles and hay bales at least 30 feet from your home (100’ is best depending on the topography and the surrounding area)
   2. Clean gutters - remove leaves, pine needles, etc.
   3. Cut tree branches that overhang the roof
   4. To prevent sparks from entering your home through vents, cover exterior attic (soffit vents) and underfloor vents with wire screening no larger than 1/8-inch mesh. Other materials melt and allow sparks in.
   5. Use metal skirting on mobile homes. Vinyl skirting melts and fire moves under the structure. Metal skirting does not melt and can protect your home
   6. Keep grass cut short and remove highly flammable vegetation (like cedar trees)
3. When you are told to leave. **Leave immediately**. Do not remain and try to protect your property. It is too late. You hinder the fire department actions and you may become a victim.
4. **Evacuating Your Home:** Read the information in the attached link about how to **prepare to evacuate.** If it is necessary for you to leave follow the tips on how to prepare your home before you go.
   1. Connect hoses to all outside faucets.
   2. Close all doors and windows.
   3. Close all indoor window covering. Drapes, shades, and window blinds should be closed.
   4. Put a ladder up to your roof to aid firefighters in accessing your roof if needed.
   5. Turn off the propane tank.
   6. Park vehicles toward your evacuation route. In most cases that just means backing into your driveway so you can pull forward to leave quickly.
   7. Leave gates unlocked.
5. **Stay out of the fire area**. Emergency responders need all roads available for quick response. You are in the way and obstruct their ability to protect people and property when you enter the area. Many times there are not enough resources to put up road blocks and direct traffic. Do not add to the work load. Stay away.

<http://firewise.gvpi.net/Information/Who-is-this-for/Homeowners.aspx>

Thank you for helping us help the OSU Community by sharing this important information.