

Volusia County Fire Services Safety Gram



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WILDLAND STRUCTURE PROTECTION SAFETY

Structures exposed to wildland fire in the urban interface can and should be considered as another fuel type. Size-up and tactics should be based upon fuels, weather, and topography just as those criteria would be applied to a wildland fire.

1. Identify escape routes and safety zones and make them known to all firefighters.
2. **STAY MOBILE**
3. Wear all personal protective equipment (PPE), including fire shelter tent.
4. Back apparatus in for quick escape.
5. Keep egress route clear
 - a. Park extra equipment on roadway
 - b. Keep hoselines off driveway
6. Flag or mark entrance to long driveways to show that protection is in place (*very important* when structure cannot be seen from road).
 - a. Multiple ribbons/flagging at end of drive on street
 - b. Ribbon/flagging across drive entrance
 - c. Sign
 - d. Other pre-determined signal
7. Park in cleared or blackened area (watch for overhead hazards).
8. Have a protection line for crew and apparatus.
9. Watch for hazards (septic tanks, chemicals, above-ground fuel storage, and wetland)
10. Avoid long hose lays
11. Keep at least 100 gallons of water reserve in your apparatus tank.
12. Top off tank at every opportunity.
13. Draft from swimming pool and ponds.
14. **CONSERVE WATER**, avoid wetting down an area.
15. Apply water only if it controls fire spread or significantly reduces heating of structure protection.

The safety hazards that exist in a typical protection of structures from wildland fires assignment are significant. In addition to applying the **STANDARD FIREFIGHTING ORDERS** and avoiding the **WATCHOUT SITUATIONS**, good judgment and planning are extremely important because of the presence of homeowners and their families, the media, pets and livestock, traffic, and unfamiliar combustibles.

L. C. E. S. – Lookouts, Communication, Escape route, and Safety zones.

Common Denominators of Fire Behavior on Tragedy Fires

There are four major common denominators on fatal and near fatal fires. Such fires often occur:

1. On relatively small fires or deceptively quiet areas of large fires.
2. In relatively light fuels, such as grass, herbs, and light brush.
3. When there is an unexpected shift in wind direction, or in wind speed.
4. When fire responds to topographic conditions and runs uphill.

Standard Firefighting Orders

1. Keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts.
2. Know what your fire is doing at all times.
3. Base all actions on current and expected behavior of the fire.
4. Identify escape routes and safety zones, and make them known.
5. Post lookouts when there is possible danger.
6. Be alert. Keep calm. Think clearly. Act decisively.
7. Maintain prompt communications with your forces, your supervisor and adjoining forces.
8. Give clear instructions and insure they are understood.
9. Maintain control of your forces at all times.
10. Fight fire aggressively, having provided for safety first.