

# 53,563

**Number of wildfires**  
caused by humans in 2020.  
Number caused by lightning: 5,387.



**1 gallon per day for 3 days** Minimum amount of water needed for each household member when sheltering in place. Ideally, have enough for two weeks.

## WILDFIRES



**ANYONE WHO LIVES** in a drought-prone area is vulnerable. Even city-dwellers may need to protect themselves from smoke.

### PREPARE NOW

**Landscape with fire in mind.** Use stone walls and gravel as fire breaks. Consider shrubs such as sumac and cotoneaster and plants like coreopsis and French lavender, which are fire-resistant, says the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

**Rethink building materials.** Consider noncombustible siding materials, such as fiber cement, brick veneer, and stucco, the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety recommends. When reroofing, make sure the shingles are labeled Class A—the highest fire-resistance rating—by UL. Fire often spreads from home to home via fences and decks, the IBHS says. So if you have a wood or vinyl fence, replace the section next to your house—at least 5 feet—with metal. For decks, opt for a metal-joist substructure.

LEARN HOW TO



**Build a 'Go Bag'** Contents should include: **1.** Water and nonperishable, nutritious food. **2.** Phone charger, flashlight, and radio (battery or hand-crank). **3.** Change of clothes, sturdy shoes, personal items. **4.** IDs, personal docs, key contacts, maps, cash in small bills. **5.** First-aid kit and meds. **6.** Duct tape. For more info, including a complete supply list for sheltering in place, go to [ready.gov/kit](http://ready.gov/kit).

**Clear away combustibles.** Move flammable materials at least 5 feet from your home, decks, and overhangs. Move wood piles at least 30 feet away. Avoid outdoor furniture that can easily catch fire, such as wicker or hardwood seating. **Keep the yard clean.** Regularly remove fallen leaves, dead plants, and pine needles in gutters, under decking, and within 30 feet

of your home. Trim tree branches to at least 10 feet from your chimney and other trees, and remove branches over your roof. Use stone or gravel mulches, not organic ones. Keep your grass cut to no higher than 4 inches. **Buy an effective air purifier.** Check CR's August 2021 issue, which will include updated air purifier ratings, or go to [CR.org/airpurifiers0721](http://CR.org/airpurifiers0721).

**Practice packing and fleeing.** "Give yourself 30 minutes to leave," says David Ofwono, director of First on Compliance, an emergency preparedness consulting company based in California. "Sometimes a wildfire moves so fast, that's all the time people have." Have face masks on hand, ideally N95s. **Have an evacuation plan.** If time permits, close and lock windows and doors.



"Know your escape routes, your options, in advance. You don't want to have to figure that out at 2 in the morning as all hell is raining down on you. And never let your gas tank go below half a tank." **MacAdam Lojowsky, Redwood Valley, Calif., on fleeing 2017 North Bay Fire**

PHOTO, PREVIOUS SPREAD: COURTESY OF YVETTE BELTRAN-SOUTHWELL. PHOTO, THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF MACADAM LOJOWSKY