

Prepare for Wildfire Season



I don't know about you, but this time of year has me anxiously awaiting the warm days, green grass, blooming flowers, and budding trees of spring. Since late summer, Mother Nature has nourished these parched lands with plenty of moisture; I have to remind myself not to grumble about the rain and snow that continue to come down, because come this summer when it's hot and dry again, we will be wishing we had it!

Those late summer and early fall rains allowed a second growth of grass throughout the Flinthills, which resulted in significant regrowth and has left us with a high fire load going

into spring; each year, Butler County experiences uncontrolled wildfires that threaten homes. Country living is a beautiful thing, until a wildfire is "running" towards your home threatening your property.

If you live in the country, here are a few tips from the Kansas Forest Service for you to help prepare and protect your property from an uncontrolled fire:

- Weed around the property regularly, especially areas that a lawn mower is not appropriate for.
- Remove leaf litter and other debris that accumulates around buildings, under vegetation, and in other collection areas.
- All trees within a 105 ft. radius should be pruned to a height of three times the height of surrounding vegetation (usually 6 to 10 feet), but do not remove more than one third of the live crown.
- Propane tanks, gasoline, and wood piles should be stored 30 ft. from structures. Keep a 10 ft. clearance around propane tanks.
- Mow the lawn regularly to keep grasses shorter than 4 inches tall around the home.
- All exterior vents should be covered with a nonflammable wire mesh 1/8 inch or smaller
- Remove all dead vegetation for a 105 ft. radius. Especially prune any dead branches that overhang the roof or are within 15 feet of the chimney.
- If your property has no large year-round water source, consider working with neighbors or a home owner's association to install one.
- Maintain power line clearance. Have an arborist assist with existing trees that interfere with power lines. When planting new trees near power lines choose a species that has a mature height of less than 25 feet.
- Make sure your address is clearly visible from the road, especially in low visibility conditions.
- If you burn trash or use fire for vegetation management, consult local regulations and obtain proper training.
 - Controlled Burns must be reported to the appropriate authority. County contact and burn information can be found at: <https://www.bucoks.com/256/Fire-Service>
- Develop a home emergency preparedness plan that includes: Clearly posted emergency phone numbers, designated escape routes and meeting places, maintained fire extinguishers, and functioning smoke alarms.
- Teach children fire safety. Remember, children learn by example!

More detailed information can be found at:

https://www.kansasforests.org/fire_management/fire_docs/ReadySetGoGuide.pdf

Remember, preparedness is the key to prevention.

Take a look at your property and do what you can to help protect it from fires!