

# WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

## CHECKLIST FOR ART & MUSICAL INSTRUMENT COLLECTORS



The Western United States' long-standing drought, coupled with high temperatures and dry vegetation creates a perfect storm for wildfires. California is not the only region of the country prone to wildfires. There were 71,499 wildfires across the U.S. in 2017, destroying 10 million acres and 8,065 homes.\*

A wildfire can become dangerous quickly, leaving little time to act other than to evacuate. Well before conditions become critical, use the checklist below for tips on how to protect your valuable collections, home and yourself—before, during and after the event.

### BEFORE THE FIRE

- Contract with a professional fine art warehouse that can pack and store your valuable items
  - Identify those items that are most important to you and prioritize their removal in case there is limited time to evacuate.
  - Make sure your evacuation plan has a built-in trigger that occurs before local authorities give an evacuation order—that may close roads and prevent vehicles from reaching your home.
  - Seek training from professionals on moving and storing your artwork. Damage often occurs when collectors move art themselves, especially when under pressure.
- Remove anything that can burn outside your house
  - Clear away leaves, pine needles, debris and anything else that can burn from your lawn, fences, roof, gutters, decks, porches and patios
  - Remove anything within 50 feet of your home that could burn, such as picnic tables, lawn chairs, cushions, mats, potted plants, flammable decorations and woodpiles
  - Remove any dead trees and trim back any shrubs or branches that come within 10 feet of your house.
  - Rake away any mulch within 10 feet of your home
- Seal off any openings into your house
  - If embers float inside the house, it will burn from the inside out
  - If ordered to evacuate, make sure windows and doors are closed tightly
  - Temporarily seal shut any vents or other openings
- Place valuable papers inside a fireproof safe
  - Create password-protected digital copies
- If electrical lines go down, make sure you can still receive emergency alerts and evacuation orders
  - The NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) and Emergency Alert System (EAS) are national public warning systems that provides emergency alerts. Make sure you have a radio and batteries
  - Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) can be sent by state and local officials via texts that will vibrate your phone. To ensure your mobile device is WEA-capable, check with your service provider

## BEFORE THE FIRE, cont.

- Learn your community's evacuation plans and map out multiple routes to leave your home
  - Have a plan for pets and livestock
- Create an emergency supply kit
  - Recommended items include: water, food, flashlight, fire aid kit, whistle, cellphone, cash and fire extinguisher
  - Purchase N95 respirator masks that filter out particles in the air
- Make sure your garden hoses are long enough to reach any area of your home
  - Fill garbage cans, tubs, and large containers with water
- Review your property insurance policies to ensure your coverage limits will replace your structures

## DURING THE FIRE

- Listen to EAS, NWR, or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions
- Evacuate immediately if authorities tell you to do so
- If trapped, call 911, but be aware that emergency response could be delayed or impossible
  - Turn on lights to help rescuers find you
  - Use N95 respirator masks to keep harmful particles out of the air you are breathing
  - If you are not ordered to evacuate, but smoky conditions exist, stay inside in a safe location or go to a community building where smoke levels are lower

## AFTER THE FIRE

- Wait for authorities to tell you when is safe to return
  - Ascertain whether tap water is safe to drink.
  - Phone systems are often down following a disaster; use text messages or social media to reach out to family and friends; make calls only in emergencies
- Avoid hot ash, charred trees, smoldering debris and live embers
  - Be aware that the ground may contain heat pockets that can burn you or spark another fire
- Use fire-resistant materials to build, renovate, or make repairs
  - Wear a NIOSH certified-respirator dust mask and wet debris down to minimize breathing dust particles
- Document property damage with photographs
  - Conduct an inventory and contact your insurance broker for assistance



To learn how Fine Art Insurance and Musical Instrument Insurance can protect your collections from wildfires call: **800.424.8830**



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\*\*Wildland Fire Summary & Statistics: Annual Report 2017," National Interagency Coordination Center, 2018.

### RESOURCES:

"7 Ways Residents Can Reduce the Risk that their Homes Will Become Fuel for a Wildfire," National Fire Protection Assoc., 2018.  
"Facts + Statistics: Wildfires," Insurance Information Institute, 2018.  
Margaret Bussiere, "How to Protect Your Art Collection from Natural Disasters," Risk Strategies, June 14, 2018.  
"Wildfires," Ready: Department of Homeland Security, 2018.  
"Wildfire Safety," Red Cross, 2018.

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