

Wildfire Risk Reduction Tips

The Kansas Insurance Department stands ready to provide insurance assistance to those Kansans affected by the recent devastating wildfires across the state, according to Ken Selzer, CPA, Kansas Commissioner of Insurance.

“Our thoughts and prayers go out to those affected by property loss and injury,” Commissioner Selzer said. “Our Consumer Assistance Hotline, 800-432-2484, can help insurance policyholders who need questions answered or assistance in dealing with claims.”

The Kansas Insurance Department staff also encourages homeowners to review the following tips to reduce the risk of further home and property loss in the event of continued wildfire activity:

- Do a survey of the landscape surrounding your house. Move plants or trees that are too close to your dwelling or burn easily. Clear dead leaves or tree seedlings away from your roof, gutters, decks or fence lines.
- Evaluate openings around your house that could allow embers to get into your home to see if they can be temporarily sealed.
- Store away patio furniture, decorations or other flammable outdoor material.
- Remove landscaping mulch from near your house.
- If evacuation is ordered, shut all doors and windows tightly. Decide in advance what type of emergency kit your family would need, including first aid, blankets, personal hygiene items, prescriptions, cell phones and clothing. Turn off the gas to your house and hose it down if you have time.
- Keep communication equipment charged and in working order. Be sure your family members know how to contact each other.

Wildfire protection tips such as these are available in the newly issued “Wildland Fire Action Guide,” developed in a cooperative effort between the International Association of Fire Chiefs, USDA Forest Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fire Administration, Office of the Kansas Fire Marshal, Kansas Forest Service, and the Kansas State University Cooperative Research and Extension. The guide is available on the website of the Office of the State Fire Marshal at www.FireMarshal.ks.gov/wildfire.

“This comprehensive guide is aimed at providing homeowners the information they need to protect their families, homes and neighbors from the ravages of out-of-control grass fires,” said Doug Jorgensen, State Fire Marshal. “We join with the Kansas Insurance Department in sending our thoughts and prayers to citizens being affected by the fires in our state, and being thankful to all the firefighters who are working so hard and sacrificing so much to protect the lives and property of their fellow Kansans.”

“Preparation for this type of disaster can mean the difference between losing a house or saving it,” Commissioner Selzer said. “Kansans in potential wildfire areas need to be vigilant.”