

Wildfire Checklist

WILDFIRES have been prominent headlines following recent summers of record-breaking activity. Approximately 25% of the US is at medium to high risk of wildfires. Recent funding for forest management and new building codes for areas of urban/wildland interface will help address this challenge but may take years to be effective at large scale.

If you have assets located in areas of wildfire risk, you should have a developed wildland fire emergency response plan. The below checklist outlines actions to take in preparation of wildfire season, for nearby fires, and after a fire has passed.

Pre-season Planning (3 Months prior)

- Review and update your Emergency Action Plan for Wildfire
- Review with the Emergency Response Team or others that would respond to a wildfire event
- Create or maintain a defensible space around your property
- Check vegetation and debris around the building and other owned property (including yard storage).
 - Remove all combustible vegetation within 5 feet of buildings or equipment.
 - Landscape with plants that do not readily ignite. Do not plant shrubs under trees or against buildings.
 - Remove trees or prune limbs that overhang buildings.
- Regularly water foliage in the summer while keeping grass short
- Consider deploying or stocking long term fire retardants (these products can inert the fuel source until it is washed away)
- Consider upgrading building components to more fire resistive substances (Class A roof, ember and flame resistant vents, fire resistive doors, windows, and decks)
- Consider an agreement with a property restoration company that is capable of cleaning, repairing, and/or salvaging your buildings and equipment. Pre-arranging may enable faster recovery times as you could get to the front of the line for necessary equipment and support.

Approaching Wildfire

- Continuously monitor the fire's progress
- Follow your Emergency Action Plan
- Ensure fire protection is fully functional and in automatic mode
- Relocate trucks, stock, and supplies from the site
- Clean leaves from the gutters
- Remove all combustible vegetation within 5 ft of the buildings or equipment
- Appropriately store or relocate ignitable liquids
- Plan for shutdown of operations and utilities
- Remove critical electronics and personal property
- Back up computer servers
- Take pictures of the buildings and contents

Wildfire is Imminent

- Close the building (doors, windows, place noncombustible covers on air intakes and vents)
- Deploy short term fire retardants or outdoor sprinkler or watering systems
- Shut down HVAC systems and smoke evacuation systems
- Shut down combustible liquid and gas systems
- Place equipment in safe mode (expect loss of utilities)
- Double check that fire suppression systems are functional and in automatic
- Evacuate all personnel if not done already

After the Wildfire

- Secure the site
- Survey for damage
 - Be aware of compromised structural supports and hot coals or embers in piles
 - Be aware of live electrical wires, downed power lines, broken glass, and sharp metal
 - May be difficult to access site
 - Assess the buildings externally before entering
 - Inspect the walls, windows, roof, doors, yard, and out buildings
 - Check electrical panels and breakers. Do not operate if damaged. Call an electrician.
 - Take photos and/or videos of the damage
 - Inform fire department and insurance carriers of any impairments
- Inspect the fire protection systems and repair if necessary
 - Post fire watch in areas where protection is impaired
- Update management on condition of building and equipment
- Notify your Lockton Account and Claims team. Follow their reporting instructions
- Establish repair priorities focusing on building envelope and fire protection
- Ban smoking and follow appropriate hot work protocol
- Begin salvage process
 - Cover broken windows and torn roof coverings
 - Relocate undamaged stock, goods, and supplies to a safe area
 - Remove water
- Clean roof drains and remove roof debris
- Check electrical equipment before connecting or restarting equipment
- Document damages and repairs. Coordinate claims activity with Lockton's Claims Team
 - Keep receipts and invoices for recovery
 - Often a separate accounting code for recovery costs works best