

Apple Mountain Lake Wildfire Evacuation Guide

Evacuating To Safety



**Call 540-635-4128 before burning brush or yard waste.
Call 9-1-1 to report a wildfire or house fire.**

Wildfire

For many people, the words "wildfire" and "Virginia" might not seem to go together, but wildfire risk is a genuine concern. Each year, about 1,600 wildfires consume a total of 8,000-10,000 acres of forest and grassland in the state. During extreme drought related conditions these numbers may double. However fires don't need to be large to be devastating, for every 10 acres that burn in Virginia, a home or other structure is damaged or would have been had it not been for the response of the first responders with the forestry and fire departments.

A wildfire can ignite your home through radiation, convection, or firebrands. These three ignition sources need to be understood in order to make your home and the surrounding area less susceptible to ignition.

Radiation: A house can ignite when exposed to very high temperatures even if the flames do not come in direct contact with the structure. This is called radiation heat transfer. Ignition of your home by radiation is more likely when it is exposed to a very large fire within close range for a sustained period of time. By clearing large trees and heavy brush, and choosing building materials that can withstand high temperatures, your home is less likely to ignite by radiant heat transfer.

Convection: Ignition of a house by convective heat transfer requires the fire to come in direct contact with the structure. Even a very small flame can ignite a house if it comes in contact with the house for a long enough period of time. By clearing even small amounts of vegetation, choosing nonflammable siding and deck material, and building on a minimal slope, your home is much less likely to ignite by convective heat transfer.

Firebrands: Firebrands are pieces of burning materials that detach from a fire and are carried by the wind. Severe Wildland fires can produce heavy firebrand showers that can travel large distances (one mile or more). The chance of a firebrand igniting your home will depend on the size of the firebrand, and the materials, design and construction of your home. By choosing a fire rated roof and nonflammable siding and deck material, you can reduce the risk of your house igniting from firebrands.

Even with all of the mitigation efforts in place, the risk of a wildfire igniting your home is at historic levels.

What you can do

Take personal responsibility for your own safety by taking the following six steps:

1. Develop an Evacuation Plan

Complete the “My Evacuation Plan” found on page 11 of this guide. Your Evacuation Plan should be simple enough to be followed when under stress, detailed enough to cover key elements and understood by everyone in your household.

- **Identify Evacuation Routes.** There are two primary evacuation routes for Apple Mountain Lake:
 1. Black Twig Rd to Oregon Hollow
 2. McIntosh Rd to Route 79.

Be aware that the evacuation routes determined by authorities at the time of a wildfire will be dependent upon many factors including which way the wildfire is moving. Primary evacuation routes are included as a map on the back of this booklet.

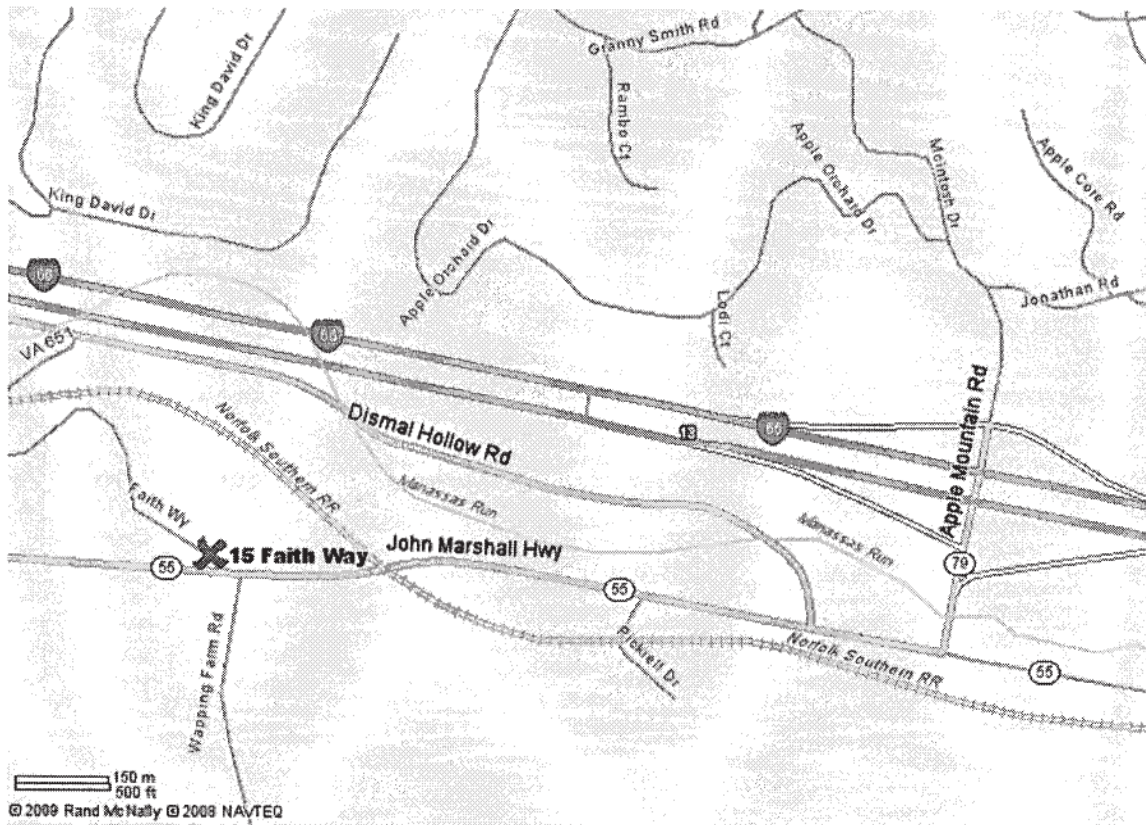
- **Designate Family Meeting Place.** If unable to reach home, a family meeting place will allow family members to meet and regroup. It should be someplace that is:
 - A temporary place to assemble before moving on to an evacuation center
 - Safely outside of the evacuation area
 - Doesn't interfere with emergency response activities
 - Easily traveled to by family members

Remember family members may be coming from different locations such as work, school, appointments, home or other locations.

- **Complete the Evacuation Tasks list.** Identify family member assigned to each task. To ready exterior and interior of house, know where your shut-off valves are for home and outbuildings.
 - ⇒ **Leave electricity on to power well pumps & porch lights.**
 - ⇒ Keep your car fuel tank at least ½ full at all times and be sure your vehicle is in good working order at all times.
- **Identify an Out of Area Emergency Contact.** During a major emergency or disaster, local telephone circuits may become overloaded whereas long distance circuits remain accessible. Identify a relative or friend who lives out of the area (out of the area code or even out of state) who can be used to check in with or pass messages back and forth to your immediate family members that may have gotten separated from you during the evacuation.
 - Cordless phones will not work in a power outage; always maintain an older style, corded telephone in your home.
 - Write down an email address for your out-of-area emergency contact and keep it with you as an alternative form of communication during the emergency.

- **Identify Evacuation Center Locations.** Evacuation Centers used for wildfires in Warren County are typically located in Front Royal. Locations will be determined by public safety officials and possibly the American Red Cross at the time of the evacuation. It will be based upon the location of the wildfire, evacuation routes used and numbers of evacuees anticipated. It will be announced on public radio – *tune in to WZRV The River 95.3 FM or WFTR 1450 AM.*

Faith Baptist Church located at 15 Faith Way off of John Marshall Hwy/Rte 55 has been identified as a temporary evacuation location for Apple Mountain Lake.



Contact person is Larry Andrews: 540-636-1127 or 540-622-3412

- **Are there any Special Considerations for Evacuations and Care needed for members of your family?**
 - Children and Infants
 - Elderly
 - Dependent Adults
 - Persons with Special Needs such as medical and mental special care
 - Pets

Don't rely on public safety agencies to evacuate you, your family or pets. Work with your neighbors to develop the assistance that you or they may need during an evacuation. Identify those living alone or those needing special assistance and plan today how you will evacuate them during an emergency.

2. Develop an Evacuation Kit

An evacuation kit should be readily available and visible at all times, updated frequently and located near the front door of your house or in your car.

Items to include in your Evacuation Kit include:

This list may also be good to help prepare an emergency kit to carry in your car if you travel long distances, especially during bad weather.



- Change of clothes and underwear
- Extra pair of glasses or contacts
- Any over the counter medications that you take somewhat regularly, i.e. antacids
- Several days' worth of prescription medication (along with copies of your prescription or a drug info insert)
- Small toiletries bag with a comb & brush and travel-size containers of soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, contact lens solution, other personal items.
- FYI sheet, if you have any special medical needs or allergies and an emergency contact number
- Contact list or directory of important personal & business phone numbers
- Small first aid kit
- Extra charger for your cell phone
- Small portable radio w/extra batteries
- Name, address & phone number of emergency shelter assigned
- Cash

Important papers (it's a good idea to store these in a fireproof safe or box in your house, even off site in a safe deposit box at a bank):

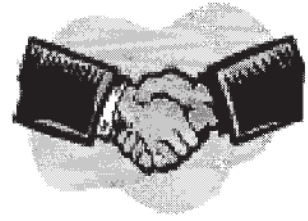
- Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks & bonds
- Passports, social security cards & immunization records
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card account numbers and company addresses
- Inventory of valuable household goods and important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

Include information and materials for your pets:

- Copy of pet vaccinations including vet's name & phone number
- Any medications your pet may be taking
- Identify boarding facilities, veterinarians or hotels outside of the affected areas that can accept your pets. If you have notice of an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.
- Pet-friendly shelters may be opened during an evacuation. This information will be available at shelter information points.
- Create a disaster readiness kit for your pet including food, water, first aid supplies, feeding dishes, leashes, carrier, blanket, etc.

Make sure all family members are aware of these preparations.

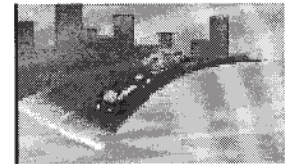
3. Develop a Neighborhood Network



You may not always be at home during times of wildfire. You need your neighbors to help protect your family, pets and house in your absence!

- ✓ Work with neighbors to identify:
 - People with special needs
 - People who need transportation to the evacuation center
- ✓ Work with neighbors to coordinate the evacuation of pets.
- ✓ Work with neighbors to identify utilities that may require shutting down in your absence.
- ✓ Work with neighbors to identify those protective actions that are required around your home when wildfire approaches.
- ✓ Work with neighbors to develop a neighborhood communication plan, which includes a telephone notification tree to notify others in case of emergency or evacuation.

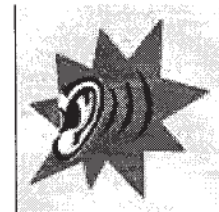
4. Practice your Evacuation Plan



- ✓ Quiz your children periodically so they remember what to do in case of wildfire / emergency.
- ✓ Conduct regular fire and emergency drills.
- ✓ Become familiar with evacuation routes so you know the emergency travel routes and road conditions.
- ✓ Maintain your evacuation kit with fresh batteries, food, water and important family documents.
- ✓ Be sure that all visitors and guests know and understand your evacuation plan and evacuation routes.

Practice, practice and practice. Repetition breeds the automatic response you will need when having to act under stress during emergencies.

5. Stay Informed



- ✓ Stay Informed on current weather and emergency conditions.
 - Tune in to WZRV The River 95.3 FM or WFTR 1450 AM.
 - Call the Apple Mountain Lake Hotline at 540.635.8946 for recorded information.
 - Virginia Department of Forestry weather info webpage:
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/weather.shtml>
 - National Weather Service Sterling VA. Telephone: (703) 260-0107 - follow the prompts.
Web Link: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>

6. When a Wildfire Threatens/Approaches

If you see a wildfire, call 9-1-1. Don't assume that someone else has already called. Describe the location of the fire, speak slowly and clearly, and answer any questions asked by the dispatcher.



- ⇒ Locate all family members and pets to prepare for evacuation.
- ⇒ Keep in mind that wildfires in mountainous areas may spread quickly.
- ⇒ Tune in to WZRV The River 95.3 FM or WFTR 1450 AM to get evacuation orders and updates on current emergency plans and preparations.

BEFORE THE FIRE APPROACHES YOUR HOUSE

- Park vehicles facing out with windows rolled up and keys in the ignition.** Disconnect any automatic garage door openers so that doors can still be opened by hand if the power goes out. Close all garage doors.
- Place your evacuation kit and important valuables in your vehicle.** Place valuable papers, mementoes and anything "you can't live without" inside the car in the garage, ready for quick departure. Any pets still with you should also be put in the car right before leaving.
- Shut Off Gas.** Shutoff any natural gas, propane, or fuel oil supplies at the source.
- Close outside** attic, eaves and basement vents, windows, doors, pet doors, etc.
- Remove any combustible items** from around the house, including woodpiles, lawn furniture, barbecue grills, tarp coverings, newspapers or doormats, etc. Move them outside of your defensible space.
- Place a garden hose and buckets full of water around your house.** Connect garden hoses. Fill any pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, tubs or other large containers with water. Please do not leave any sprinklers on when you leave your residence; this reduces the available water to fight the fire. If you have gas-powered pumps for water make sure they are fueled and ready.
- Place aluminum ground ladders** outside your house for firefighting use. Assemble firefighting tools near the house, including: shovel, metal rake, hoe, etc.
- Close inside doors in the house** to prevent draft. Open the damper on your fireplace, but close the fireplace screen. Remove flammable drapes and curtains. Close all shutters, metal blinds or heavy non-combustible window coverings to reduce radiant heat.
- Leave electricity on.** Turn on outside lights and leave a light on in every room to make the house more visible in heavy smoke and darkness. Turn off heating and air conditioning.

PREPARING TO LEAVE

- Don't Lock Up.** Leave doors and windows closed but unlocked. It may be necessary for firefighters to gain quick entry into your home to fight fire. The entire area will be isolated and patrolled by sheriff's deputies or police.
- Cover up** by wearing 100% cotton long pants, long sleeved shirt, boots (leather preferred), goggles, hat and bandana for your face.
- Notify** your out of area contact of your intended evacuation destination.
- Leave a note** attached to your front door for neighbors and public safety officials advising of your evacuation destination and telephone number if available.

The Evacuation Process



Evacuate when wildfire approaches, you feel threatened, or directed by public safety officials. Check with local radio and television stations for evacuation instructions and information. Once the evacuation order is given, please follow all directives from fire and law enforcement personnel. Evacuate your pets and all family members who are not essential to preparing the home. Anyone with medical or physical limitations and the young and the elderly should be evacuated immediately.

Officials will determine the areas to be evacuated and the routes to use depending upon the fire's location, fire behavior, wind, terrain, etc.

- ⇒ **Evacuate immediately if told to do so!**
- ⇒ **Evacuate when you become aware of an approaching wildfire.**
- ⇒ **Evacuate if you feel threatened.**
- ⇒ **Evacuate before it becomes too late!**

- Law enforcement agencies are typically responsible for enforcing an evacuation order. Follow their directions promptly and exactly!
- You will be advised of potential evacuations as early as possible. You must take the initiative to stay informed and aware.
- Listen to your radio/TV and for announcements from law enforcement and emergency personnel.
- You may be directed to a temporary assembly area off the mountain to await transfer to an evacuation center.
- When heavy smoke reduces visibility, movement may be restricted only to escorted convoys.
- Always drive cautiously!
- Beware of responding emergency vehicles at all times and be prepared to **yield the right of way** ---- **IMMEDIATELY** to the emergency vehicle.

If You Become Trapped – Stay Calm!

Survival in a Vehicle:

- This is dangerous and should only be done in an emergency, but you can survive the firestorm if you stay in your car. It is much less dangerous than trying to run from a fire on foot.
- Roll up windows and close air vents. Drive slowly with headlights on. Watch for other vehicles and pedestrians. Do not drive through heavy smoke.
- If you have to stop, park away from the heaviest trees and brush. Turn headlights on and ignition off. Keep windows rolled up and air vents closed.
- Get on the floor and cover up with a wool or 100% cotton blanket or coat.
- Stay in the vehicle until the main fire passes. **Do not run!**
- Air currents may rock the car.
- Some smoke and sparks may enter the vehicle.
- Temperature inside will increase.
- Metal gas tanks rarely explode.
- Engine may not restart.
- Use your cell phone to call 9-1-1 and notify officials of your situation and location.

While on foot:

- The best temporary shelter is in an area with little to no flammable materials such as dried leaves or branches. On a steep mountainside, the backside is safer. Avoid canyons, natural "chimneys" and saddles.
- If a road is nearby, lie face down along the road cut or in the ditch on the uphill side. Cover yourself with anything that will shield you from the fire.
- Seek a depression without underbrush, leaves, or thick weeds and then lie face down in the depression and cover yourself with NATURAL FIBER (cotton, wool) jackets, blankets, etc. Stay down until after the fire passes!
- Cover mouth and nose and cover up your body with NATURAL FIBER clothing or a blanket.
- Use your cell phone to call 9-1-1 and notify officials of your situation and location.

While at home:

- Keep your family together.
- Call 9-1-1 to notify officials of your situation and location.
- Fill sinks and tubs with cold water.
- Keep doors and windows closed, but unlocked.
- Stay inside your house.
- Stay away from outside walls and windows.
- If your house catches fire, move to the far end of the house and close windows and inside doors to restrict the spread of the fire. When it is safe to do so, exit your house and move to a "blackened" area of your property or neighborhood that has already burned. It is safer to be in an area that has already burned than an area not yet burned.

It will get hot in the house, but this is much safer than being outside and exposed to flames and dangerous fire gases.

After the fire passes:

- Check your family and neighbors.
- Check roof and exterior of house for fire.
- Check under decks and inside attic for fire.
- Check your yard for burning trees, woodpiles (between pieces of firewood), etc.
- Extinguish embers and sparks. The water you put into your pool or hot tub and other containers will come in handy now. If the power is out, try connecting a hose to the outlet on your water heater.
- Continue to check for fires, embers and sparks for at least 12 to 24 hours after the fire has passed.

Returning Home



Officials will determine when it is safe for you to return to your home. This will be done as soon as possible with primary consideration given to safety and accessibility.

Prior to re-entry into the community, utilities will need to be repaired and in service.

These things take time. **BE PATIENT.**

When you do return home:

- Be alert for downed power lines and other hazards
- Make sure you have running water.
- Make sure your drains are draining and toilets are flushing to ensure that your septic system is working.
- Check propane tanks, regulators, and lines before turning gas on.
- Check your residence carefully for hidden embers or smoldering fires.
- Contact your insurance company if you have suffered loss or damage.