



WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

A GUIDE FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

Cotton Global Disaster Solutions understands that any interruption of business continuity as a result of a loss can magnify the impact of any devastating event beyond the initial damage. While it's impossible to completely avoid being affected by natural hazards such as wildfires, making comprehensive preparations now can help reduce the threat of a wildfire and expedite your business' recovery.

To assist your teams as they prepare for the unexpected, Cotton's wildfire recovery experts have prepared the following checklist. If you have any questions or would like to schedule a consultation, contact our 24-hour hotline and a representative will respond immediately - **877.900.8030**.

PRE-SEASON PLANNING

Perform a Structure and Wildland Fire Hazard Assessment to evaluate your facilities' potential to be ignited by an approaching wildland fire.

Create a wildfire emergency plan that incorporates:

- An internal fire team to support first responders.
- Analysis of business resiliency to fire losses.
- Continuity of business plan to ensure sustained operations during and after a loss.

Develop a Vegetation Management Plan to identify important variables that might influence a fire such as topography, building location, potential fuel treatments, and environmental concerns.

Identify your Defensible Space – the area between a building and an approaching wildfire where plants and trees can be managed to reduce the wildfire threat.

Understand your Fire Hazard Severity Zone – the combination of landscape and fire history in the region – when approaching new construction projects and building materials.

Institute an evacuation plan for employees, contractors, and guests with an identified gathering location.



PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Maintain your open Defensible Space throughout the season to inhibit the spread of potential wildfires.

Manage the accumulation of combustible debris in all outdoor spaces and limit landscaping materials to those that are noncombustible.

Limit yard storage to non-combustible material and ensure it is located at least 100 ft. from your facilities.

Implement duct-type smoke detectors where possible in all air intakes.

Ensure exterior building surfaces are protected by:

- Replacing combustible features, such as wall cladding and glazing, with noncombustible material.
- Building new exteriors with ignition-resistant materials.
- Protecting possible ignition sources with coverings or fire-resistant coatings where replacement is impossible.

Support emergency fire services by maintaining proper site entrances, clearly identifying water sources, and maintaining access to water sources for emergency vehicles.

IMPENDING WILDFIRE

Activate your wildfire plan and notify your designated fire team.

Implement data and record backups while moving essential material and original copies to a safe, offsite location.

Shut down or close off building air intakes to protect from smoke and windblown embers.

Seal gaps and building openings or implement self-closing mechanisms where permanent blockage is impossible or unsafe to do so.

Move any remaining yard storage inside or further away from the facility when not possible to relocate.

Relocate valuable assets, equipment, or inventory offsite but in an accessible location in case they are needed for recovery.

Power down all unnecessary utilities except for essential fire protection infrastructure.

Cease operations in a calculated manner to avoid danger without compromising machinery, inventory, or revenue.

Continue monitoring local and regional news in addition to government websites to stay alert for potential wildfire activity and aware of local weather conditions which might affect the spread of the fire.

Prepare alternative means of communication such as battery-powered radios, satellite phones, and cellular phones with backup power in case of outages.



DURING A WILDFIRE

If you, or one of your team members, personally witness the development of a wildfire, immediately report your findings to all relevant local authorities.

Update team members and stakeholders as often as possible regarding property safety or emergency communications.

Continue monitoring local news and government authorities for developments.

Adhere to the recommendations of your local authorities when considering evacuation.

AFTER A WILDFIRE

Do not return to the property until you have received confirmation from authorities that it is safe to do so.

Do not attempt to enter any structurally damaged facilities.

Always assume any downed electrical wires are live and pose a threat of electrocution.

Avoid any smoldering debris, charred foliage, hot embers, or potential hot spots on the ground that pose a risk of burning.

Remove soot from the air intakes of any essential equipment that needs to be restarted in order to prevent it from being ingested by the building or machine engines.

Conduct thorough documentation of all damages using photo, video, and receipt cataloging, and reach out to your insurance company immediately for assistance.

Secure your restoration partner as urgently as possible in the case of severe damage.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

[*Wildfire Information Sheet*](#)

[*National Fire Protection Association*](#)

[*Business Continuity Planning Checklist*](#)

[*Build an Emergency Kit*](#)

[*Fire & Smoke Damage Restoration Solutions*](#)