

## Help protect your business from wildfires

The snow is gone, giving way to a new growing season. However, that melted snow also reveals dried vegetation and plenty of fuel for possible wildfires. Each year wildfires burn millions of acres, affecting hundreds of homes and businesses.

As many of the businesses in the horticulture industry are in areas prone to wildfires, we've come up with some suggestions to help you limit the damage before, during, and after a wildfire.

### Before a wildfire

You might think you're at the mercy of a wildfire. However, there are steps you can take to minimize damage. Be sure to:

- **Look low:** Move anything stored outside that's likely to burn at least 50 feet away from buildings or structures.
- **Look high:** Clear roofs and gutters of leaves, tree limbs, pine needles, or other debris that could catch fire.
- **Stock up:** Have emergency supplies stocked and ready to go. That includes flashlights, battery-powered TVs and radios, and extra batteries. Don't forget about first-aid kits, water, and non-perishable food.
- **Plan ahead:** Develop an emergency response plan specifically designed to handle a wildfire at your business.
- **Practice the plan:** Test your emergency plan annually so you and your employees understand how it works. This will also help you identify anything that needs to change.

When your plan is ready, share it with local emergency responders and community leaders to make sure everyone's efforts are coordinated. It's also a good idea to make sure your address is marked clearly on driveway entrances and buildings.

### During a wildfire

If a wildfire does strike, safety is key. Be prepared to evacuate quickly. And if there's time, there are some things you can do that might minimize damage:

- **Slow the flames:** Use hoses or sprinklers to wet roofs, walls, and nearby landscaping.
- **Pull the plug:** Disconnect equipment from power sources.
- **Turn the valves:** Shut off any sources of natural or propane gas. Shut off any pilot lights.
- **Shift what's inside:** Close the window coverings. Move any supplies, inventory, or equipment that can easily burn away from outer walls to the center of the building.

### After a wildfire

If buildings are damaged in a wildfire, keep this in mind:

- **Wait until it's safe:** Don't enter the building(s) or grounds until emergency crews clear the area.
- **Watch your step:** Stay clear of any downed electrical lines.
- **Look for problems:** Once you've been told it's safe to go inside, check all areas of your building for any signs of fire damage.

At Hortica, we're here to help you prepare for wildfires and other disasters that could threaten your business. It's what we do. [Contact us today](#) .

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