

WILDFIRE & PALA

KNOW THE RISKS & HOW TO PROTECT YOU & YOUR FAMILY

Pala completed a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment in 2019, which identified elevated wildfires as one of four high-risk exposures resulting from climate change.

WILDFIRES are considered a high-risk exposure for the Pala tribe.

Pala is currently located in a fire hazard severity zone.





7 Ways Residents Can Reduce the Risk that their Homes & Property Will Become Fuel for a Wildfire

- #1
Clear

Clear off pine needles, dead leaves & anything that can burn from your rooflines, gutters, decks, porches, patios & along fence lines. Falling embers will have nothing to burn.
- #2
Store Away

Store away furniture cushions, rattan mats, potted plants & other decorations from decks, porches & patios. These items catch embers and help ignite your home if you leave them outside.
- #3
Screen & Seal

Wind-borne embers can get into homes easily through vents & other openings and burn the home from the inside out. Walk around your house to see what openings you can screen or temporarily seal up.
- #4
Rake

Embers landing in mulch that touches your house, deck or fence is a big fire hazard. Rake out any landscaping mulch to at least five feet away.
- #5
Trim

Trim back any shrubs or tree branches that come closer than 5 feet to the house and attachments, and any overhanging branches.
- #6
Remove

Walk around your house and remove anything within 30 feet that could burn, such as woodpiles, spare lumber, vehicles and boats – anything that can act as a large fuel source.
- #7
Close

If ordered to evacuate, make sure all windows & doors are closed tightly, and seal up any pet doors. Many homes are destroyed by embers entering these openings and burning the house from the inside out.



NFPA has many more tips and safety recommendations on its websites, including www.firewise.org.

Until recently, large, high intensity fires occurred regularly. As human urbanization increased in the area, human-caused ignitions have increased dramatically. There were 38 fires from 1920 – 2012 that affected Pala. Recent fires have burned significant portions of Pala’s lands and have forced evacuations at the Pala Casino Spa and Resort.

Climate factors including Southern California’s uniquely intense Santa Ana winds, increasing temperature, and more severe drought conditions (resulting in drier autumns and more dead vegetation fuel) are increasing the wildfire risk at Pala. Wildfires are known to trigger secondary exposures such as worsened air quality (fine particulate matter), water insecurity, and vector changes (e.g. ticks).

WHAT IS PALA DOING TO ADAPT AND PREPARE?

Pala completed an Adaptation Plan with a full list of strategies to help safeguard the health and wellbeing of the Pala community. Below are a few examples of ways we plan to address wildfire threats.

- Develop an emergency, disaster response and health management plan to anticipate and prepare public services and evacuation plans for exposure risks
- Provide early, real-time warnings and clear emergency notifications before and during exposure event
- Establish or update adaptive fire management plans, including periodic forest assessments and traditional forest management practices to prevent high intensity wildfires (e.g. prescribed burning, introduction of resilient vegetation), and formalization of chain of command roles.

TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE DURING WILDFIRES

- [Create and maintain 100 feet of defensible space around your home](#)
- [Create your own emergency supply kit](#)
- Check on elders and other vulnerable neighbors
- Don’t forget your pets!
- Take advantage of medical and emotional care services
- Engage in healthy coping behaviors and seek comfort in community events following a weather-related disaster
- [Set up a family Evacuation Plan](#)
- [Follow Pala Environmental Department on Facebook for climate updates and information](#)
- [Sign up for San Diego County’s Alert System](#)

PALA’S HIGH- RISK HEALTH IMPACTS

Did you know that wildfires can harm our physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural health and wellbeing? Below are health impacts considered high or medium risk for residents of Pala.

- Wildfire-related injury and death
- Illness due to inability to access critical health services (from damage to roads, power, telecommunications, hospitals)
- Carbon monoxide poisoning (e.g. from generators during a power outage)
- Mental health impacts including post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety and grief
- Short or long-term relocation
- Loss of sacred or historical sites
- Lost work, school, or business days
- Decrease in fitness activity level
- Disruptions of community functions
- Respiratory and cardiovascular illness and Valley Fever
- Worsened allergies
- Drinking water supply interruption
- Illness and death caused by Lyme, West Nile Virus, and Zika

“HISTORICALLY MANY WILDFIRES HAVE AFFECTED THE RESERVATION AND THE REGION. THE POOMACHA FIRE BURNED 17% OF THE TOTAL RESERVATION.”

-Pala Hazard Mitigation Plan