



Red Flag Alert



The Red Flag Alert Program is designed to provide a highly visible reminder on days when strong winds, high temperatures, and low humidity increase the threat of wildfire. A Red Flag Warning is a forecast warning issued by the United States National Weather Service to indicate the potential danger of severe fire weather and a relatively increased possibility of fire occurring somewhere in the area. After drought conditions, when humidity is very low, fuels are dry, and especially when high or erratic winds are a factor, the Red Flag Warning becomes a critical notification for residents living in that area.

To the public, a Red Flag Warning means **heightened fire danger**. Wildfires are a year-round reality. Residents must prepare well in advance for dry, hot, windy days when wildfires are most likely to occur. Strong winds can carry embers (burning pieces of vegetation or other flammable material) up to a mile ahead of an actual fire. Flying embers are the leading cause of structural damage and home loss in a wildfire. Consider something other than wood for fencing or landscaping materials near your home. The goal is to eliminate or reduce the progression of wildfire spreading to your home. A regular maintenance regime helps minimize the amount of last minute work you need to do to your structure when a wildfire threatens. Days in advance work on the included list “Preparing a House for Wildland Fire Season”. These measures will help improve your structural defense and defensible space around your home.

In your home, have quick availability to your important documents (a set of house plans are great to include), computer backups, photographs, artwork, family recipes and medications (don’t forget your pets). A DVD home inventory or photos of the contents of your home could prove to be most helpful.

Prepare an Emergency Supply Kit and keep it in your car (do not store food items here as that may attract some of our wildlife). Your kit should contain enough supplies and belongings for every member of your household for at least 3 days. Refer to www.wildlandfireRSG.org or www.ready.gov for additional suggestions.

So, when you see the Red Flag posted at our Ridgewood entrance, consider removing combustible materials from outside. These may include patio furniture, cushions, toys and door mats/rugs; anything flammable. Update your emergency Supply Kit if necessary. Remember, the Red Flag means the fire danger is usually in the high to extreme category and conditions are ideal for wildland fire combustion with rapid spread. **The reality is that there will never be enough firefighters, engines, or trucks to defend every home in a major wildfire. It’s up to you to take responsibility for protecting your family, your home, and your community.**