

DON'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN – TAKE THESE EASY STEPS NOW TO STAY PREPARED FOR WILDFIRE!

Dear RHHA Neighbors,

November is already here, which can be one of the worst fire months of the year. Eight of California's ten deadliest fires of all time have occurred in October or November at the end of the dry season (including the Camp and Kincade Fires). Right now, grasses are exceedingly dry, humidity levels low, and no heavy rains are in the immediate forecast. This is an important time to stay vigilant and be prepared for wildfire and evacuation. Everyone in RHHA can still take these easy steps to get ready for wildfire:

1. Rake the leaves and cut the grasses around your house, put them into trash bags and dispose of them.
2. Watch where leaves and debris collect around your house perimeter – that's the same place where hot ashes and embers are likely to fall and catch fire. Clear these "collection" locations around your house (rake and dispose).
3. Have your roof gutters cleaned. This can be a DIY project or you can hire someone locally to do this work. Check online (Nextdoor Rivas) or ask your neighbors for referrals of vendors who do this type of work. This is an extremely important, inexpensive part of fire preparedness, as many fires start when an ember connects with leaves and debris that have collected in the gutters.
4. Start with just 2 hands and 5 feet! Focus on clearing a five-foot perimeter around your house and remove all bark, brush, leaves, weeds, grass and plants in this "zone". Creating this simple safety zone perimeter can save your home in the event of wildfire. Statistics show that at least 90% of all wildland structure fires occur within this "Home Ignition Zone" (HIZ).
5. Remove any flammable items or debris stacked up against, under or near your house, including firewood, pallets, lumber, wooden ladders, newspapers, toys, flammable patio furniture/umbrellas, plastic trash cans, etc. Safely store these items or dispose of them.
6. Remove, or hire a vendor to remove, any limbs of trees that are hanging low or touching the ground in your yard or that are hanging over your roof, as this creates ladder fuels for fire to climb.
7. Be prepared and ready to evacuate at the first evacuation advisory notification or when you see or learn about fire nearing the Rivas. The longer you wait to leave your home, the more jammed Soda Bay Road and the nearest highways will become, so "DON'T WAIT – EVACUATE!" Take your family members, pets, important documents, medicines, prescription glasses, credit cards/cash and personal memorabilia such as photos. Keep your car filled with gas and car keys handy at all times in anticipation of possible evacuation. Know how to manually open your garage door in the event of power failure. Pack a "to-go bag" with clothes and sundries. Have an evacuation and family communications plan prepared and exit routes identified before fire hits. During this pandemic it is more important than ever to identify where you will take shelter. You probably only want to utilize public shelters as a last resort to prevent unintentional COVID exposure. Identify friends, relatives, or other locations where you can safely shelter.
8. Provide your updated emergency contact information and e-mail address to the RHHA office.

To help you be ready and set for wildfire, the RHHA is initiating a new e-mail emergency preparedness program starting this week, which will include more in-depth information and resources for fire safety and mitigation that you will find useful year-round. Together, we can all be Firewise!

Board of Directors, Riviera Heights Homeowner's Association