

FACT SHEET

ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION FOR THE
BERKELEY CAMPUS

No. 20

Fire Safety for Animal Behavior Field Stations

Reduce Fire Hazards

- Store gasoline (as well as paints, solvents, and other flammable liquids) in an approved safety container or approved flammable cabinet.
- Keep hay, straw, shavings, scrap wood, and other combustible materials away from the structures.
- Clean roof surfaces and gutters regularly.
- Keep trees and shrubs pruned.
- Maintain a fuel break around all structures. Keep weeds “knocked down” around all permanent as well as temporary buildings.
- Post No Smoking signs where appropriate.
- Make sure that outdoor equipment has effective spark arrestors. (It’s better to use gasoline-powered equipment in the morning when humidity is high and temperatures are low.)

Be Prepared—Have a Plan

- Have tools on hand at your facility. These may include a preconnected garden hose with a spray nozzle, shovels for throwing dirt, rakes for clearing vegetation, and a battery-operated radio to monitor news reports and emergency evacuation broadcasts.
- Have an evacuation kit for you and your animals. Include first-aid items for staff and animals; sheets and blankets; cages; and anything else necessary for people and animal movement, handling, and care for the first 24 hours.
- Have appropriate attire on hand in the event of an emergency evacuation. Leather gloves, slip-resistant shoes, cotton bandannas for face protection, and goggles for eye protection are suggested.
- Develop a “Fire Safety Evacuation Plan” and post it in a clearly visible spot. Make sure that all who visit, work, or “live” at the site understand the plan. The plan may include different types of evacuation, from a two-hour or longer notice to evacuate to an immediate evacuation. Ask yourself, “How long will it take to clear the site and what do we need to do it?”
- Have regular meetings to discuss the plan and practice if possible. Try tabletop exercises. Remind people to carry their employee identification in case of an emergency.



- Know the emergency number for your site. Call it if you see a fire or you suspect one is approaching your site. Also call to notify emergency responders of your location during a fire.
- Be able to describe your site's location clearly. Remember to give closest crossroads and mile markers as well as directional location (north, south, east, or west).

When Fire Comes Your Way

Your personal safety and that of the people working with you must be your first concern.

- Try to remain calm and alert; think clearly, and act decisively.
- Pay attention to weather conditions and fire behavior. Watch for a sudden change in wind direction or speed; a dramatic change in air temperature or humidity; or smoke, ash, or burning embers dropping around you.
- Call the emergency number and give the person on the other end as much information as possible.
- Prepare for your evacuation. If possible, post a lookout for possible dangers, identify your escape routes and safety areas, and point your vehicles in the direction of your first escape route with the doors unlocked and the keys in the ignition.
- Maintain good communications with the people you work with; give clear instructions and make sure people understand their roles. (This is where practice makes perfect.)
- Cooperate with firefighters and law enforcement officers. You and your staff's safety is their number one concern.

If You're Caught in the Open

- **If you're caught out in the open** when the fire hits, the best temporary shelter is where the vegetation is sparse (well-grazed pastures, open arenas, road cuts and banks, large boulders). Look for a depression in the ground and clear as much vegetation and flammable "ground litter" as you can. Then lie face down in the depression and cover yourself with anything that will shield you from the heat.
- **If caught in a vehicle**, move it to bare ground or a sparsely vegetated area, close all windows and doors, lie on the floor, and cover yourself with a jacket or blanket. Keep calm, stay in the vehicle, and let the fire pass.
- **If caught without shelter on a road**, lie face down along the road cut or the ditch on the uphill side (less fuel and less convection heat). Cover yourself with anything that will shield you from the heat of the fire.
- **Avoid natural chimneys.** A natural chimney is a narrow, steep canyon that concentrates heat and updraft. Temperatures can exceed several thousand degrees Fahrenheit during a fire. Precious oxygen is quickly used by the advancing fire.
- **Avoid saddles.** Topographic saddles are wide natural paths for fire, winds, and vegetation; fires tend to be drawn up and over these depressions with great speed and intensity.

Never...

Never try to outrun the head of a fast-moving fire! Try to get to the flanks or into a burned area.

BE PREPARED, BE ALERT, AND BE SAFE. YOUR SAFETY COMES FIRST.