



## Safety Tips to Prevent Brush, Grass, and Forest Fires

Brush and grass fires can sometimes start from natural causes, like lightning. However, these types of fires can often be prevented by following a few simple safety rules.

### General Prevention

Place cigarette butts in metal containers. Do not throw them on the ground or into vegetation.

Leave fireworks to the professionals. Do not use consumer fireworks.

Follow the recommendations at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) to make your home and landscaping more resistant to fire, specifically "How to Have a Firewise Home."

Reduce the risk from sparks by being sure nothing is dragging from your vehicle keeping tires properly inflated, and being careful when using lawn mowers or other equipment. Get more information at [www.preventwildfireca.org/OneLessSpark](http://www.preventwildfireca.org/OneLessSpark)

Don't let a target shooting hobby start a wildfire. Avoid steel bullets outside as they can spark when they hit rocks or other hard objects. Observe all laws and restrictions about where, when and what to shoot.

### Outdoor Burning



Be aware of, and comply with, any local ordinances or permit requirements pertaining to outdoor or open air burning including:

- Campfires
- Brush fires

- Fire pits
  - Chimineas
  - Outdoor fireplaces
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- You are not permitted to do outdoor burning during a fire ban. Please visit <http://www.ramara.ca/index.php/component/content/article?id=144> to determine whether or not a fire ban is in place before you burn.
  - Closely attend all outdoor fires. Be sure to put out the fire completely before leaving.
  - Avoid burning on windy, dry days.
  - When conditions are windy or dry, it is too easy for open burning to spread out of control.
  - Do not use gasoline or other flammable or combustible liquids to burn brush, trash, or other waste.

### Grass Fires



A grass fire differs from other fires by its extensive size, the speed at which it can spread out from its original source, its potential to change direction unexpectedly and its ability to jump gaps such as roads, rivers and fire breaks. To prevent dangerous grass fires, assess your property to determine its risk. Tall trees, wild grass, shrubs, and any other combustible materials can all contribute to spreading a fire. During drought or extended lengths of dry weather, this vegetation can become perfect fuel for a fire driven by strong winds. Some simple planning will greatly reduce the threat to your home, property and community.

- Do not attempt a controlled burn on your land without contacting the local fire department to check on conditions and precautions.
- Avoid burning grass near plastic culverts as they are flammable.

- Do not throw cigarette or cigar butts on the ground or out of a vehicle. Dispose of them properly and make sure they are completely extinguished.
- Keep a 30 foot "safety zone" surrounding your home. This area should be clear of brush, with grass cut short. Store firewood and other combustible materials at least 30 feet away from any buildings. For homes that sit on a steep slope, the safety zone should be increased accordingly.
- Keep your yard healthy, cut, and watered. It is a natural firebreak.
- Clean up dead leaves and twigs from your yard, roof and gutters. Cut tree limbs within 15 feet of the ground and remove dead branches that extend over the roof.
- Do not park cars, trucks or recreational vehicles on dry grass or shrubs. Exhaust systems on vehicles can reach temperatures of more than 500°C; it only takes about 200°C to start a grass fire in the summer.
- Use an approved spark arrester on all internal combustion engine power equipment. This special muffler helps ensure that sparks generated by off road vehicles, chainsaws, and other equipment, don't start grass fires.
- Parents should emphasize to their children the dangers of playing with fire. Children, who have no idea how quickly flames can grow and spread, start many grass fires. For great facts and tips for educating children please visit [www.firefacts.org](http://www.firefacts.org)
- Homeowners who barbeque should maintain a 10 foot area free of brush and shrubbery around grills and propane tanks. Never leave a grill unattended.
- Keep a shovel, bucket of water, fire extinguisher or garden hose on hand at any time while burning outside.
- If conducting a controlled burn, have a water hose close by and always check with your local municipality to ensure there is not a fire ban in effect.

*Practice safe burning at all times. If you have any questions, please contact the Ramara Fire and Rescue Services at 705-484-5374 ext. 253*