



Wildfire Preparedness Projects - Safety Tips and Safety Gear

Before starting a project, it's important to review the safety tips and safety gear below. Each participant needs to be familiar with the information. Always leave power equipment tasks to trained adults.

Safety Tips:

- For safety purposes, many of the projects found on the Project Ideas List are best accomplished by two or more people. It's always a good plan to work in pairs. <http://www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/be-firewise/project-ideas.aspx>
- Bending: Keep your feet shoulder-width apart and move your whole body as one unit; bend at your hips and knees, not at your waist.
- Lifting: If an object is too difficult to lift, ask a friend for help. Use slow smooth movements while lifting and keep your body facing the object. Twisting can hurt your back. Keep the load close to your body between your shoulders and waist – this puts less strain on back muscles.
- Stacking Firewood: For tips on stacking firewood refer to this article from Popular Mechanics: <http://www.popularmechanics.com/home/improvement/outdoor-projects/how-to-stack-firewood/>
- Moving hazardous materials: Use caution when moving and storing any type of hazardous items (gasoline, portable propane tanks, etc.). Many products can be dangerous if handled or stored incorrectly – and can harm your health and the environment.
- Hand tools: Always wear eye protection. Handle sharp-edged and pointed tools carefully with them close to your side and the points and heavy ends downward and outward – never carry them in your pocket. See comments below regarding other safety precautions when working with hand tools.
- Tools should be inspected to ensure that they are in good condition before use. Check for dull blades/cutting parts and or cracked handles or leaking fluids. Do not use broken or unsafe equipment.
- **Minors should never accept** an invitation from someone they don't know to enter a home or other structure – unless accompanied by a trusted adult or group leader.

If you are removing trash, be aware of nails, broken glass, and sharp metals. Always ensure that an adult works with minors.

Safety Gear:

When working with hand tools, mowing, and hauling branches, always use good safety practices, including wearing the proper clothing and personal protective equipment.

- Wear work gloves and trim-fitting long sleeve pants and shirts and non-slip closed-toed shoes or boots.
- Always wear eye protection/safety goggles.
- Industrial style ear plugs/ear muffs need to be worn in loud work areas.
- If you are cutting overhead branches, wear a hard hat.
- If you are using power tools wear recommended safety clothes, including chaps, hardhats, goggles, steel toe boots, and hearing protection (ear muffs). For some power tools, the use of face shields is recommended. Use power tools correctly.

Be Aware of Environmental Hazards:

When working outdoors, maintain good situational awareness about the conditions of the terrain. Good footwear, including boots with good treads, can help prevent slips and falls.

- Be aware of bees and hornets. Sometimes power tools can disturb hives.
- Be aware that snakes and other creatures, including spiders, can sometimes be found in woodpiles. Take care when chipping piles.
- Be aware of the type of soil and/or duff you will be working in. Clay and certain soils such as DG (degenerated granite) can be slippery, as can be wet leaves.
- Be aware of red flag warnings and other local fire weather concerns before using any power tools. In some areas power tools may not be used or may have limited use during certain types of weather conditions. If using power tools it is always a good idea to have a water source such as a garden hose close by, or a fire extinguisher with you on site. Check with your local fire authority.

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