

FIRE PREVENTION AND YOU

All of you are aware that we are experiencing one of the worst drought seasons in this area in a number of years and the long-range forecast, if it holds true, doesn't bode well for much improvement soon. Wild fires, usually from burning dry grass, are springing up all around us and Blue Lake is not immune to such a problem. Take a stroll around some of our streets and note the cigarette butts tossed out along the edges and you would agree. In view of the present fire danger, your POA is asking each property owner to make time ASAP to inspect around one's property, vacant lots in particular, with the objective of fire prevention in mind.

Following is a list of ideas you could use to aid you in the above effort. This list was compiled, in large part, by Mr. Ralph Hendrix, former Marble Falls fire chief and now city mayor.

- Keep a clearing of at least 15 feet around your house—30 feet is better—and other outside structures, for survivability space.
- Remove leaves and other debris from your roof and yard.
- Mow your lawn regularly. Do not allow cut grass to accumulate. Dispose of yard cuttings and debris promptly, and in accordance with local regulations.
- Move dry firewood at least 50 feet away from any structure, your home in particular.
- Remove all “ladder fires” such as brush, old lumber, etc., which link “ground fuels”, such as grass, leaves and twigs, to larger shrubs and trees—and your home.
- On vacant lots, “fuel breaks”, or firebreaks, should be considered.
- Prune trees so the lowest limbs are at least 6 feet above the ground—10 feet is better.
- When refueling gasoline driven yard/garden equipment, do so carefully so as to avoid igniting fuels on hot surfaces. While at it, check the spark arrestors to ensure they are working.
- Store all flammable liquids in proper containers and away from buildings. Never keep combustible materials under decks or elevated porches.
- If practical, keep water hoses attached to all outside taps.
- Any trellises should be made of non-combustible materials.
- Dispose of charcoal from your B-B-Q properly. Never “dump” it outside until it has been “drowned” with water.
- When possible, use construction materials that are fire-resistant or non-combustible. This includes roofing, siding and veneer materials. The number one cause of home loss in wild land fires is from untreated wooden shake shingles.
- **IMPORTANT**—create a family disaster plan in case you are caught in a fire situation. Have at least two means of escape in each room (either door/window) and at least two ground-level doors designated as safety exits. Have a plan for rescuing your pets. Know how/who to contact for emergency response, the fire department nearest you in particular (Horseshoe Bay Fire Department for Blue Lake). And ensure that all in your family know your plan.

For those folks living outside Blue Lake who have property here, vacant lots in particular, and who may need help in removing brush and/or debris, if required, there are lot clearing and clean-up services available in the immediate area. Call the MUD office (830-598-5460) for assistance in locating one.

When looking at your property, think “fire”, folks, and how to prevent it. Let's continue to keep Blue Lake safe and beautiful.

Thank you.