**Wildfire Safety**

Every year, many wildfires burn throughout the state of Alaska. Wildfires are a natural part of Alaska’s environment and many only burn lands that are far away from our communities. When wildfires are started by humans, or burn too close to where we live, they can become very dangerous. Wildfires can be very difficult to control, so knowing what to do ahead of time can help you better protect yourself and your family.

**Before a wildfire**

* Know your community’s evacuation plan and have several escape routes.
* Make an emergency kit that includes: respirators, emergency supplies, important documents, and special supplies for individuals with health conditions, children, and pets.
* Create and maintain a 30-foot fire buffer around your home that is free from leaves, debris, and flammable materials.
* Use fire resistant materials when building or renovating.
* Before starting a campfire or burning waste, check if there are any local fire bans or restrictions and check the current fire danger levels.
* Use caution when lighting campfires or burning waste. Locate your fire in a place where it cannot spread, never leave it unattended, and make sure it is completely put out.

**During a wildfire**

* Remain aware of nearby fires. Listen for emergency information and follow instructions.
* Prepare to evacuate. If ordered to evacuate, leave as quickly as possible.
* If not ordered to evacuate, limit exposure to smoke. Remain inside and close off windows and door to keep smoke outside. Wear a respirator when outside.
* If trapped, call 9-1-1.
* If you lose power, be aware of other hazards like carbon monoxide poisoning, foodborne illnesses, and unsafe drinking water.

**After a wildfire**

* Only return when you’re told it’s safe.
* Wear protective gear like a respirator, gloves, googles, and long sleeves to protect against ash when cleaning up.
* Be careful on damaged roads and around damaged structures.
* Be aware that flooding, carbon monoxide poisoning, and electrical hazards are common after wildfires.

Wildfires can start and escalate quickly so it’s important to be prepared beforehand. Staying aware and prepared can help make dealing with a wildfire less stressful and dangerous. For more information, please contact the ANTHC Environmental Health Program at (907) 729-4043 or [ceh@anthc.org](mailto:ceh@anthc.org).

