



NEWS RELEASE
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***Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, Inc. - FLASH® Offers Free
Tools in Advance of Deadly Wildfire Threat in Florida***

(Tallahassee, Fla.) – As state experts warn of a heightened wildfire threat, the nonprofit [Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, Inc. – FLASH®](http://www.flash.org) is urging Florida families to take action today using free online tools to protect families and homes. According to the Divisions of Forestry and Emergency Management, conditions are right for accelerating wildfire activity brought on by significant freeze activity in early 2009 that has dried vegetation and soils throughout the state. Nine hundred six-seven fires have burned 25,157 acres since January 1st compared to 452 wildfires burning 10,597 acres during the same period in 2008.

“Wildfire prevention is the simplest and least expensive of all disaster mitigation activities because it is largely about reducing wildfire fuel by managing landscaping and brush,” said FLASH President/CEO Leslie Chapman-Henderson. “Wildfire cannot occur without three ingredients --- air, heat and fuel, so removing combustible shrubs and trees can keep wildfire away from homes and help eliminate ignition zones.”

FLASH is offering its free tools to help families combat wildfires and overcome the mindset that luck is the best tool homeowners have in any disaster. “When homes survive a disaster, it is because somebody did something on purpose, ahead of time to reduce or eliminate the threat,” said Leslie Chapman-Henderson. “Families are their own best line of defense when preparing for wildfire because prevention steps are simple, inexpensive and are perfectly suited for Do-It-Yourselfers.”

The FLASH wildfire prevention toolkit is available to homeowners and neighborhoods at www.flash.org and includes a short, educational video, newsletter on wildfire myths and a link to the organizations’ nonprofit YOUTUBE channel, www.youtube.com/stronghomes, where users can view a library of animated short videos on safety and prevention techniques for all types of disasters. [FLASH’s](http://www.flash.org) consumer resources are backed by free advice from a team of experts available toll-free at (877) 221-SAFE.

(more)

FLASH suggests following these basic guidelines for protecting your home from wildfire:

Remove

- Dry vegetation, such as dead grass and leaves WITHIN 30 FEET of home
- Tree branches within 10 feet of chimneys
- Branches within 6-10 feet of the ground
- Firewood within 50 feet of structure
- Thick beds of pine needle within 10 feet

Cover

- Chimneys, attic, soffit vents and elevated wood decks with a noncombustible screening of 1/4 inch or smaller mesh

Plant

- Native, fire-resistant vegetation
- All trees and shrubs at least 10 feet apart

Maintain

- A healthy, watered defensible space of lawn and plants at least 30 feet around the structure
- A legible and clearly marked street number A 12 (width) x 15 (height) driveway clearance for fire engines

The nonprofit Federal Alliance for Safe Homes – FLASH[®], Inc. is a 501(c) collaboration of organizations dedicated to strengthening homes and safeguarding families from disaster. Based in Tallahassee, FLASH is the nation's fastest-growing disaster safety education organization with more than 100 partners including FEMA, FL Division of Emergency Management, Georgia Pacific, The Home Depot, International Code Council, National Weather Service, Renaissance Reinsurance, Simpson Strong-Tie, State Farm, USAA and WeatherPredict Consulting, Inc. To learn more about FLASH and access free resources, visit www.flash.org call (877) 221-SAFE (7233).