

When Wildfire Strikes – Safety Tips while Boating

Know What to Do

If you find an active wildfire, do not attempt to fight fire, call 911 and report it.

If a wildfire starts during your boating trip, be ready to evacuate when ordered to do so by local officials or if the fire draws near.

If ordered to evacuate, do so immediately. You may have only a few minutes to get to safety.

In extreme cases, river rangers may shut down the river to recreation traffic for hours or several days. Listen to the radio for reports and evacuation information and instructions.

If you must evacuate, always follow evacuation routes indicated by local officials, even if they are different from your planned evacuation routes. Because wildfires can change speed and direction quickly and unpredictably, your planned escape routes may be blocked.

Observe the fire and firefighter operations from a safe distance.

Stay away from aerial water drops and overhead flights.

Do not stop in areas along the river where the helicopters are loading water or bucket dipping.

Watch out for other boats and rafts that may be watching the fire or helicopters, and not you.

If you must stop to camp, choose a location on the river, which is opposite the fire, and be ready to leave at a moments notice.

Avoid displaced animals like snakes, cougars, deer and coyotes. They could be disoriented and aggressive.

After a Wildfire

Never return to your property until local officials tell you that it is safe to do so

Be cautious when returning to a burned area. Hot spots can flare up without warning. Watch out for rolling rocks and logs

Be careful walking around burned out areas. There are hot spots, loose rocks, and pockets of ash, which are holes full of hot ashes left by burned trees and stumps. Falling into an ash pit could cause serious burns and other injuries.

Watch out for burned trees or power poles, which may have been weakened by the fire. Be aware that local wind patterns may change due to loss of trees in the fire, so damaged trees may fall when and where you least expect them

Wildfire Prevention

Always check with local agencies to find out what the fire restrictions may be in the area that you are boating.

Don't throw burning objects-like cigarettes or matches-from any vehicle.

Parking over dry grass may cause a fire. Hot exhaust pipes, catalytic converters, and mufflers are as dangerous as a match.

When you camp or walk through wildland areas, follow fire safety rules. Above all, never leave any fire until it is completely out.

Learn the facts about fires: how they start, what conditions favor them. Don't start any fire when the danger is high.

On a hot, dry day, two seconds of carelessness could destroy trees, brush, animals, homes, and lives.