



Prepare with Pedro!

WILDFIRES

Dear Educator:

Thank you again for inviting us to share our *Prepare with Pedro* emergency preparedness program with your students. To help build on our presentation we have developed these K-2 lesson plans, with separate activity sheets for two age levels.

Pedro will guide you, your students and their households through engaging, standards-based activities that teach science and health concepts, while building language arts and critical-thinking skills. The lessons follow a Before–During–After approach to navigating wildfires that will empower students to be safety advocates at home.

We hope that you will use these resources to further enrich your students' learning experience and help them prepare for emergencies.

Sincerely,
Your Friends at the American Red Cross

Grades K-1

This activity begins with a class discussion about what wildfires are, what causes them and how households can protect their homes from a potential wildfire. Before beginning, review the following facts about wildfires:

- Wildfires are unplanned fires that burn forests, shrubs and grasslands quickly and can destroy large areas of land. They are dangerous and can damage communities that are close by. Some wildfires are caused by lightning and nature, but most wildfires (nine out of ten) are caused by people not being careful with fire outdoors.
- Households can prepare for a wildfire by creating a 30-foot wide “safety zone” around their home to help protect it. This involves removing dead leaves and branches along with other flammable material, trimming away low branches and plants growing near the home, keeping porches clear of clutter and the roof and gutters clear of dead leaves, positioning any propane tanks or gas grill outside the safety zone, and having a water supply nearby.

Activity 1

Create a Safety Zone

Objectives

- Familiarize students with the nature and causes of wildfires
- Teach key steps for creating a “safety zone” around your home to minimize damage from wildfires
- Strengthen visual discrimination, vocabulary and measurement skills
- Promote parent/caregiver involvement through at-home activities



Ask students: Have you heard of a **wildfire**? What does that word mean? **Say:** A wildfire is any outdoor fire that gets started by mistake or unexpectedly and burns forests, shrubs or grasslands. Once a wildfire gets going, it can keep burning when it gets to places where people live, so it's important for households to know how to stay safe if a wildfire happens.

Ask: What do you think causes wildfires? **Say:** Sometimes wildfires are started by lightning or other natural causes, but most wildfires are caused by people not behaving safely outdoors. **Ask:** What do you think are some ways people could cause wildfires? **Say:** Wildfires can start by people not putting out their campfires all the way, leaving a barbecue or outdoor stove burning while they do something else, shooting off fireworks, burning dead leaves unsafely or throwing away cigarettes carelessly.

Ask: What do you think is the best way to prevent wildfires?

Say: The best way is to be careful with fire outdoors. Children should never play with fire, matches or lighters. We can also be prepared by protecting our homes, especially if they are near a place where a wildfire might happen. If possible, households should create a "safety zone" around their home. **Ask:** What do you think a "safety zone" is? **Say:** A safety zone is an area around the home where there is little or nothing for a wildfire to burn, which will help keep the fire away. **Ask:** What kinds of things should households AVOID having inside their home's safety zone? **Say:** You want to avoid things that can catch fire and spread it to your home easily, like papers, containers with gas or oil in them, piles of dry leaves, or branches that touch your home. **Ask:** What kinds of things do households WANT in their safety zone? **Say:** A hose, a water supply, things that will not burn.

Distribute copies of the activity sheet and explain that students are going to help Pedro the Penguin create a safety zone around his friend Jaime's home to prepare for a wildfire. Direct students' attention to the safety zone ring drawn around the image and explain that this line is 30 feet away from the home on all sides. **Ask:** Do you know how long 30 feet is? **Say:** It's about ten big grown-up steps long. Let's measure so we can see for ourselves! As a class, use a tape measure or rulers to measure 30 feet, pointing out how far away the beginning of the line is from the end.

Next, draw students' attention to the items in the safety zone. **Say:** Let's look inside the safety zone and see if Pedro's friend and his household need to make changes to help keep their home safer in case there's a wildfire. **Ask:** What do you see? For each item students identify, **ask:** Do you think that would be safe to have near your home during a wildfire? Why or why not? If an item is safe, circle it. If an item is not safe, cross it out. Go through each item in this manner and at the end, **say:** Great job! Jaime's household

now knows what to clean up or remove from their safety zone to help protect them from a wildfire.

Answers: SAFE (circled): hose; bicycle; flowers; mailbox; slide. NOT SAFE (crossed out): woodpile; gas grill and tank; picnic table; stack of newspapers on the porch; branches touching the chimney; gutter clogged with leaves; branches on ground; shrubbery too close to the home.

Finally, point out another important wildfire preparation tip—it is easy to see the address number on this home. That will help firefighters find the home quickly if there is an emergency. To conclude, have students color in their pictures. Wrap up the activity by reading the directions at the bottom of the sheet, which encourage households to check the safety zone around their homes.

Emphasize to the children that they should not do these safety protection actions on their own. **Say:** Remember, you should share this information with the grown-ups in your home and help them with a safety zone check. Do not do this on your own.

Grades 1-2

For **Part 1**, complete the same introduction and exercises as in the Grades K-1 activity. For **Part 2, say:** Now, we will learn more about how wildfires start. Read each item aloud:

- **Lightning – Ask:** How could lightning cause a wildfire? **Say:** When lightning strikes trees, grass or bushes, they can catch on fire. If it is hot and dry outside, more and more plants nearby can burn and create a wildfire that spreads very quickly.
- **Campfires – Ask:** How could a campfire cause a wildfire? **Say:** Campfires can stay warm after you leave your campsite if you do not put the fire out properly, so things around them might catch on fire. Grown-ups should always make sure to put out the flames and cool off the hot embers with plenty of water.
- **Grills and Outdoor Stoves – Ask:** How could a barbecue grill or outdoor stove cause a wildfire? **Say:** If the grill or stove is under a tree, the heat could cause branches overhead to catch on fire, leading to a wildfire. A grown-up should be nearby and watching a grill or stove the whole time it is turned on.
- **Fireworks – Ask:** How could fireworks cause a wildfire? **Say:** Watching fireworks is exciting, but fireworks are also dangerous. When they are set off, they cause huge sparks that can start a fire when they land back on the ground. Fireworks should only be set off by people who know how to use them in areas where they will not cause a wildfire.

Next, have students use the word bank at the bottom of the page to complete the fill-in-the-blank sentences. Review the answers, prompting students to explain the "why" behind each answer.

- Answers:** 1. campfire;
2. lightning; 3. grill;
4. fireworks

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Emphasize to the children that they should not do these safety protection actions on their own. **Say:** Remember, you should share this information with the grown-ups in your household and help them with a safety zone check. Do not do this on your own.



Activity 2 Make a Plan

Objectives

- Familiarize students with the concept of evacuation and the importance of creating a wildfire evacuation plan
- Help students identify two evacuation routes from a threatened home to a safe place
- Strengthen visual discrimination, visual literacy and spatial relations skills
- Promote parent/caregiver involvement through at-home activities

Grades K-1

In this activity, students will explore the importance of preparing and practicing a wildfire evacuation plan with their households, and help Pedro make a plan to get his friend's household to safety during a wildfire. To begin, review the evacuation tips below:

- Be prepared to evacuate at a moment's notice.
- Listen to local radio and television stations for updated emergency information, including your safest escape route.

- Arrange for temporary housing at a friend or relative's home outside the threatened area. Identify nearby shelters, if possible, and know your routes to get there.
- Make an evacuation plan: Agree on two ways out of your neighborhood (on foot or by car) and have a pre-designated meeting place in case family members get separated.

Ask students: Do you know what the word **evacuation** means? Or what it means to **evacuate** from a place? **Say:** It means leaving a place that might be dangerous and going somewhere safer. An evacuation is like a fire drill at school, when we practice how to leave the building quickly and safely and go to a meeting spot outside. **Ask:** Why do you think a household might need to evacuate from their home during a wildfire? **Say:** Households might need to leave or evacuate, because the fire might be burning close to their neighborhood, which means it could reach their home and be dangerous if they stay there.

Say: A great way to be prepared for a wildfire is to make an **evacuation plan**. This means that the grown-ups in your household agree on two ways you would drive or walk away from your home to get some place safe. The roads or paths you would use are called "routes." **Ask:** Why do you think you want to know TWO ways to evacuate from your home during a wildfire? **Say:** There might be a reason that you can't use one of your routes. For example, the fire could be burning along that route or firefighters might have blocked that route off to keep people safe.

Distribute copies of the activity sheet and read the directions. Explain that students are going to help Pedro find two evacuation routes from his friend Jaime's home at the top left of the picture to Jaime's Grandpa's home at the bottom right of the picture. Have students work alone or in pairs to draw lines creating two separate paths from Jaime's home to his Grandpa's home. Review their chosen routes as a class and discuss why some routes may be better than others. There are four routes. See page 3.

Conclude by reading the directions at the bottom of the activity sheet, which encourage households to stay informed about the risk of wildfires in their communities and states.

Emphasize to the children that they should not do evacuation planning on their own, so they do not feel responsible. **Say:** Remember, you should share this information with the grown-ups in your home. Your grown-ups will make the evacuation plan. Your job is to be a helper.

Grades 1-2

For **Part 1**, complete the same introduction and exercises as in the Grades K-1 activity. For **Part 2, say:** Wildfires move fast, so you have to be careful to stay away from the fire when you are evacuating. Direct students to the question at the bottom of the page: *What should you and your grown-ups do to be sure you are moving away from the wildfire when you leave your home [to evacuate]?*

Ask: Can you think of things we could look for once we are outside, to know where the fire is or which way it is moving?

Have students unscramble the sentence, providing hints as needed:

- **HINT #1:** The first word is "Watch." What do you think you would want to watch to know where a wildfire fire is?
- **HINT #2:** What might you see in the sky to tell you where the fire is?
- **HINT #3:** What does a fire create that looks a bit like a gray or black cloud?

Answer: Watch the smoke!

Conclude by reading the directions at the bottom of the activity sheet, which encourage households to stay informed about the risk of wildfires in their communities and states.

Emphasize to the children that they should not do evacuation planning on their own, so they do not feel responsible. **Say:** Remember, you should share this information with the grown-ups in your home. Your grown-ups will make the evacuation plan. Your job is to be a helper.

Grades K-2 Take-Home Activity

Make a Wildfire Evacuation Plan

Objectives

- Empower students and their households to create a plan to help prepare for and stay safe during a wildfire
- Build critical thinking, problem-solving and planning skills
- Strengthen vocabulary, reading and writing skills
- Promote parent/caregiver involvement through at-home activities

The take-home activity provides background information about wildfires for grown-ups, and encourages households to create an emergency go kit and evacuation plan should there be a wildfire in their area. **Say to students:** You've learned how households can be better prepared for wildfires. You're ready to share what you've learned. Your grown-ups can make plans to help your household be prepared, too! Remember, your grown-ups will be in charge of making the plan. You're the helper.

Distribute copies of the take-home activity and tell students that there is information for grown-ups to read on this sheet, and then together they will make a plan to help them stay safe during a wildfire.

Resources

- American Red Cross: [redcross.org/wildfires](https://www.redcross.org/wildfires)
- Ready.gov: [ready.gov/wildfires](https://www.ready.gov/wildfires)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/index.html)

