

FIRE SAFETY NOTE

This week's nearby fires should be a wake-up call. Even though Holmby Westwood is not in a canyon or hillside area, we're not immune from having a fire spread through our neighborhood during periods of low humidity and windy conditions.

Two months ago, a large fire occurred in a house on Beverly Glen Blvd. it is suspected that the fire was electrical and started in a walk-in closet before spreading to the attic. 63 firefighters from four stations battled the blaze from 10:0 PM to 4:00 AM. After initially putting out the fire in one hour, the fire started again.

Fortunately, there wasn't much breeze that evening, but surrounding homes over a block away were filled with smoke. If we'd had high winds that night, surrounding homes and trees could easily have ignited from embers, which can travel a mile from a fire. Many fires spread to nearby homes by flying embers entering attic vents.

This is a LAFD reminder for all residents to have a "firewise" home:

- Make sure you have or install metal mesh which is no larger than 1/8 inch in your attic and roof vents to prevent embers from entering your attic spaces.
- Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screen with metal mesh to prevent ember entry
- If you live in an older home, make sure your wiring is in good condition and able to handle all the additional appliances and tech products you may be adding to your home. Overloading a system can cause fires.
- Clean gutters and roofs of dead leaves, pine needles and other debris that could catch embers
- Replace or repair any loose or missing shingles or roof tiles to prevent ember penetration
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating
- Move any flammable material away from wall exteriors – mulch, flammable plants, leaves and pine needles
- Remove anything stored beneath decks or porches
- Repair or replace damaged or loose window screens and any broken windows

If you need to evacuate:

- Make a family plan – the safest exits from your home and where to meet
- What to take – prescriptions, keys, important papers, family photos, phone charger, and small valuables – make a list of items to take and keep it in your nightstand
- If you don't have a safety deposit box, get one for your important papers or invest in a fireproof safe
- Our closest evacuation center is Westwood Recreation Center, 1350 South Sepulveda Blvd. just south of the Federal Building
- Another nearby evacuation center is Rancho Park Recreation Center, 2551 Motor Avenue.
- Animals can be taken to the Pico Animal Shelter – take your pet's food and prescriptions. Crate your animals.
- Keep your wallet, glasses, keys, and a flashlight on your nightstand
- Keep shoes next to your bed & clear the area around your bed in case of a power outage
- Place plug-in emergency lights in critical areas of your home
- Keep your cars off the street so emergency vehicles won't be blocked
- Make sure you always have at least half a tank of gasoline in your car at all times

Be safe and help to keep Holmby Westwood safe