

**Amateur Radio Emergency Service  
Santa Barbara Central Coast**

**SURVIVAL TACTICS AT WILDFIRES**

The following tactics were prepared by the California Department of forestry and distributed by the Santa Barbara County sheriff's department.

1. Do not park near or under power lines.
2. Do not come into contact with any type of wire fence. It may be energized by down power lines.
3. Drive with your headlights on and always remain within radio communications.
4. Leave your windows up and doors closed. Even small fire embers can ignite your vehicle's interior.
5. Always drive with your windows rolled up in a fire area.
6. Do not park at road turns or in saddles, as these topographical features indicate a canyon or draw where fires can flare up rapidly.
7. Wear eye protection during windy (Santa Ana) conditions.
8. Drink lots of fluids. Dehydration takes place four times faster in a fire area. Carry at least two quarts of water in your vehicle.
9. When driving or walking into an area, plan your escape route first. Don't get cut off.
10. If you must drive through a wall of fire, stay in the center of the road, turn the air conditioner off, make sure all windows are up and vents closed, turn on your lights (headlamp and emergency flashers), sound your horn and drive at a steady pace. Rapid changes in acceleration may cause your engine to stall due to the fire's consumption of oxygen.
11. If trapped by the fire, stay in your vehicle and crouch on the floor to reduce radiant heat to your skin. If you think it's hot in your vehicle, just try going outside. Leave your vehicle only when it is on fire and you absolutely can no longer stay inside due to smoke, fumes and heat.
12. Don't block roads. Always pull to the side opposite the fire.
13. Always back into narrow driveways; it speeds up your escape.
14. Do not park near the ends of propane tanks. When they explode, the tank ends come off first.
15. Carry a large handkerchief or paper air mask to filter out the larger particles of smoke by-products.
16. Do not park behind or in front of fire trucks; give them space to operate.
17. Long sleeves are better than short.
18. If trapped by fire when away from your vehicle, move to an area that the fire has burned or to a cleared area and wait it out. Get behind anything that will reduce radiant heat such as rocks, oak trees, building, walls. If you must, as a last resort, run through fire, pick the lowest fuel and flame height, know where you are going, calm yourself, take a deep breath and then run. If you inhale during your run you may sear your lungs.