

Educational only. This checklist is shared to help homeowners think through what to do before a wildfire, not as professional fire-safety advice. Always follow evacuation orders from the Los Angeles County Fire Department, LAFD, Cal Fire, and your local authorities. Hainy Hydrant does not guarantee any outcome from following these steps.

An evacuation order, or even just smoke and a rising Santa Ana wind, doesn't mean you have zero time. You usually have a small window. Walking through the items below takes **30 to 60 minutes total**. Address them in order. They are the places embers most often find their way in.

1 Roof valleys & gutters

Dry leaves and pine needles in gutters smolder under embers, then ignite the eave below.

DO Clear debris if safe. Otherwise soak the gutters and roof valleys with water.

2 Vents

Standard vents let thumb-sized embers reach attic insulation and stored materials.

DO Install ember-resistant covers, or block gable and eave vents with plywood or sheet metal. Close every interior door.

3 Patio furniture

Cushions, doormats, and decorative items ignite quickly and can be blown against the house.

DO Move cushions, doormats, planters, and anything combustible inside or well away from the structure.

4 Exposed wood & vegetation

Decks, railings, fences, and plants near the house carry fire into siding and eaves.

DO Move what you can away from the house. Soak what stays, knowing wet surfaces may dry again before fire arrives.

5 Windows

Intact glass still transmits radiant heat, which can ignite curtains, furniture, or objects inside.

DO Close every window and vent. Pull curtains fully open and away from the glass.

6 Stage your Hainy Hydrant

Private fire equipment only protects the home when someone on scene can find it and use it.

DO Bring the hose, nozzle, and hydrant tool out of storage. Place them clearly visible in the front yard.

If You Evacuate (the right call almost always)

Once the walk-through is done, leave. Quickly, calmly, with what you actually need.

- Know **two evacuation routes** out of the area.
- Grab your **go-bag**: documents, medications, phone chargers, photos, cash, clothes.
- Bring **pets and pet supplies**: carriers, leashes, food, medications.
- Park **facing outward** in the driveway with keys accessible.
- Agree on a **family meeting point** outside the fire area in advance.
- Do **not** return until officials say it is safe.

If Someone Stays Behind (only if planned in advance)

Staying is rarely the right choice. If a household member has chosen to remain, the goal is small ember suppression, not fighting active fire.

- Do **not** try to fight an active flame front. Shelter inside and focus afterward on ignition points.
- Wear long sleeves, pants, boots, gloves, eye protection, and a respirator mask.
- Keep multiple **escape routes** open. Park facing out.
- Stay in **radio or phone contact** with someone outside the fire area.
- Watch the home for **small ignitions** only. Suppress with water before they grow.
- Leave immediately if conditions deteriorate, smoke obscures escape routes, or you feel unsafe, and there is still a safe escape route.

The pattern that protects homes: Most homes that survive a wildfire are saved by someone on scene with the right water at the right time, putting out small ignitions before they grow. Whether that person is the homeowner, a neighbor, or an arriving first responder depends on preparation done before fire season.