

*Do you have a source of water close enough to your home to fight a fire?*

*Can the local fire department get to your source of water?*

*Do you need a water right for your water supply?*

*Large amounts of water are needed to protect a home in a catastrophic wildfire situation. Emergency firefighting is an exempt use. This means no permits are required to draft from creek, river, lake or pond while the fire is being fought. The problem is many rural homes have no available source of water.*

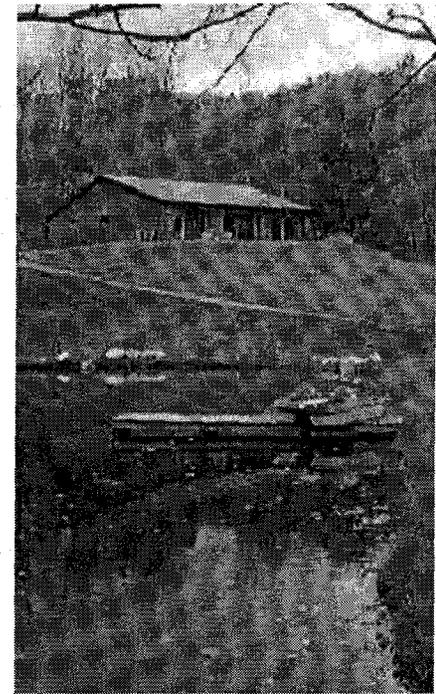
*A pond may provide a realistic alternative to supply enough water to protect a home. For a simple small off-channel pond, the permit is not difficult to obtain and the timeframe is 90 to 180 days.*

*The purpose of this brochure is to encourage you to prepare for an emergency and create awareness of water supply needs, necessary permits and supply alternatives not needing permits.*

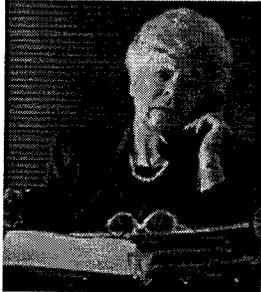


Oregon Water Resources Department  
725 Summer Street NE Suite A  
Salem, Oregon 97301

## **Wildfire Water Supplies for Rural Residential Structures**



## Water supplies for rural firefighting



**Are you concerned about having enough water to fight fire around your rural home?**

Do you have enough water to protect your home from wildfires?

Unfortunately, many rural homes do not have a source of emergency water supply. Even homes required to have in-home water supplies of 4,000 gallons may not have adequate supply for large scale firefighting.

### *Check with your local fire department*

Fire departments may have recommendations about how much water you should have on hand or the distance they can pump water from a nearby source. If you don't know who to contact, resources include the Office of State Fire Marshal at (503) 378-3473 or <http://sfm.state.or.us>. Planners and individuals determining water volumes will find useful resources at <http://www.firewise.org/pubs/operationWater/>.

### *Emergency firefighting is an exempt use*

Protecting a home in a catastrophic wildfire situation requires a large amount of water. Emergency firefighting is an exempt use. This means no permits are required from the Water Resources Department (WRD) to use water from a creek, river, lake or pond *while* you are fighting the fire. The problem is many homes are too far from any source of water.

### *Property owners can help themselves*

A realistic alternative for protecting your structures from wildfire is to create your own emergency water source such as harvesting rainwater from roofs to store in a cistern or swimming pool or you may create a small pond.

### *A WRD permit is needed to create a source of water.*

Although ponds require permits, the alternate reservoir application and permit process for a small off-channel pond is easy and usually completed in 90–180 days. Larger ponds or ponds filled with ground water require a standard permit and may take longer.

Two types of applications may be needed. One for alternate reservoirs and a second for a limited license for filling ponds. The limited license allows new pond owners to fill their new ponds in the same season as construction.



**You can get more information about the water right application process on line at: [www.wrd.state.or.us](http://www.wrd.state.or.us)**

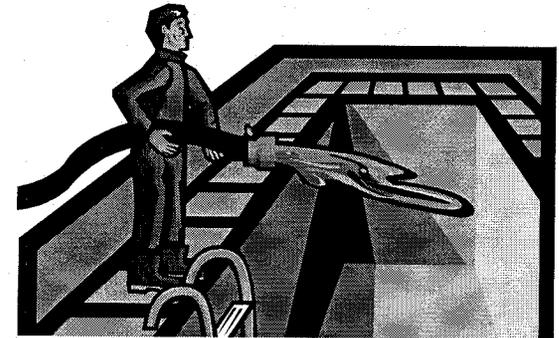
Application materials are available on line from the WRD. The WRD may be contacted via a local Water Master's office or by calling (503) 986-0900 or online at [www.wrd.state.or.us](http://www.wrd.state.or.us). Here are some links for information or forms:

- <http://www.wrd.state.or.us/OWRD/offices.shtml>
- <http://www.wrd.state.or.us/OWRD/PUBS/forms.shtml>
- <http://www.wrd.state.or.us/OWRD/PUBS/aquabook.shtml>

### *Small lots and rainwater harvest*

If your property is too small or has insufficient surface or ground water to fill a pond, a cistern or a swimming pool may be an alternative.

It may be feasible for the homeowner to harvest rainwater from roofs and other impervious surfaces.



The rainwater harvest formula is: the number of inches rainfall x the number of square feet of surface area x 0.625. Routing water to store in a cistern or a small structure such as a swimming pool does not require a permit. Routing harvested water to a pond requires a permit.

### *Increasing your home's survival in a wildfire*

- Remove dead plants, trees, branches and debris around your home and prune limbs overhanging the roof.
- Store firewood away from building walls.
- Clean tree needles and leaves from the gutters, roofs and decks.
- Screen all structure gutters, vents and openings, such as under stairways and low decks, with 1/8-inch non-corrosive metal mesh.
- Use fire-resistant roofing such as tile, composition shingles or metal.
- Keep a water pump and hose ready for use.

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