



Nate Linder, NorthWestern Energy's Director of Wildfire Operations, has been with the company for 18 years. Based in Helena, his career has spanned new construction, asset management, and central operations—experience that ultimately led him to his current role.

In 2023, NorthWestern Energy established the Wildfire Operations Department—a team dedicated to improving situational awareness, strengthening system resilience, and engaging with customers and communities on wildfire preparedness.

"I was drawn to this role because of how important the work is," Nate said. "There's a lot of opportunity to grow, try new things, and use technology to make a real difference."

His days include reviewing wildfire risk and forecasts, preparing for near-term weather events and advancing long-term mitigation efforts.

"From risk modeling and engineered mitigation projects to crews in the field, there's an incredible level of dedication across the company," he said. "It's amazing what we can accomplish when everyone works together."

Since stepping into the Director role, Nate has gained a deeper appreciation for the complexity of wildfire management.

"There's much more science and modeling involved than people might expect," he said. "We're constantly learning and improving how we assess risk."

As wildfire season approaches—and with May marking Wildfire Awareness Month—teams across the company are preparing tools, systems, and hands-on demonstrations to help keep communities safe.

Outside of work, Nate enjoys this time of year for another reason: rhubarb pie season. A recipe passed down from his grandmother, it's a family favorite he hopes others will enjoy as much as they have.

## Grandma Esther's Rhubarb Pie

### Pie Crust (Makes 2 Crusts)

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup (2 sticks) very cold butter, cut into small pieces
- 2 teaspoons salt (use 1/2 teaspoon if using salted butter)
- Up to 1/2 cup ice water

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- In a large bowl, combine the flour and salt. Add the cold butter and cut it into the flour using a pastry blender until the mixture forms coarse crumbs.
- Add ice water 1 tablespoon at a time, mixing gently, until the dough just comes together. (You may not need all the water.)
- Form the dough into a ball (do not overmix). Wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes—longer is even better.

**Tip:** Cold ingredients are key to a flaky crust—keep the butter cold and chill the dough before rolling.

### Rhubarb Filling

#### INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups fresh rhubarb, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 2/3 cups sugar
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- Pinch of salt
- 2 tablespoons butter

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400°F. In a large bowl, combine the rhubarb, sugar, flour, and salt.
- Let the mixture sit for about 15 minutes to release the juices. Pour the filling into a prepared pie crust.
- Dot the top with butter. Cover with top crust, seal edges, and cut small vents in the top.
- Bake for 50 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown and the filling is bubbling.

**Tip:** If the crust starts to brown too quickly, loosely cover the edges with foil.

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We are proud of the diversity in the communities we serve. To better serve the needs of some of our customers, we translate important customer information into two languages: Spanish and Karenic. To request translated customer information, please contact us at the numbers listed above.

Estamos orgullosos de la diversidad en las comunidades a las que servimos. Para satisfacer mejor las necesidades de algunos de nuestros clientes, traducimos información importante del cliente a dos idiomas: español y karénico (Karen). Para solicitar información traducida del cliente, contáctenos a los números indicados arriba.

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# Energy Connections

Customer Bill Insert  
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In this issue: Wildfire awareness month | Sign up for alerts  
Wildfire evacuation checklist | Rhubarb pie recipe



Bright ideas to save

## Take the Heat Off

When it comes to the temperature settings on your water heater, make sure it's safe and efficient — 120 degrees F is where you want it to be!

# May is Wildfire Awareness Month

With warmer weather arriving and winter moisture in short supply this year, wildland vegetation is already susceptible to fire, which makes May a great time to prepare for wildfire season. When it comes to wildfires, being prepared is the best way to protect your family, your home and your community. Here are some ways to prepare for wildfire season.

## Update Your Contact Information and Sign Up for Alerts

Make sure your contact information is up to date with NorthWestern Energy. Do you have an old landline number or old email address on file? Now is a great time to double check.

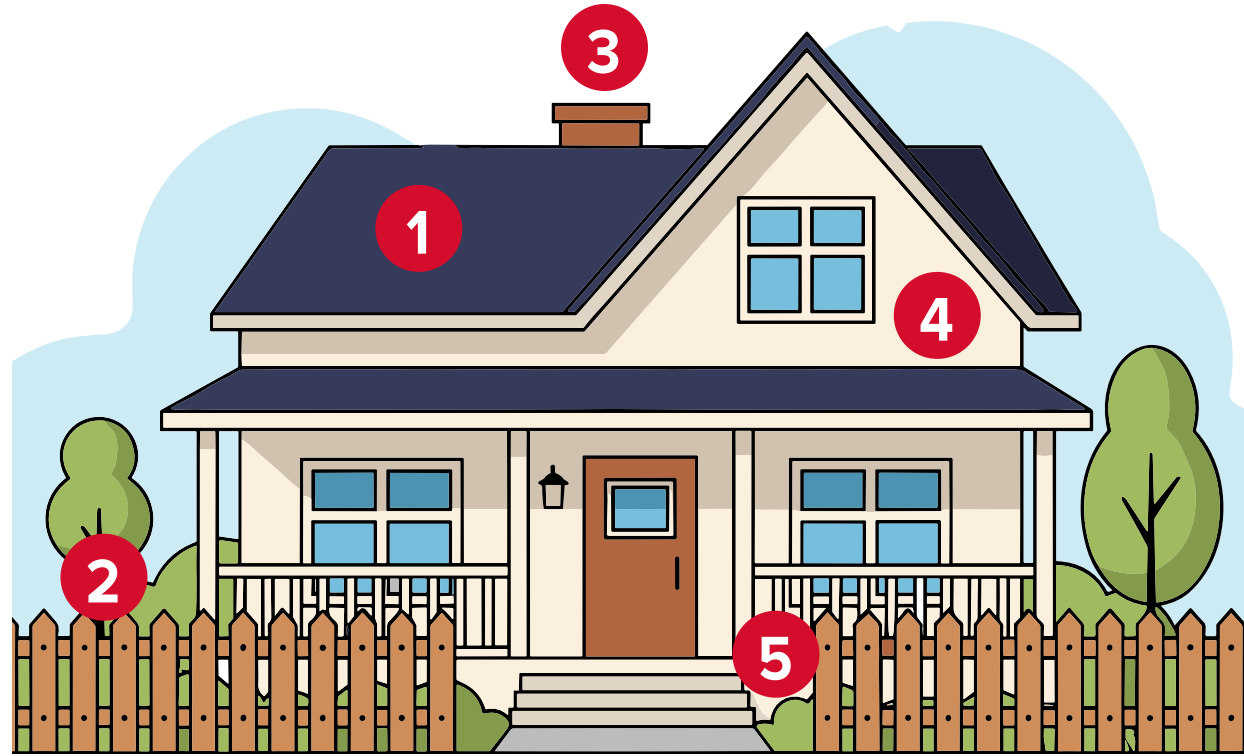
Log in to My Energy Account and update your information. While you're there, set your notification preferences. You can select to be notified via text or email about outages, billing and more. This is one of the primary methods we'll notify you of a power outage or a Public Safety Power Shutoff.

Learn more at [NorthWestern Energy.com/notifications](https://www.nwenergy.com/notifications).

## What to Expect During a PSPS

As a measure of last resort, NorthWestern Energy may shut off power during extreme situations to prevent sparking a wildfire. If extreme weather conditions threaten our ability to safely operate the electrical grid, we will turn off power to help protect public safety.

Learn more about Public Safety Power Shutoffs at [NorthWesternEnergy.com/PSPS](https://www.nwenergy.com/PSPS).



## Make Your Home More Fire Resilient

Research about community destruction from wildfire has shown that embers are the main source of home destruction from wildfires. Embers can ignite materials on and adjacent to your home to cause ignition.

### Five To-Dos to Protect Your Home from Wildfires:

- 1. Install a Class A roof.** Your roof has the most surface area, therefore, will catch the most embers. Class A roofs are designed to minimize fire impacts. Class A roof materials include metal, tile and asphalt composition shingles.
- 2. Remove all combustible materials within the first 5 feet around your home.** Embers will collect in this zone. Remove woody plants, grasses, lumber, woodpiles, mulch and other combustible materials. Install gravel, rock or sand in this area instead.

- 3. Cover all structure vents with 1/8-inch metal screen.** Install 1/8-inch metal screen over all structure vents. 1/8-inch metal screen reduces the heat content of embers to reduce the likelihood of igniting combustible materials behind the vent.
- 4. For wood or vinyl sided homes, consider replacing siding with fiber cement.** Replace at least the lower foot of wood/vinyl siding with fiber cement, stone, brick or other non-combustible material.
- 5. Replace wood decks** with less flammable materials such as concrete, stone or TREX decking.

# Wildfire Evacuation Checklist

Prepare now, so you'll be ready to evacuate in the case of a wildfire.

### Go bag essentials:

- Important documents
- Medications
- Non-perishable food and water for 72 hours
- Inventory of home contents (consider making a video inventory now, prior to an emergency)
- Photographs of the exterior of the house and landscape
- Enough clothing for 3-5 days

### Prepare your vehicle:

- Keep a full gas tank
- Place essential items in the car
- If you do not drive, make other arrangements for transportation in advance
- Close garage door when you leave

### Inside the home:

- Close all interior doors
- Remove lightweight, non-fire-resistant curtains and other combustible materials from around windows
- Turn off all pilot lights
- Close fireplace damper
- Close or block off any doggie-doors
- Lock-up firearms or valuables

### Prepare pets and animals:

- Have veterinary records and medications in one easy-to-find place
- Transport food, water and bowls in easy-to-carry, sealed containers
- Have a livestock trailer and reliable vehicle for towing the trailer
- Practice loading your livestock into the trailer and towing it before an emergency