

# Understanding Mudflow Risk



FEMA



Did you know you are at increased risk of floods after a wildfire? Wildfires dramatically alter the terrain, and properties directly affected by fires and those located below or downstream of burn areas are most at risk for flooding and mudflows.

## 1 What They Are

A mudflow is a river of liquid, flowing mud on land that is normally dry. The earth is carried by a current of water.

## 2 Why Wildfires Increase Risk

Wildfires destroy plants and trees that strengthen hills and char the soil so it can't absorb rainfall. This increases risks for flash floods and mudflows.

## 3 How They Happen

Rainfall across burned areas washes soil downslope. These mudflows can flood houses and structures quickly, with little warning.

## 4 What You Can Do

Be aware that flood risks are higher for up to five or more years after a wildfire until vegetation regrows. Protect the life you've built with flood insurance.

Learn more at  
[FloodSmart.gov/wildfires](https://www.floodsmart.gov/wildfires)

