

[Thousands turn out for Ember Stomp festival in North Bay to celebrate wildfire safety, preparedness](#)

ABC 7

As we head into prime wildfire season, thousands came out for a festival like no other in the North Bay on Saturday. Ember Stomp is a wildfire safety and prevention event, helping homeowners prepare for the very real possibility of a wildfire emergency.

Freshly cut juniper branches were set on fire in just a matter of minutes. The live demo, supervised by firefighters, shows what can happen to the same bushes many folks still have on their properties.

“It’s terrible from a fire prevention standpoint, so we want to demonstrate today what a little fire can do to juniper when it’s on fire,” said Marin County Fire Chief Jason Weber.

Seeing is believing at this year’s Ember Stomp, a wildfire safety festival at the Marin County Fairgrounds.

“It sounds kind of funny, right? A festival about wildfire. You don’t think about celebrating that,” said attendee Ben Snyder.

Thousands of homeowners are embracing resources and information designed to keep their homes and families safe from the real possibility of wildfire.

“We live in a condo that’s close to other people, so we wanted to have our go-bag and feel like we had a plan ahead of time,” said Novato resident Meagan Dowdall.

“You’ve got 30 seconds to pack a go-bag and get out of your house, go,” said a festival booth worker who

was timing Lauren Reinhard. She grabbed what she could.

“I got toilet paper, a light, water for drinking,” Reinhard said.

“While the urgency and the threat of wildfires is a very scary situation for anyone in fire-prone areas, we have the solutions and we know what to do,” said Meg McCabe, executive director of Fire Safe Marin.

Insurance advocates were there helping canceled policyholders living near fire-prone areas, navigate a path forward.

“It’s a crisis. Technology is a big part of it. Insurers are flying drones over houses, seeing things they don’t like and dropping people,” said Amy Bach, executive director of United Policyholders.

Marin County’s firefighting chopper flew in for up-close tours. Later, there was another dramatic live fire demonstration. A mock house hardened for wildfire suffered little damage, but the untreated house next door became fully engulfed. The chief said it’s all about being prepared.

“There’s lots of inexpensive things you can do. Clear five feet around your house, and the right screening materials on vents can make a big difference when that fire hits your house,” Weber said.