



Frequently Asked Questions

About Phos-Chek®

What is Phos-Chek?

Phos-Chek is an environmentally safe, colorless fire retardant. Manufactured by Astaris LLC, Phos-Chek has been used by the United States Forest Service for over 40 years to successfully mitigate wildfire activity. It has saved thousands of homes and millions of acres of forests.

How long will Phos-Chek remain effective?

Unlike other retardants, once applied, Phos-Chek is a long-term treatment that remains effective until washed off by strong hosing or substantial rainfall. It should last through wildfire season (mid-May to December), as long as there is no significant rainfall.

Is Phos-Chek safe?

Yes, it has been approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

- **Effects on Land Animals.** There are no known adverse effects to domestic or farm animals that eat small amounts of foliage coated with Phos-Chek retardant. However, a veterinarian should be consulted if your pet ingests a significant amount of treated vegetation. Studies conducted by Astaris and federal government agencies on potential toxicity effects on small wildlife (birds, rodents, earthworms) indicate that Phos-Chek exhibits a low order of acute toxicity.
- **Effects on Plants and Foliage.** Like fertilizer, retardant that is not removed from green vegetation after a fire has passed may cause its leaves to turn brown and wither. After heavy watering or substantial rain, the plants should return to normal and, much like fertilizer, growth should be enhanced by the added plant nutrients.
- **Effects on Fish and Other Water-Dwelling Organisms.** Studies conducted by Astaris indicate a low order of toxicity to fish and other water-dwelling organisms. However, if directly applied, the free ammonia present in the fire retardant can be toxic to aquatic life. Our trained specialists follow strict guidelines to minimize the amount of runoff into streams and ponds. Minimal runoff of Phos-Chek poses little serious threat to aquatic life.
- **Formulated for Residential Use.** Normally dyed red for Forest Service use, a colorless version of Phos-Chek has been formulated for residential and structural use.

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How does Phos-Chek work?

Phos-Chek renders woodland fuel sources, such as grass, pine needles and woody material, non-flammable. As heat increases from an approaching fire, Phos-Chek decomposes — giving off water vapor to cool the flames and leaving behind a non-flammable carbon coating. This coating insulates and restricts air flow, virtually “starving” the fire of fuel. Phos-Chek remains effective until it is removed by strong hosing or significant rainfall.

What is Phos-Chek made of?

The active ingredients are ammonium phosphate and diammonium sulfate; the same active ingredients in many agricultural fertilizers. Before use, Phos-Chek is mixed into a liquid concentrate that includes thickeners, flow conditioners, corrosion inhibitors and water. The end result is about 88% water and 12% retardant. Phos-Chek is considered very safe.

How is Phos-Chek applied, and how long does the process take?

Through an exclusive agreement with Private Client Group, trained fire mitigation specialists from Firebreak Rapid Response LLC will spray eligible policyholders' properties and vegetation with the fire retardant. Depending on the home's brush exposure, retardant may be applied at two distinct times:

- **Pre-treatment:** At the onset of wildfire season, Phos-Chek is applied to brush around the perimeter of the property as a preventive measure.
- **Emergency response:** If a wildfire comes within three miles of the home, retardant will be applied directly to brush and combustible structures on your property. The treatment generally requires about 30 minutes to apply (depending on the size of the property). Since Phos-Chek is safe, you don't have to leave the property during its application.

What are the benefits of treating a property with Phos-Chek?

Both treatments offer an unprecedented level of personal wildfire protection:

- Pre-treatment extends the "no burn" zone around your home, preventing the progression of approaching grass and shrub fires. By treating the vegetation surrounding your property, we form a baseline of protection to last throughout wildfire season.

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- The emergency response treatment is designed to protect your property if it's in the path of an oncoming wildfire. Wildfire activity is monitored daily and checked against the geographical coordinates of enrolled policyholders' homes, allowing for immediate deployment to homes in harm's way. Upon arrival, the response team will apply Phos-Chek to the combustible components of the home and landscaping.

Will Phos-Chek biodegrade?

Yes, the thickener and other additive compounds in the solution are biodegradable or will naturally break down. The fire retardant is made of diammonium sulfate and ammonium phosphate. Both are used in agricultural fertilizers and are readily absorbed by vegetation.

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