

MODULE 7

RESPONSE AND RECOVERY



CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT



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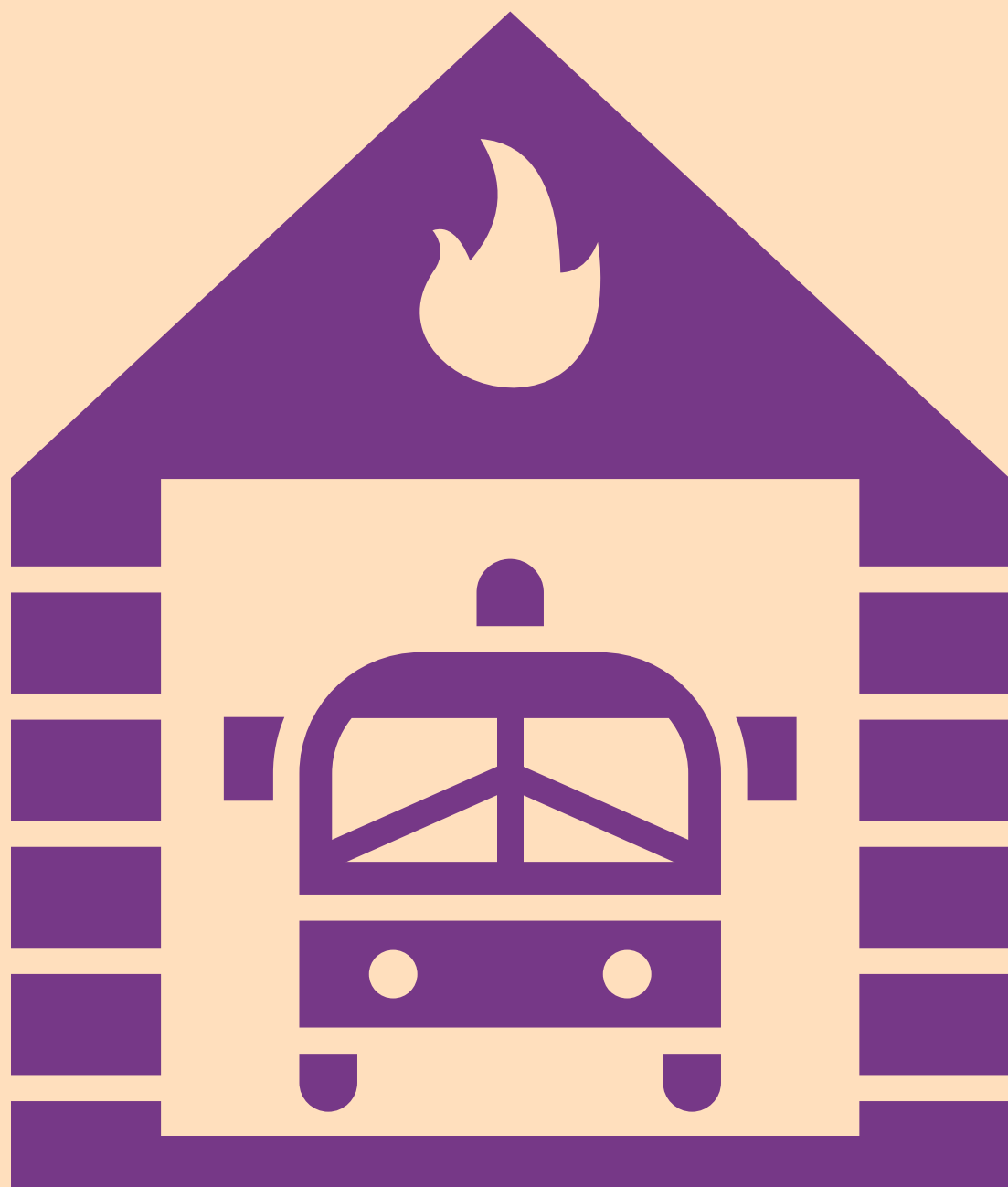
In this module, you will explore how to respond effectively during a wildfire and the steps required for post-fire recovery. The module covers first aid in wildfires, the safe use of firefighting tools, and strategies for sheltering at home or evacuating. It also focuses on recovery efforts, such as coping with stress and returning home after a wildfire.



CONTENT

Throughout this module, you will learn about:

1. What to do If You Get Trapped in a Wildfire
2. Sheltering in your home during a wildfire
3. Traveling During a wildfire



- 4. Communication with the authorities in case of fire
- 5. Use of fire extinguisher
- 6. First Aid for Wildfire-Related Injuries
- 7. CPR in the Context of a Wildfire



8.Safe use of fire tools

9.How to reduce exposure to wildfire smoke

10.Orientation and pathfinding for evacuation

11.Evacuation

12.Coping with wildfire stress

13.Components of recovery

14.Returning home after a wildfire



WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET TRAPPED IN A WILDFIRE



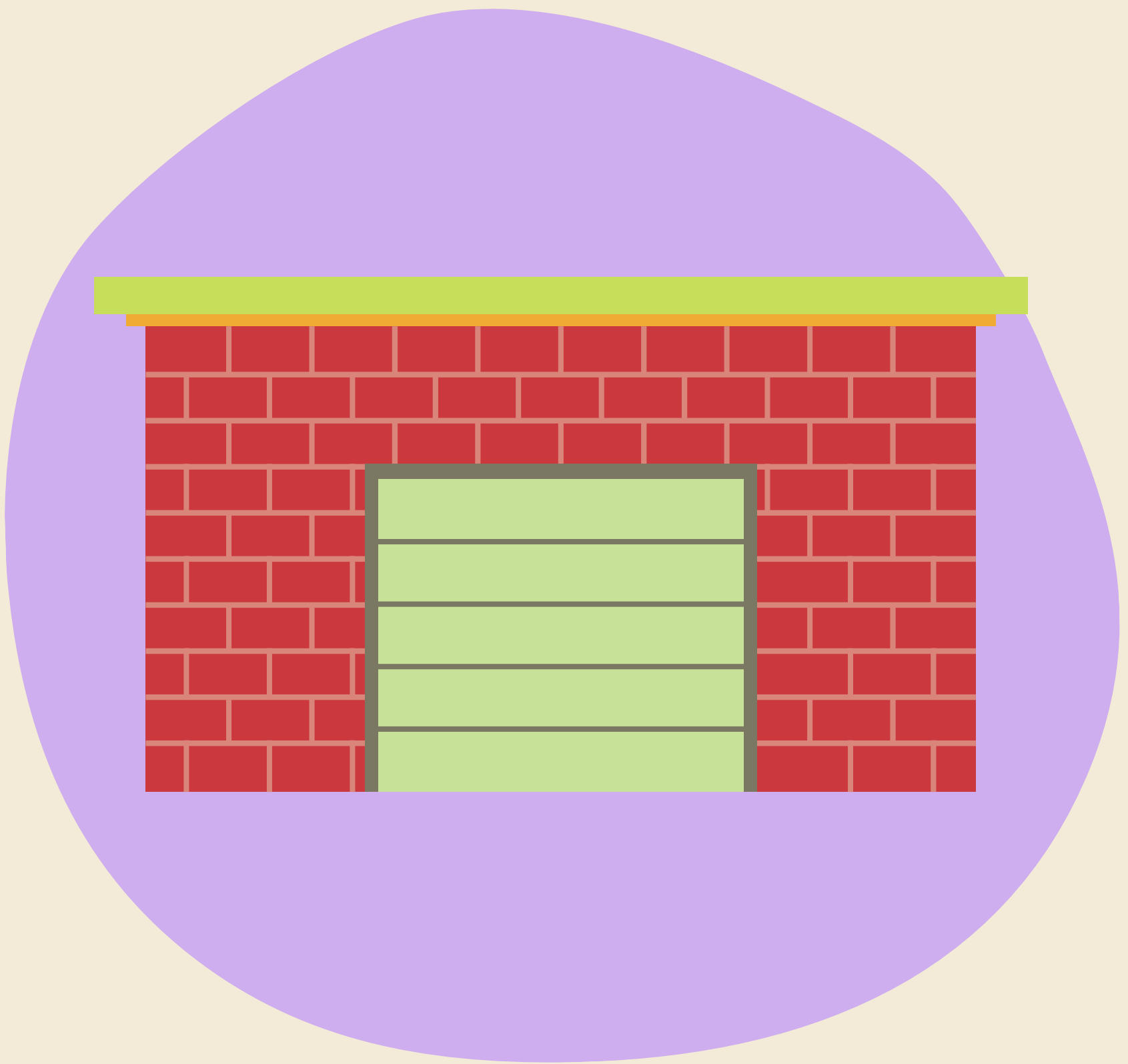
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- Keep calm
- Do not take shelter in a car.



- If your home is made of wood, seek shelter in a fire-resistant building.

IN THE HOUSE

- Close all the doors and windows firmly.



- Block up all the cracks with wet clothes to prevent smoke penetration.

RELOCATE FLAMMABLE OBJECTS

- Remove the curtains from the windows.
- Move any furniture away from windows and exterior doors.



- Follow the instructions and the routes suggested by the Authorities.

IF YOU ARE SURROUNDED BY FIRE

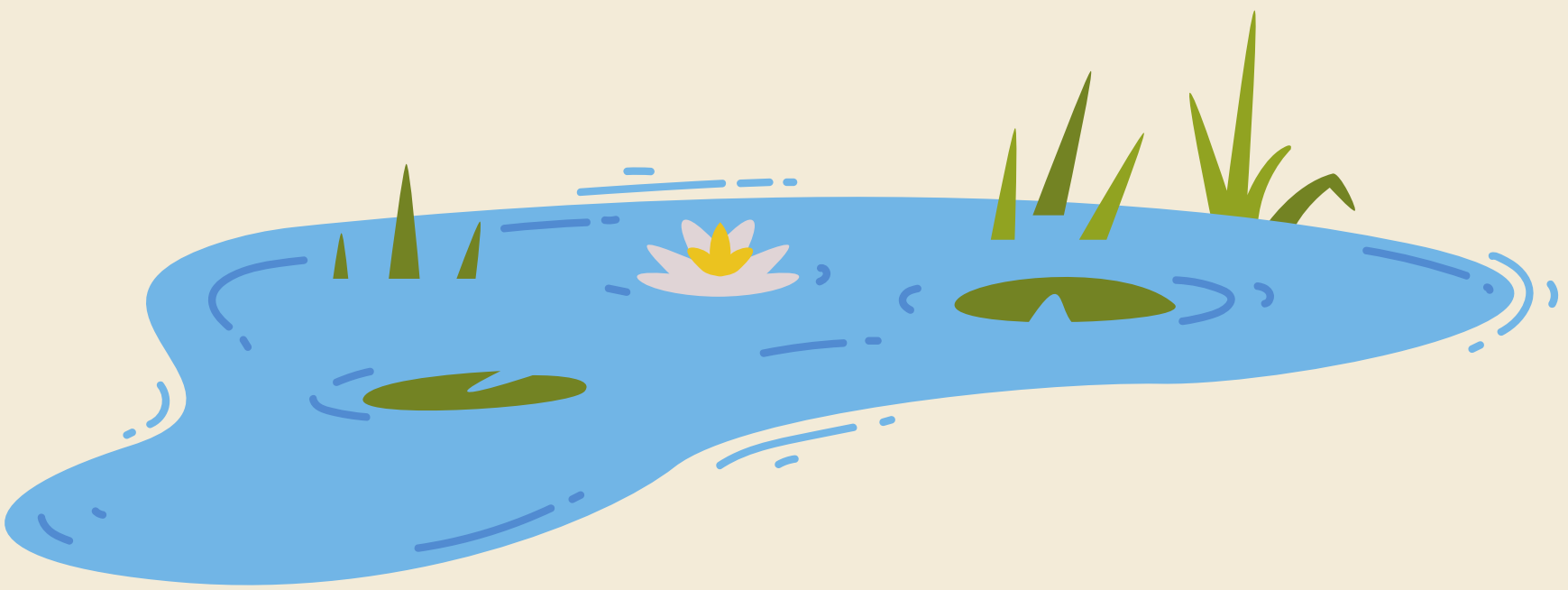
- Protect yourself from the radiation by lying on the ground behind a large rock or log



- Breathe air close to the floor through wet clothing

LEAVE THE AREA

- Stay away from areas with a lot of vegetation.



- If possible, identify an area with water where you can defend yourself from high temperatures.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO LEAVE ON YOUR OWN



- Try to inform authorities and wait for the authorities to arrive.



EVACUATION

- Do not abandon the building unless your escape is completely secured.

SHELTERING IN YOUR HOME DURING A WILDFIRE



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In the event that all other evacuation plans fail and leaving your property is not an option, sheltering in your home should be a last resort. Adequate preparation is crucial if you find yourself in this situation.

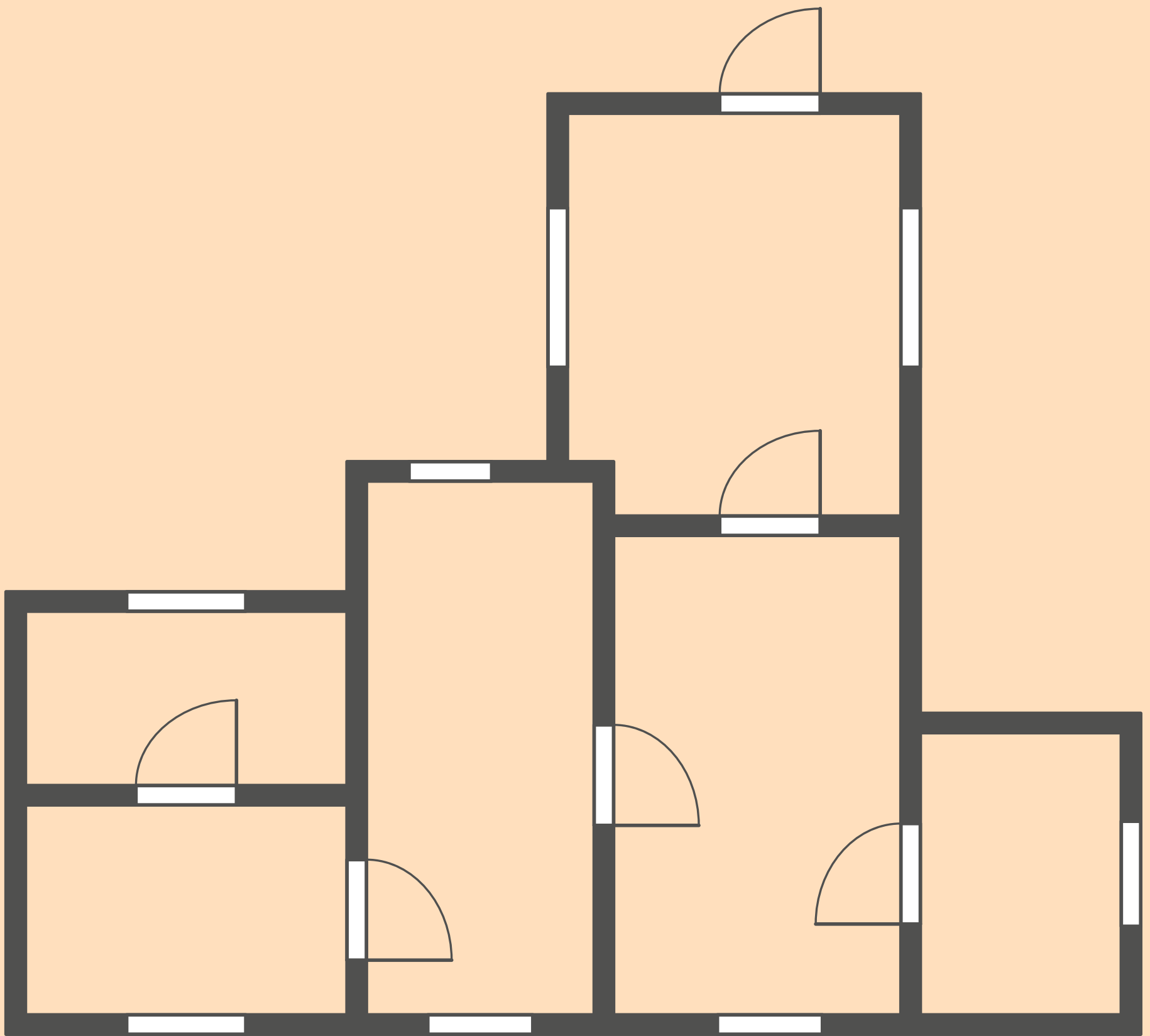


Ensure you have an emergency kit ready, including protective clothing and masks for everyone who may need to take shelter.



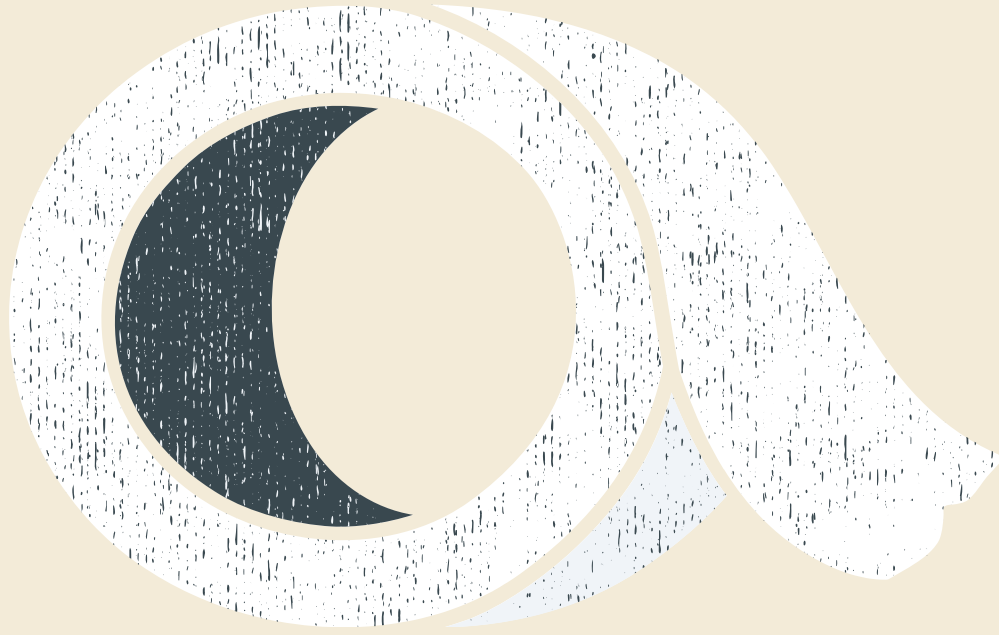
**HERE ARE KEY STEPS
TO FOLLOW WHEN SHELTERING
IN YOUR HOME DURING
A WILDFIRE**



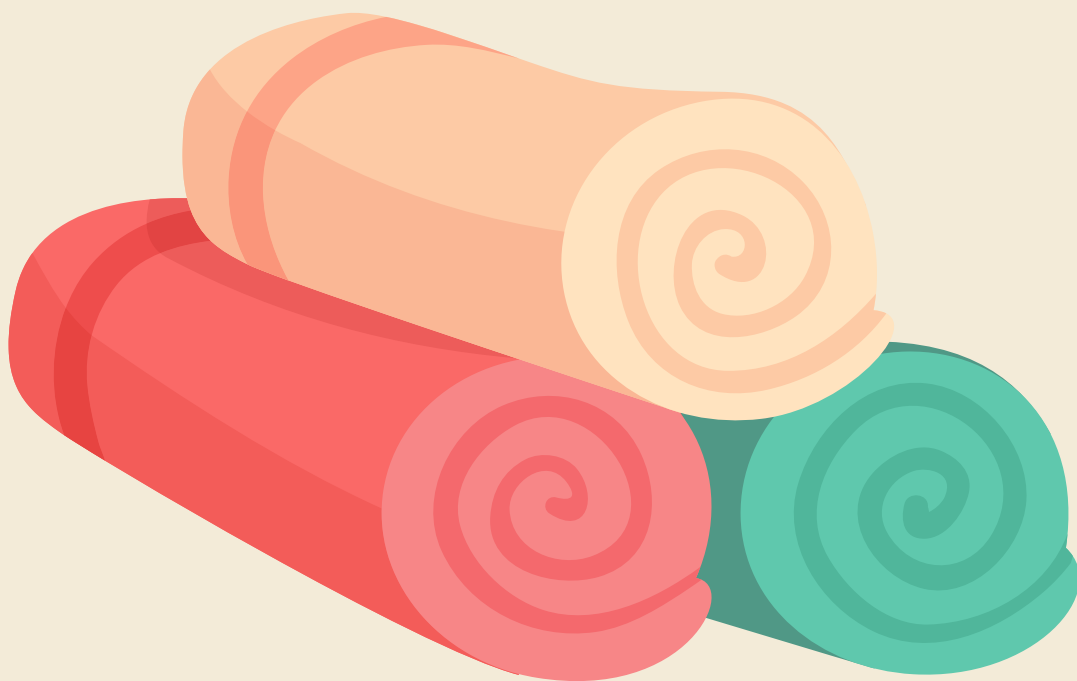


- Choose a room with two exits, furthest from the fire front. At least one exit must lead outside.

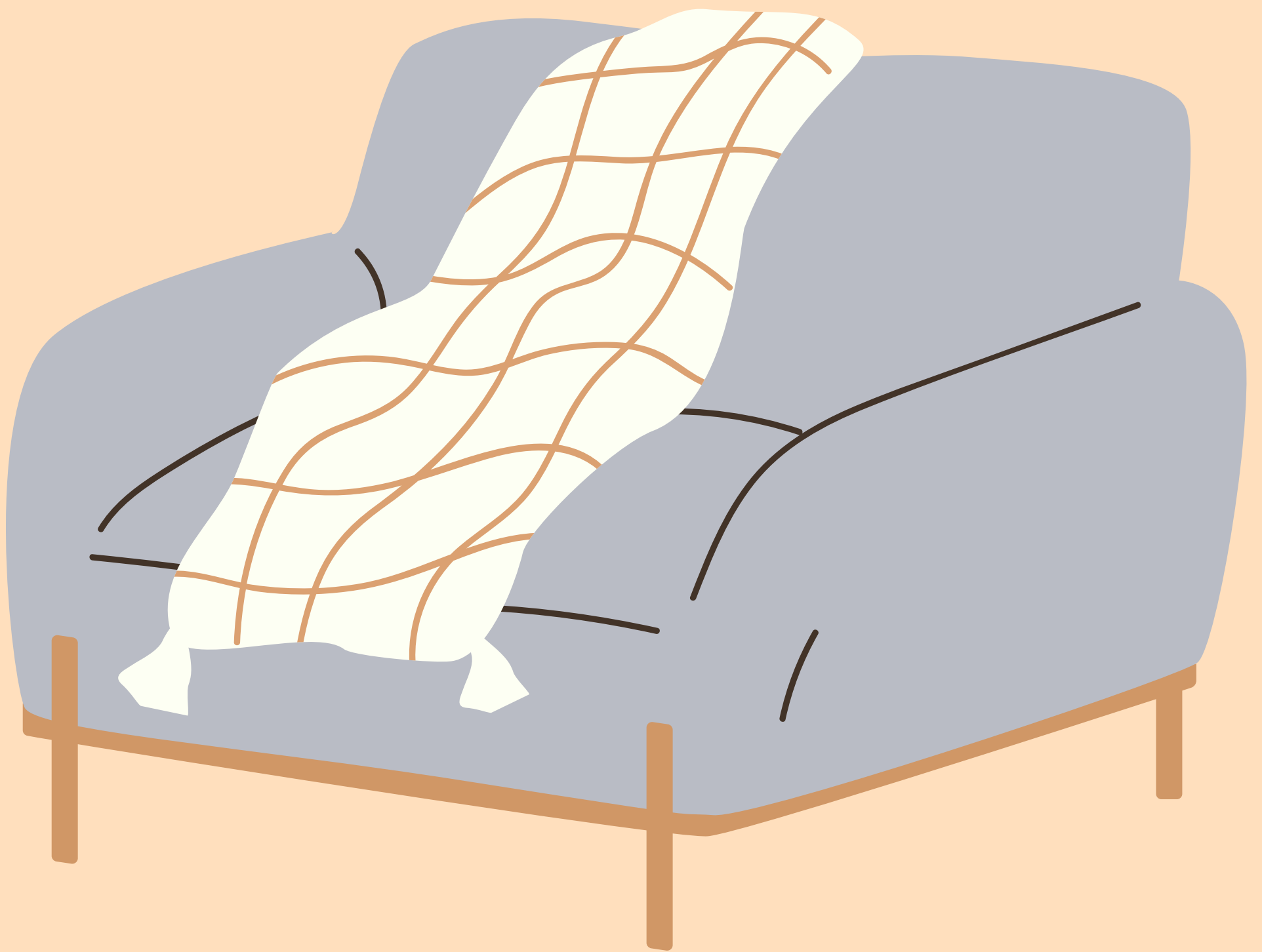
- Seal all doors and windows as securely as possible.



- Wet towels and rugs and place them along the inside of external doorways.



- Keep woolen blankets nearby for protection against radiant heat.



- Take down curtains and move furniture away from windows.

- Remove flammable items outside the house, such as doormats.



- Stay inside the house when the fire front is passing.

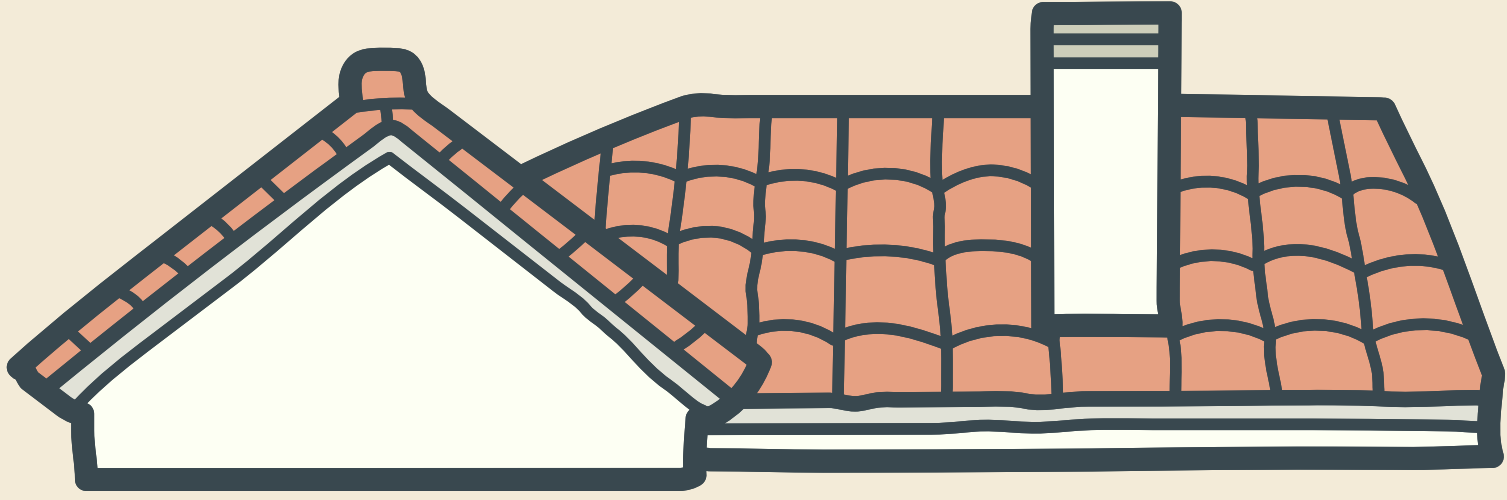


- If people expect you to leave, communicate that you are staying.



- Actively defend your property by extinguishing spot fires.





- Check the roof cavity through the manhole for any spot fires.



- Stay low to limit exposure to smoke.

- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.



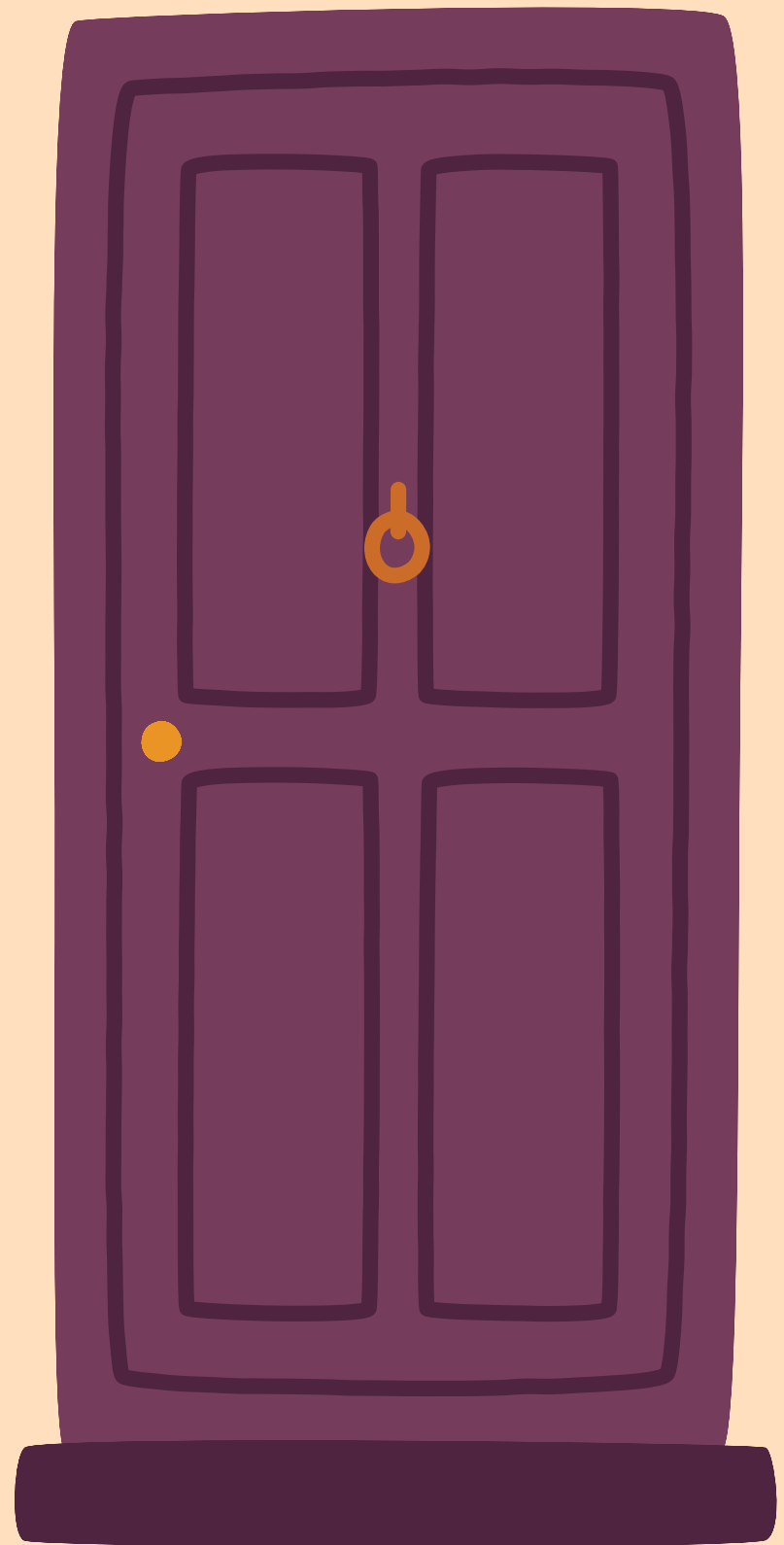
- Shelter in the house for as long as possible.



**IF YOUR HOUSE CATCHES
FIRE AND CONDITIONS
BECOME UNBEARABLE**



- Leave through the door furthest from the approaching fire.

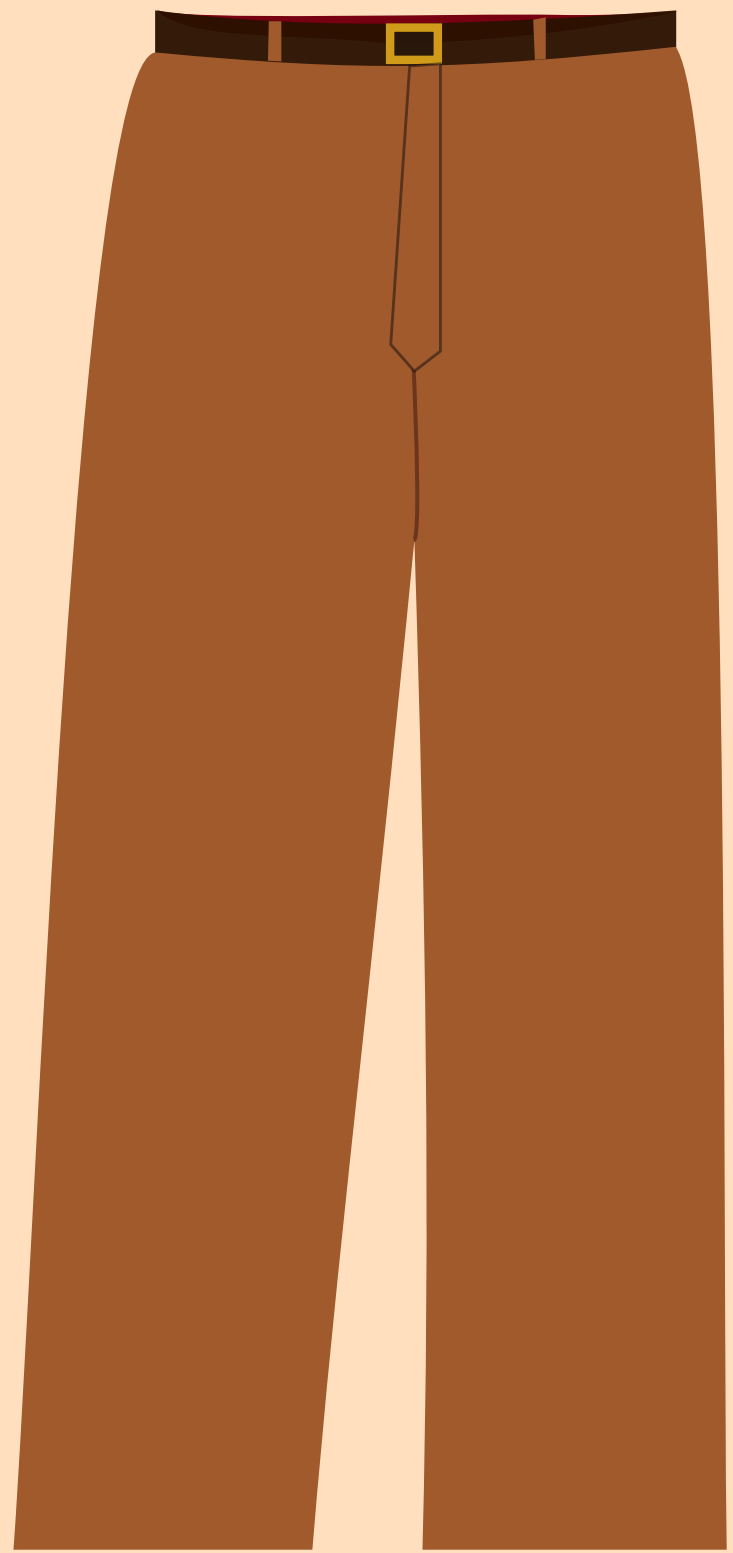
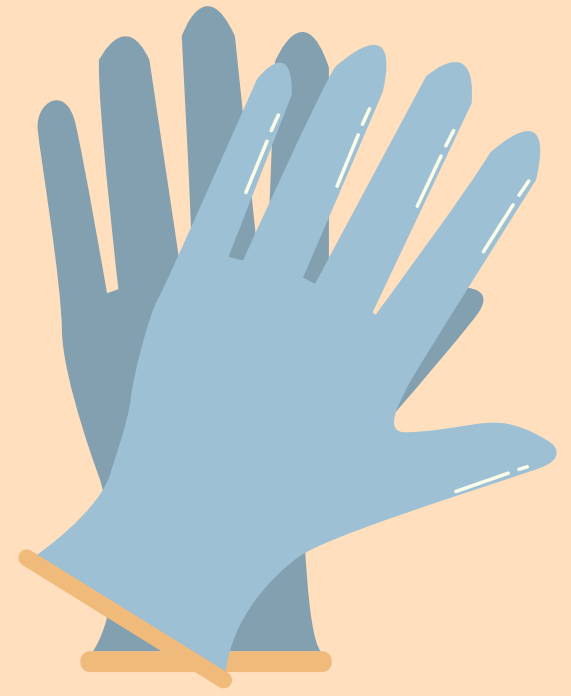


- Go to an area that has already been burnt.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM RADIANT HEAT

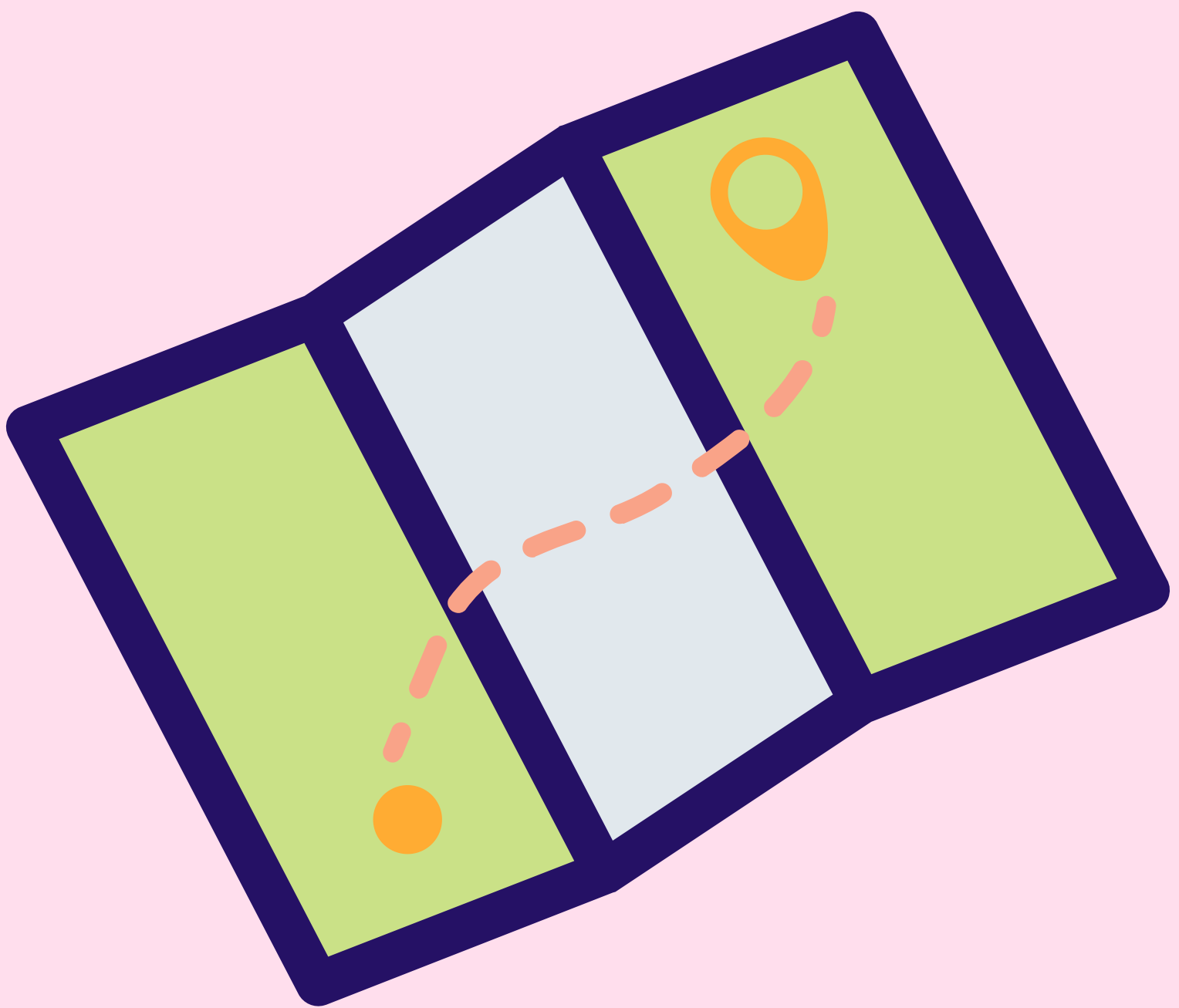


- Wear thick, long sleeves and long trousers.



- Use strong leather boots, gloves, and head protection.

TRAVELING DURING A WILDFIRE



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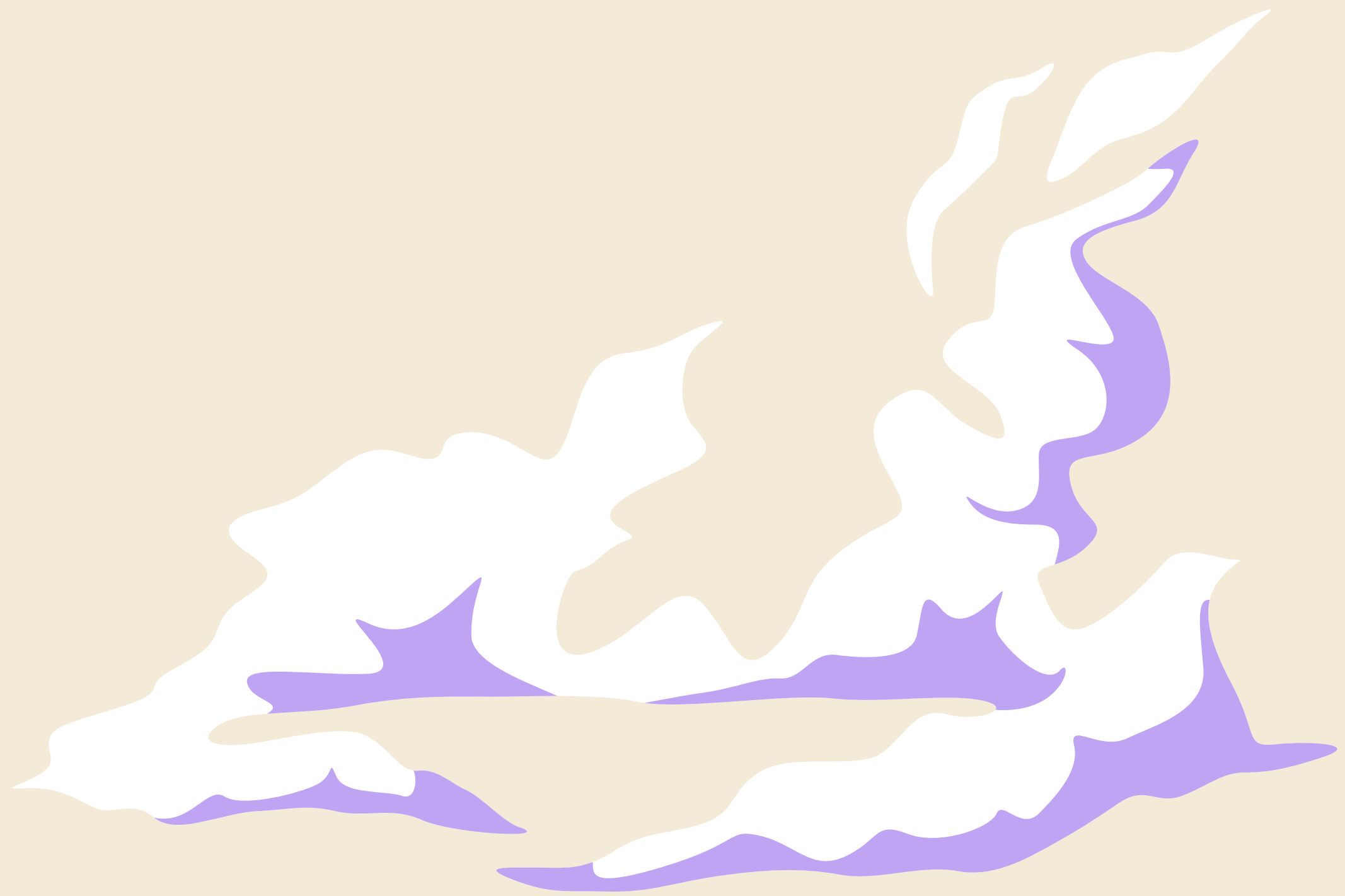
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Bushfires can start without warning, posing a significant risk to those traveling or staying near bushland.

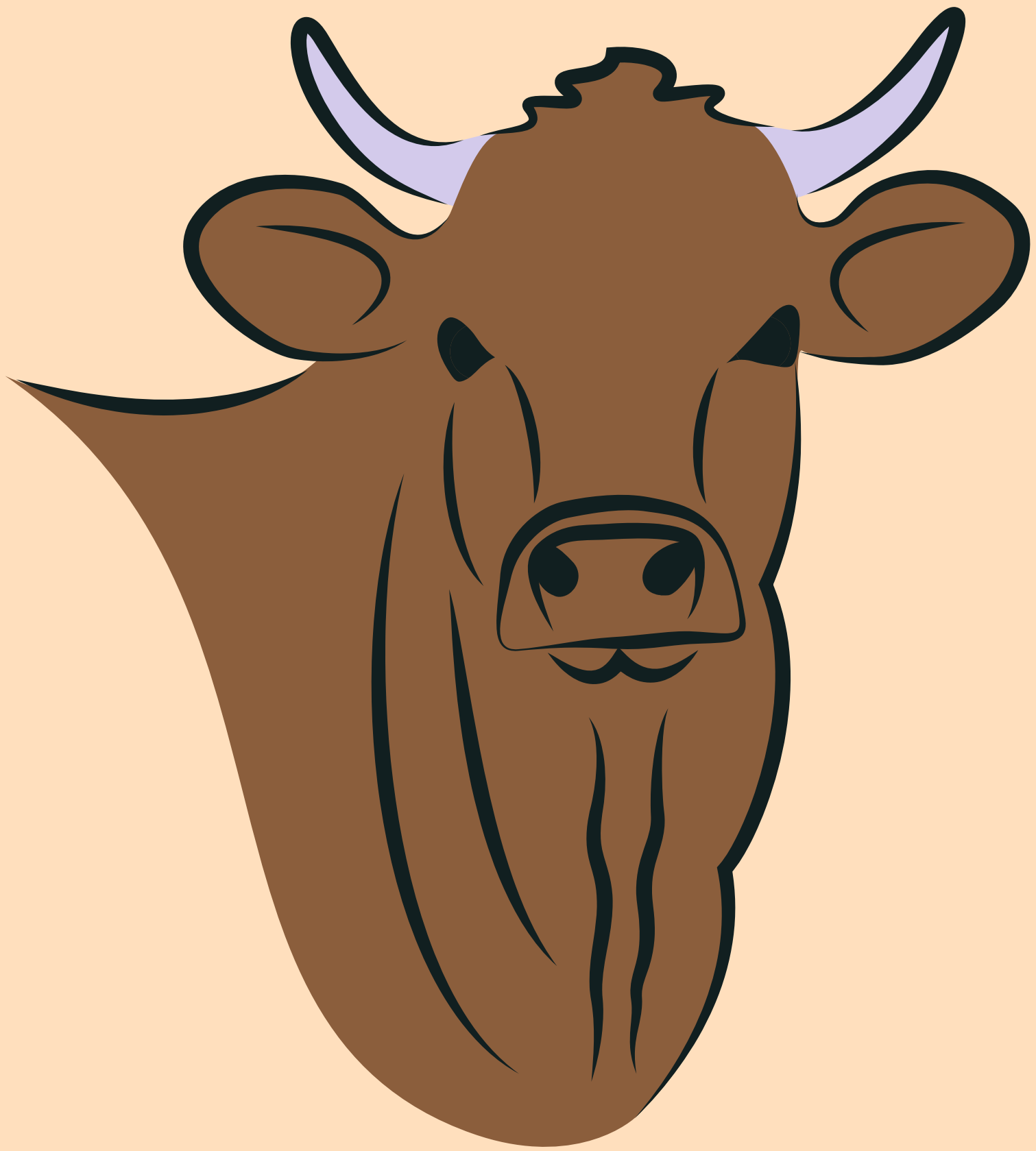
To enhance your safety,
pack an emergency kit
with essential items such
as woollen blankets,
drinking water, and
protective clothing.





**IF THERE IS A LOT OF
SMOKE**

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- Slow down, considering the presence of people, vehicles, and livestock on the road.

- Turn on your car headlights and hazard lights.



- Close the car windows and outside vents.



- If visibility is poor, pull over and wait until the smoke clears.

IF YOU BECOME TRAPPED BY A FIRE



Sheltering inside a vehicle is a high-risk strategy, and survival is unlikely in severe circumstances

- Park the vehicle off the road in an area with little vegetation, facing towards the oncoming fire front.



- Turn off the engine.

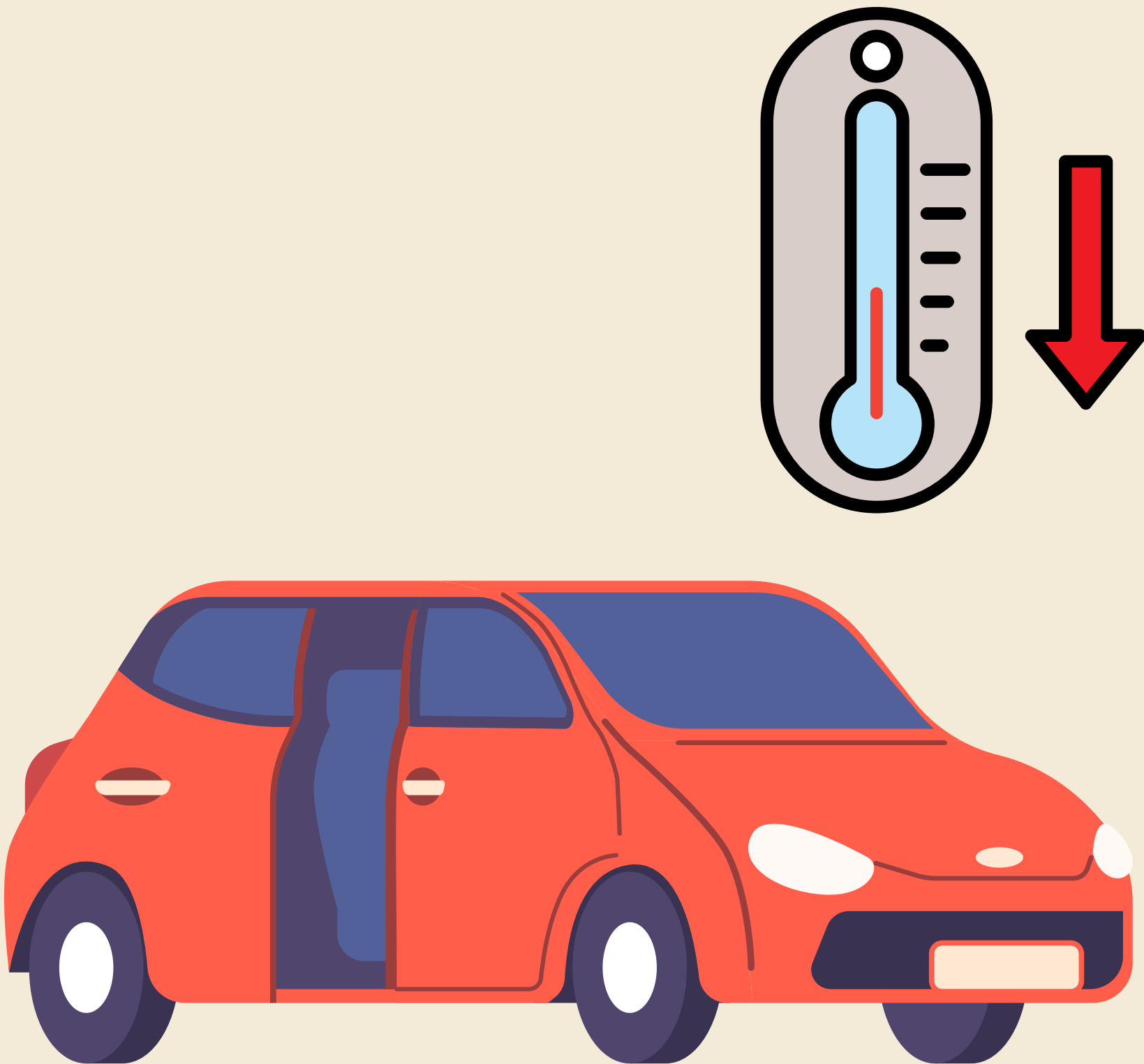
- Close the car doors, windows, and outside vents; then call 112.



- Stay in the car until the fire front has passed. Stay close to the floor, covering your mouth with a damp cloth to avoid inhaling smoke.



- Stay covered in woollen blankets, drink water, and wait for assistance



- Once the front has passed and the temperature has dropped, cautiously exit the vehicle.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES IN CASE OF FIRE



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Effective communication with state authorities in case of a forest fire is crucial for timely response and management of the situation. Here's a guide on how to communicate effectively:



EARLY REPORTING

Identify the signs

If you see smoke, flames, or any signs of a fire starting, it's essential to report it immediately.



Know who to contact

Have the contact details of local emergency services, forest service, or state fire management authority readily available. In many regions, dialing a general emergency number (like 112 in Europe) is the recommended way to report a fire.



Provide detailed information

When reporting a fire, give as much detail as possible about the location (use landmarks if exact addresses aren't available), the size, and behaviour of the fire. Information about wind direction and speed can also be helpful if known.



STAY INFORMED

Official channels

Follow local authorities on social media and stay tuned to local news channels for updates. Authorities often use these platforms to disseminate information quickly.



Emergency alerts

Sign up for emergency alerts if your community offers them. These can provide real-time updates and instructions directly from state authorities.



Community meetings

Attend any community meetings where fire officials provide updates and guidance. These meetings are also an opportunity to ask questions and express any concerns.



FOLLOW EVACUATION ORDERS

Understand the orders

Know the difference between different types of evacuation orders (e.g., ready, set, go), and follow them strictly.



Evacuation routes



Familiarize yourself with all potential evacuation routes in advance and follow the recommended routes rather than using GPS navigation which may not be updated with real-time hazards or road closures.

Communicate your status

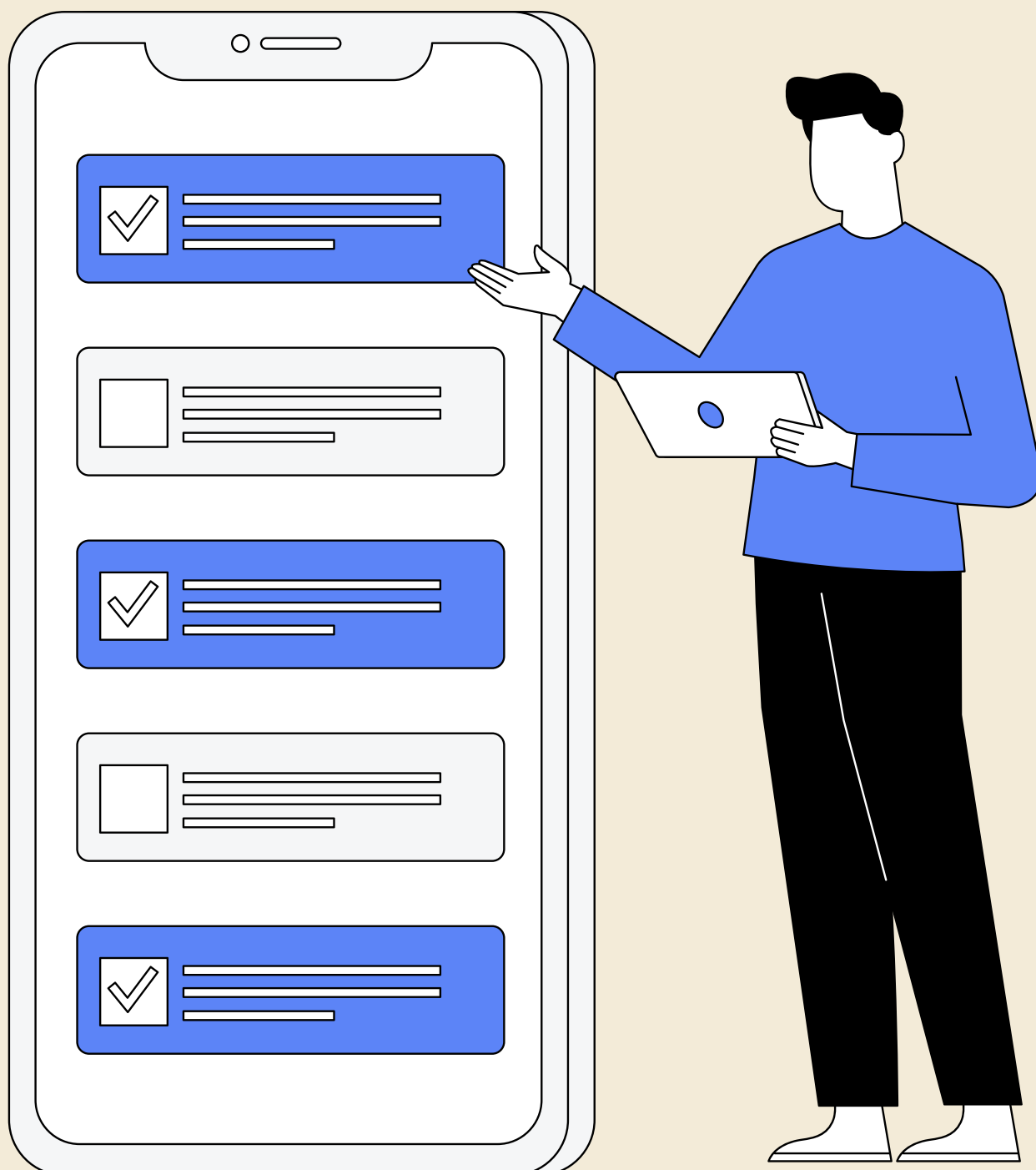
Once you evacuate, let authorities know where you are if there is a registration system in place. This helps in accounting for all residents and aids in directing resources.



POST-FIRE COMMUNICATION

Damage reporting

After a fire, communicate any damage to your property to authorities. This can often be done through disaster relief services provided by the authorities or municipalities.



Seek assistance

If you need help after a fire, such as temporary housing, supplies, or psychological support, contact your local municipality. They can direct you to the appropriate services.



Community recovery meetings

Participate in community meetings that focus on recovery efforts. These meetings can provide vital information on assistance programmes and rebuilding efforts.



DOCUMENTATION

Document everything

Take photos, keep receipts, and make detailed notes of damage and recovery efforts. This documentation will be crucial for insurance claims and possible government aid.



USE OF FIRE EXTINGUISHER



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Using a fire extinguisher properly is crucial for effectively putting out fires while ensuring safety. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to use one:



IDENTIFY THE RIGHT TYPE OF FIRE EXTINGUISHER

First, you need to make sure that the fire extinguisher you plan to use is suitable for the type of fire you're dealing with:



CLASS A

For ordinary combustibles like wood,
paper, and cloth.



CLASS B

For flammable liquids like gasoline, oil, and grease.



CLASS C

For electrical fires.



CLASS D

For fires involving flammable metals
(common in industrial settings).



CLASS K

For kitchen fires involving cooking oils
and fats.



Most homes and offices use an ABC type, which is versatile enough for most situations except for Class D and K fires.



REMEMBER THE PASS TECHNIQUE

Use the PASS technique to
operate the extinguisher.



PULL

Pull the pin at the top of the extinguisher, breaking the tamper seal.



AIM

Aim the nozzle or hose at the base of the fire, standing approximately 2 to 3 meters away.



SQUEEZE

Squeeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent.



SWEEP

Sweep the nozzle from side to side, moving carefully toward the fire until it appears to be out. Keep an eye on the area in case the fire reignites



SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

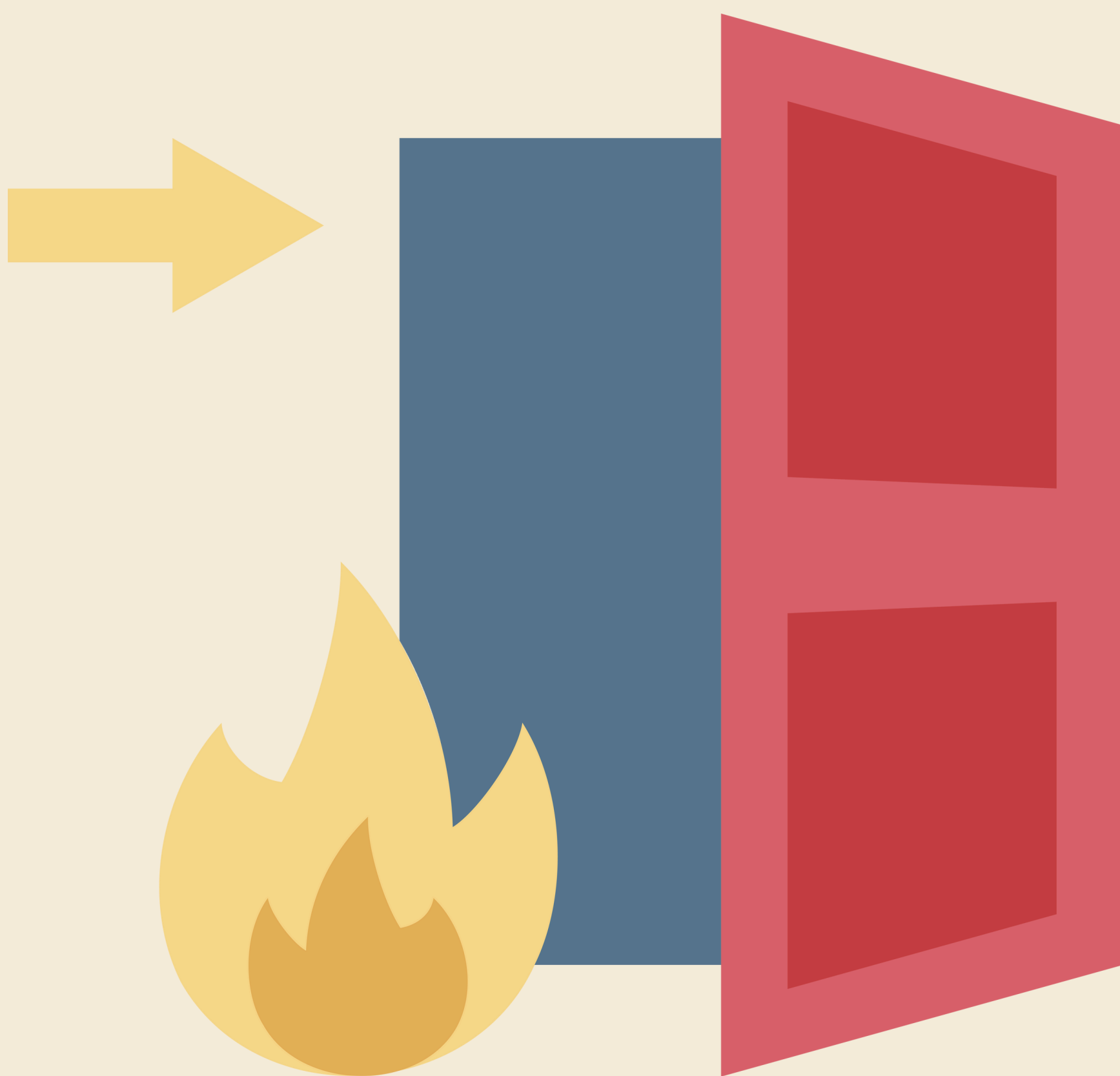
Act quickly but safely

Always call the fire department immediately if the fire seems uncontrollable or if it's not extinguished after using the extinguisher.



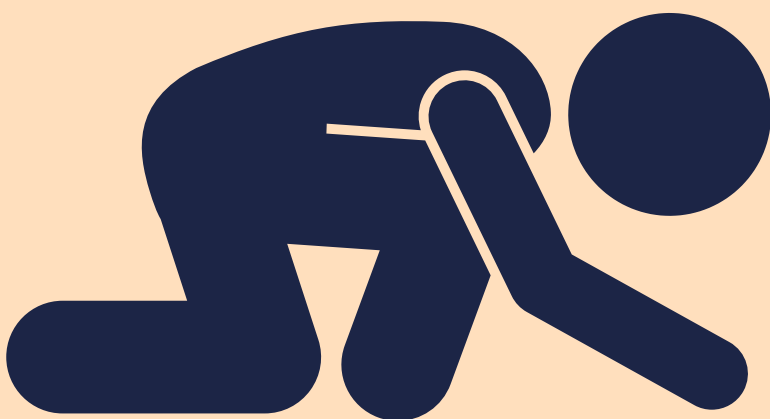
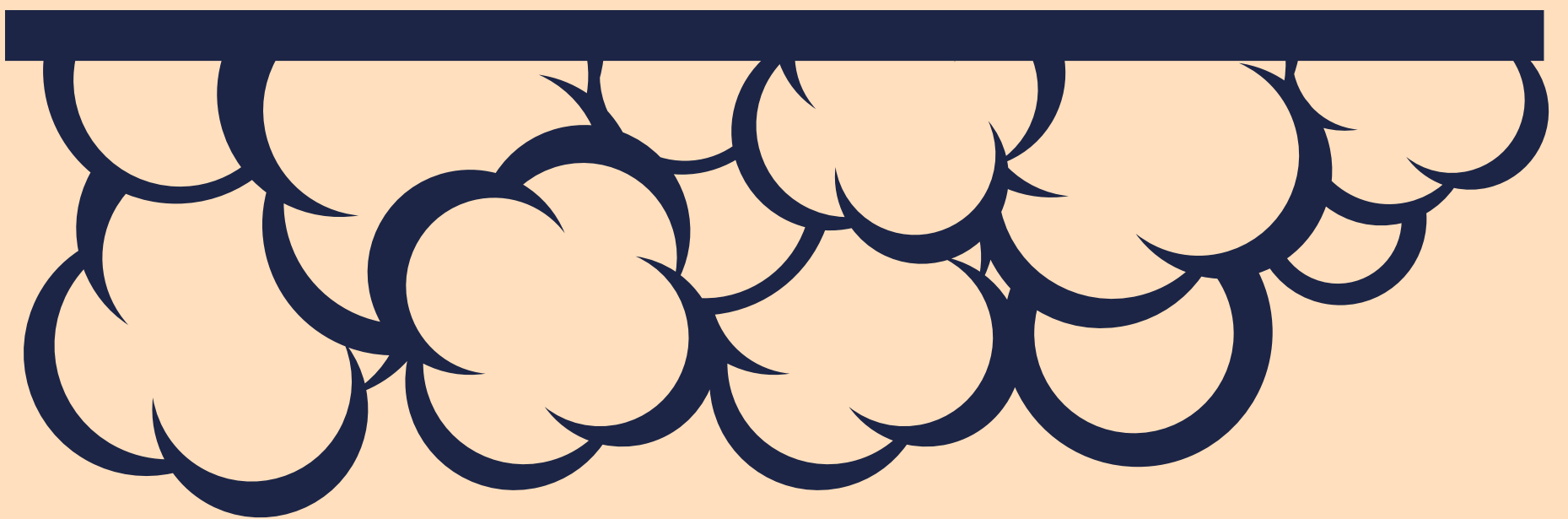
Maintain an escape route

Never allow the fire to come between you and your escape route.



Avoid smoke

Inhaling smoke can be deadly, so try to stay low if there is smoke and leave the area if it becomes too dense.



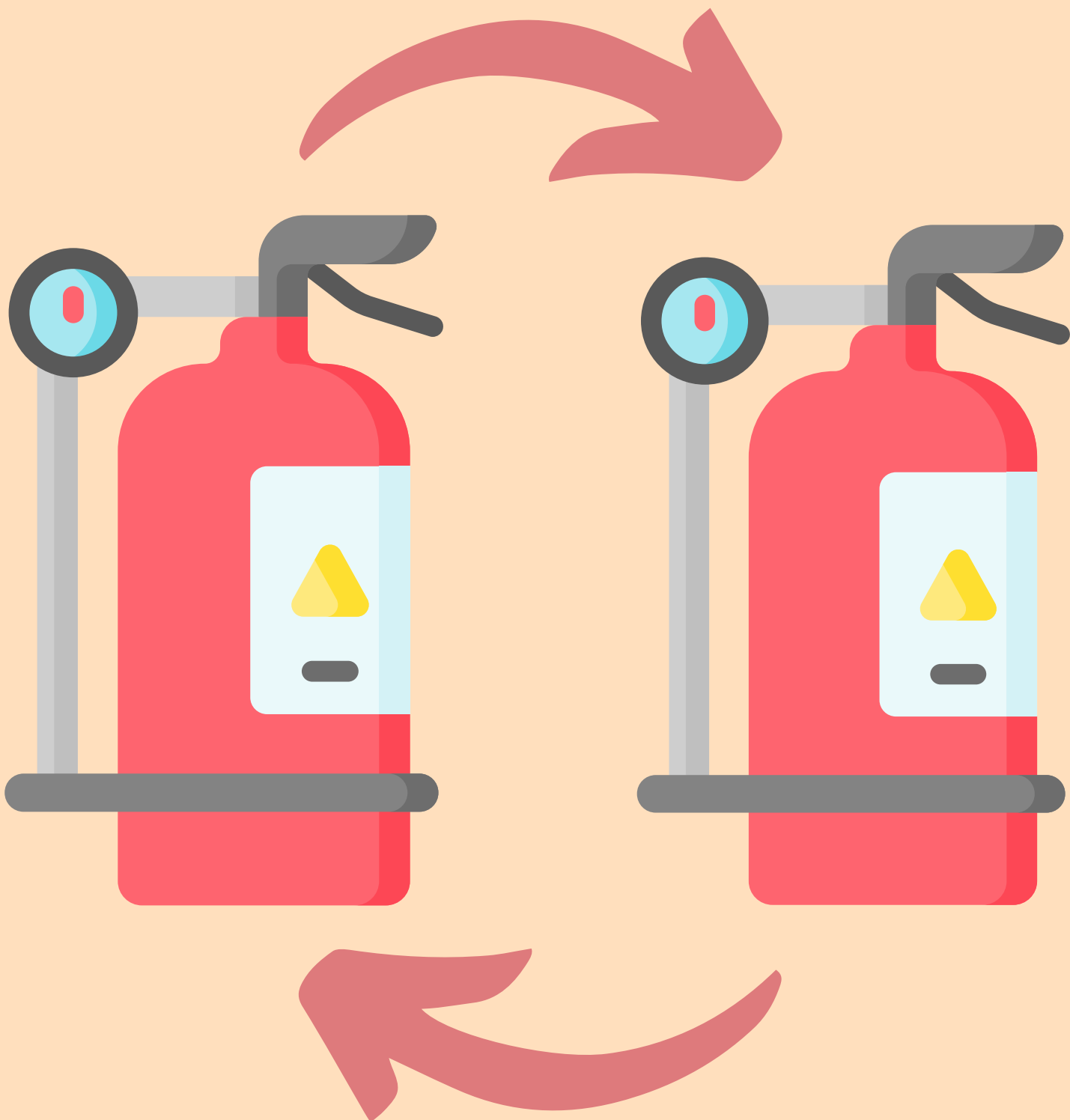
Inspect the extinguisher

Before use, quickly check the extinguisher for visible damage, ensuring it's still pressurized and sealed.



AFTER USE

Once a fire extinguisher has been used, even partially, it needs to be recharged or replaced. Never put back an extinguisher that has been used as it may not function properly in future emergencies.

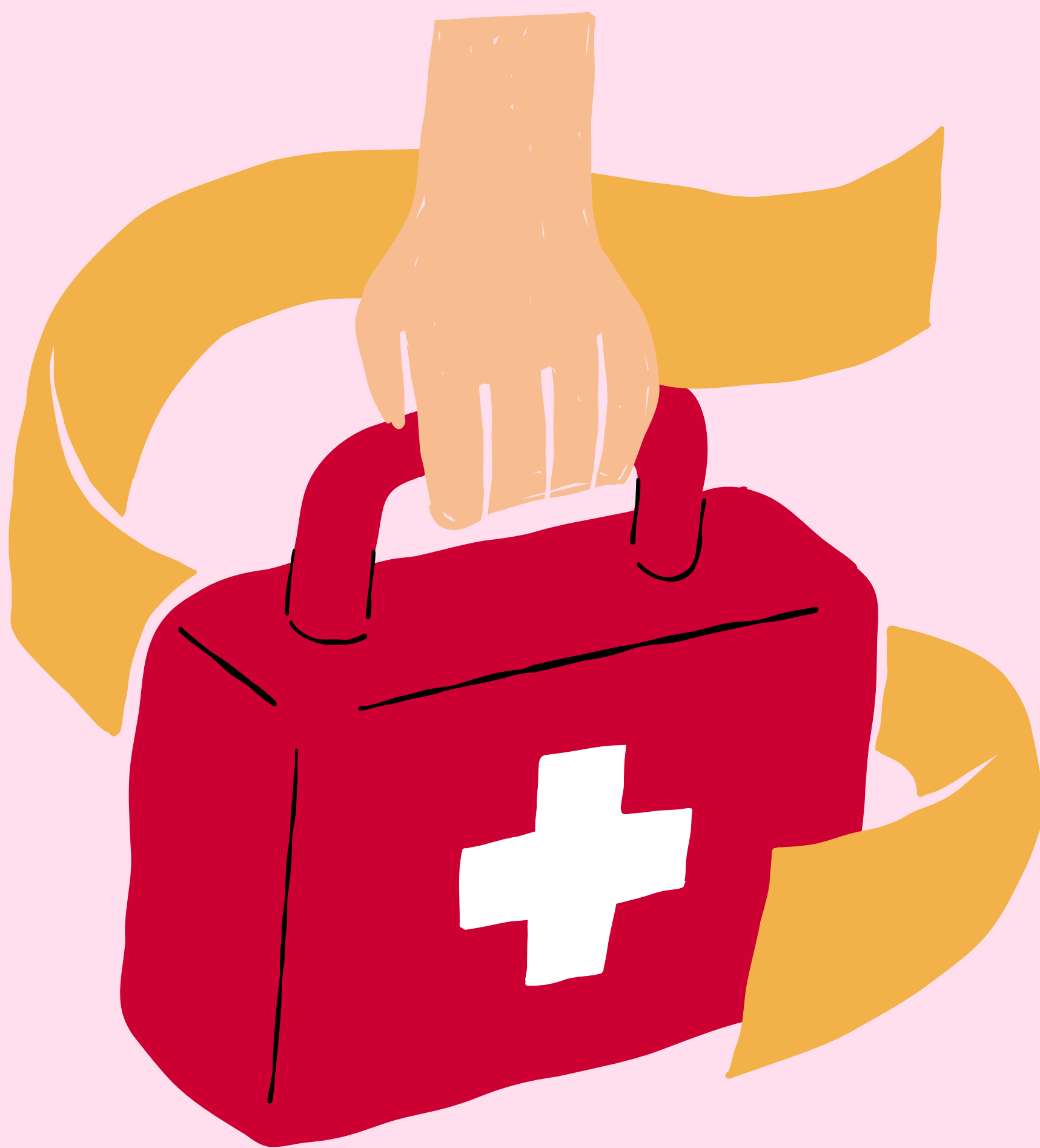


TRAINING AND FAMILIARIZATION

Familiarize yourself with the operation of a fire extinguisher if you have one at home or in your workplace. Many local fire departments offer training sessions.



FIRST AID FOR WILDFIRE-RELATED INJURIES



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BURNS

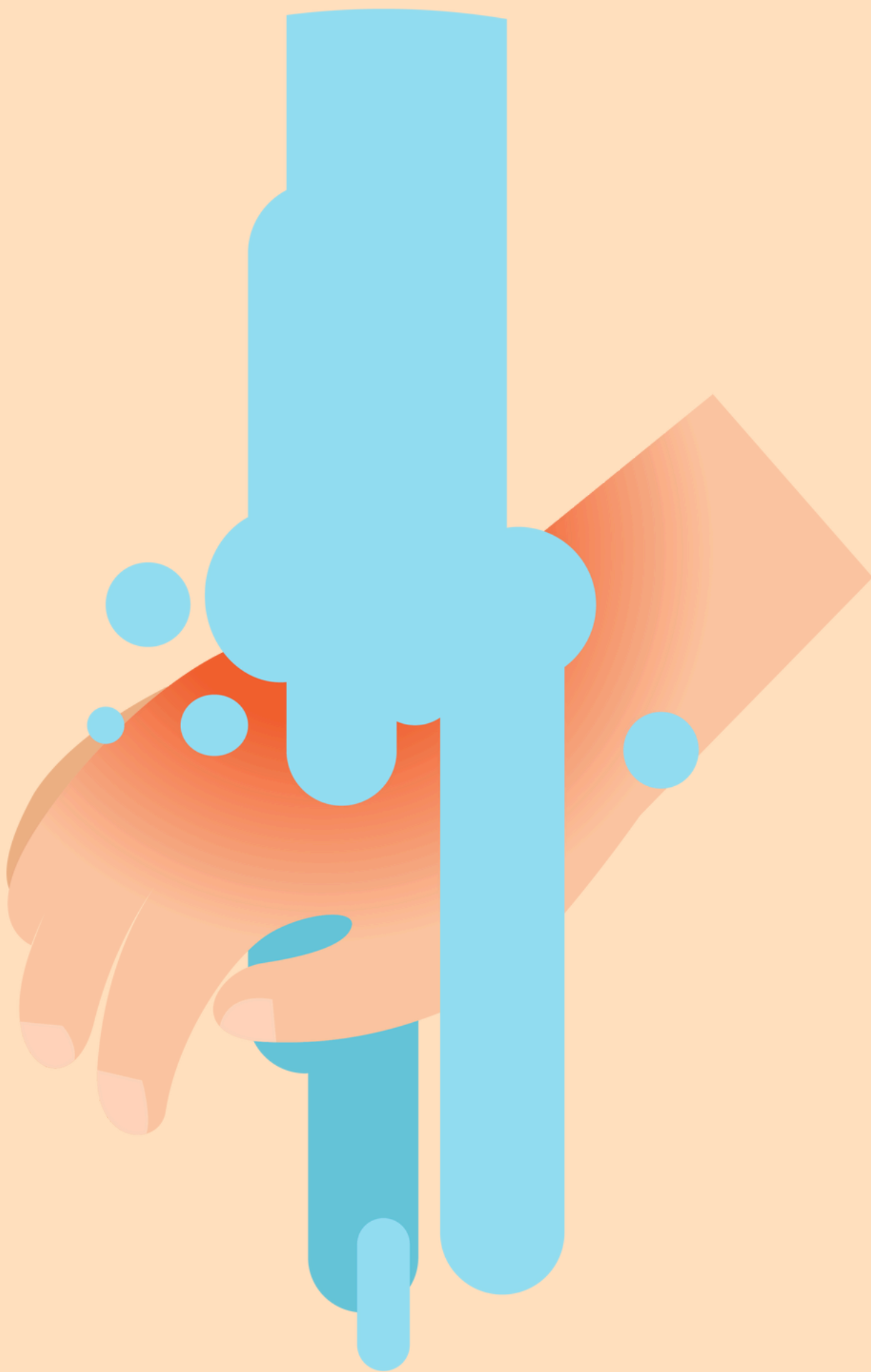
Assess the burn severity

First-degree burns cause redness, second-degree burns cause blisters, third-degree burns may cause charred or white skin.



Cool the burn

Use cool water, not ice, to reduce the temperature of the burn for 10-20 minutes.



Cover the burn

Use a sterile, non-adhesive bandage or clean cloth to protect the burned area.



Treat pain and prevent infection

Over-the-counter pain relievers can help manage pain. Avoid applying creams, ointments, or grease to severe burns.



Seek medical attention

Always seek professional medical help for second-degree burns larger than 7 centimeters and all third-degree burns.



SMOKE INHALATION

**Move to fresh air
immediately**

Avoid further exposure to smoke.



Check for respiratory distress

Watch for signs of respiratory distress like coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest pain.



Loosen tight clothing

Help the person breathe more freely by loosening belts, ties, and other restrictive clothing.



Stay calm

Keeping the person calm
can help manage their
breathing more effectively



Seek medical attention

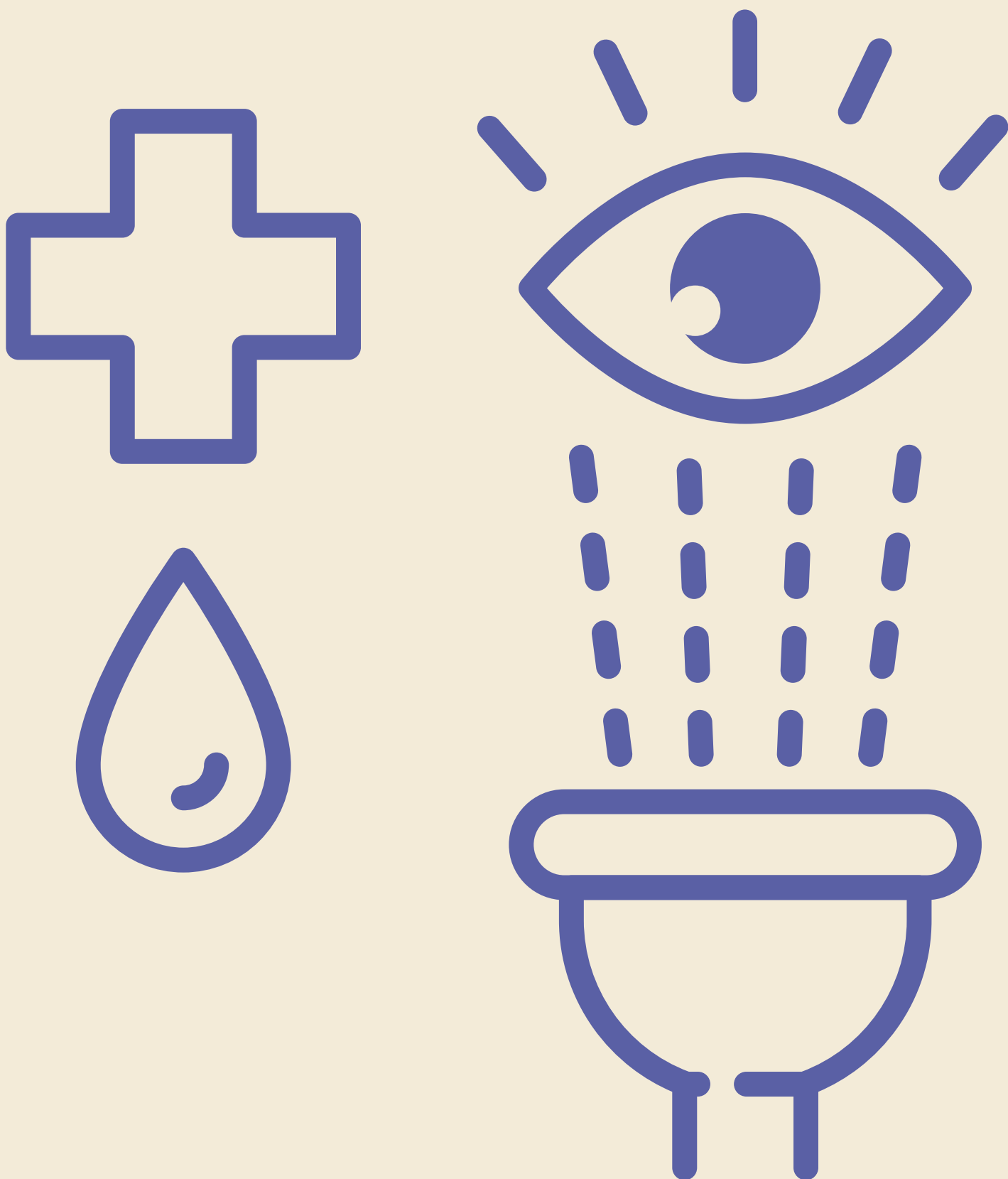
If breathing problems continue,
professional medical help is needed.



EYE IRRITATION

Rinse eyes

Use clean water to rinse the eyes if they are affected by ash or smoke.



Avoid rubbing

Rubbing can cause more irritation
or damage.



Wear sunglasses

Protect irritated eyes from light.



HEAT EXHAUSTION AND DEHYDRATION

Find a cool place

Move the person to a shaded or air-conditioned area.



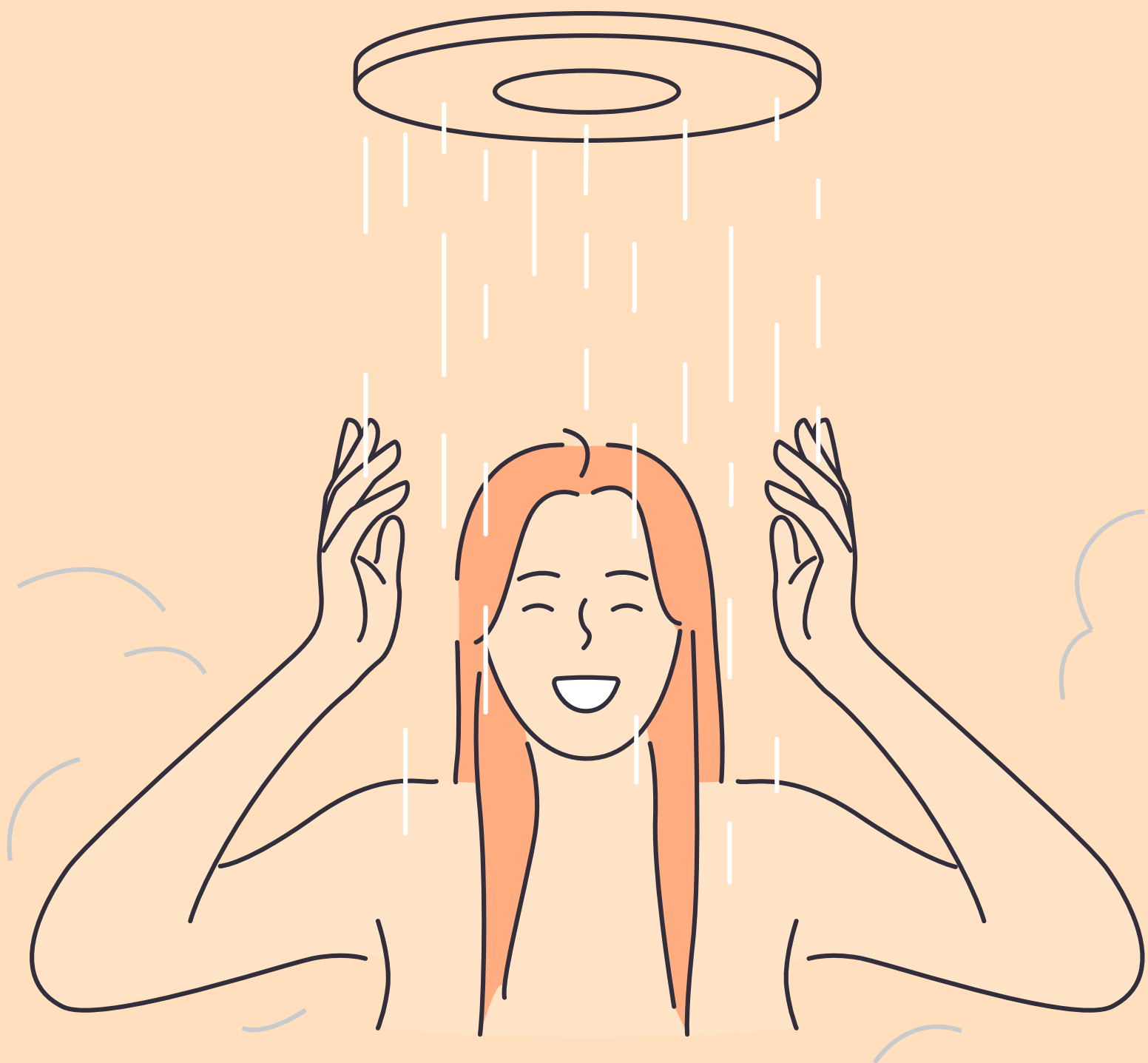
Hydrate

Provide plenty of water to drink.



Cool the body

Apply cool, wet cloths or have them take a cool shower.



Monitor for heatstroke

Look for signs of heatstroke, such as high body temperature, rapid pulse, dizziness, nausea, confusion, or unconsciousness.



GENERAL ADVICE

Prepare a first aid kit

Always have it ready and accessible.



Plan evacuation routes

Know how to leave your area quickly and safely.

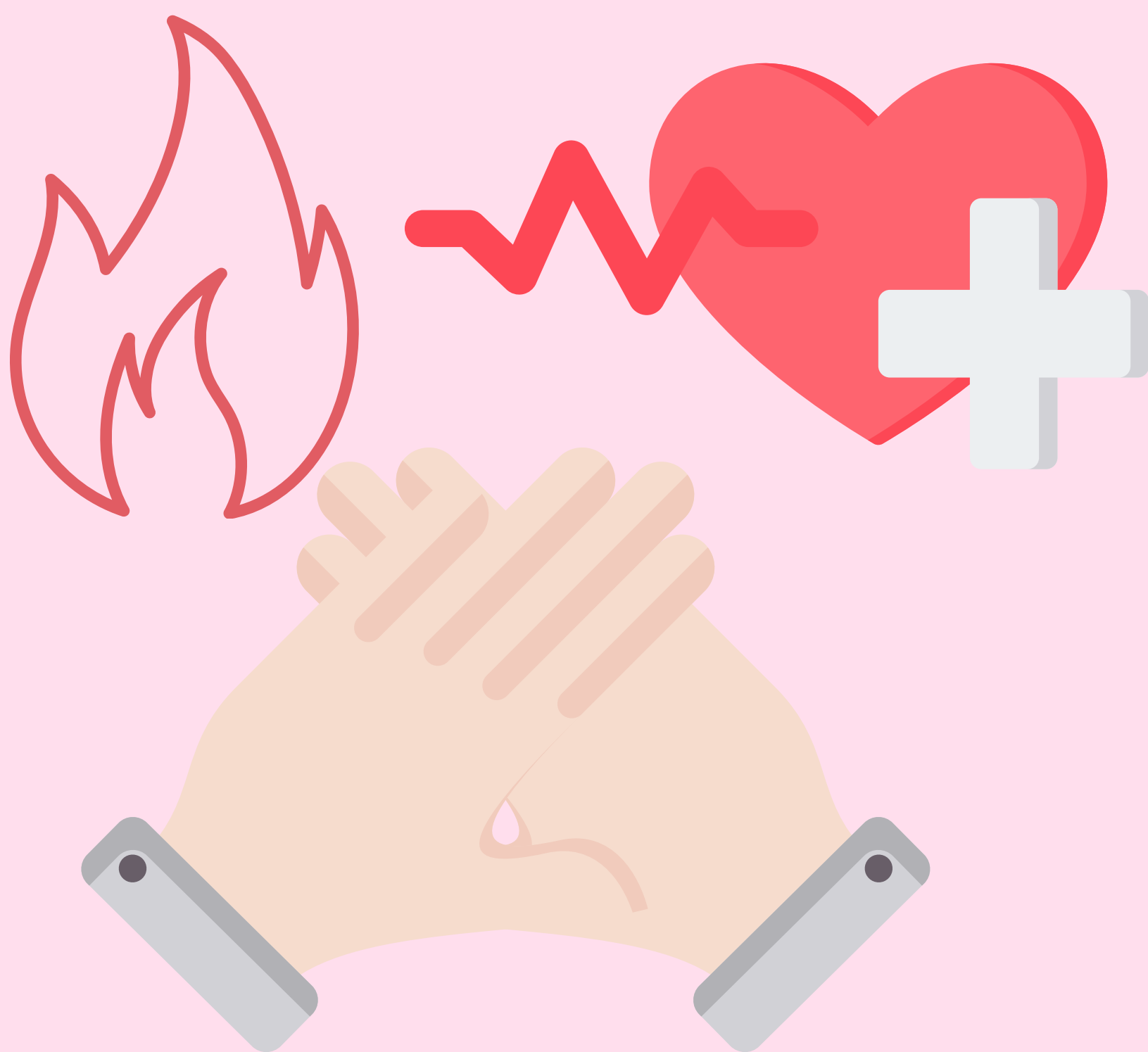


Stay informed

Keep a battery-powered radio to receive updates on the wildfire.



CPR IN THE CONTEXT OF A WILDFIRE



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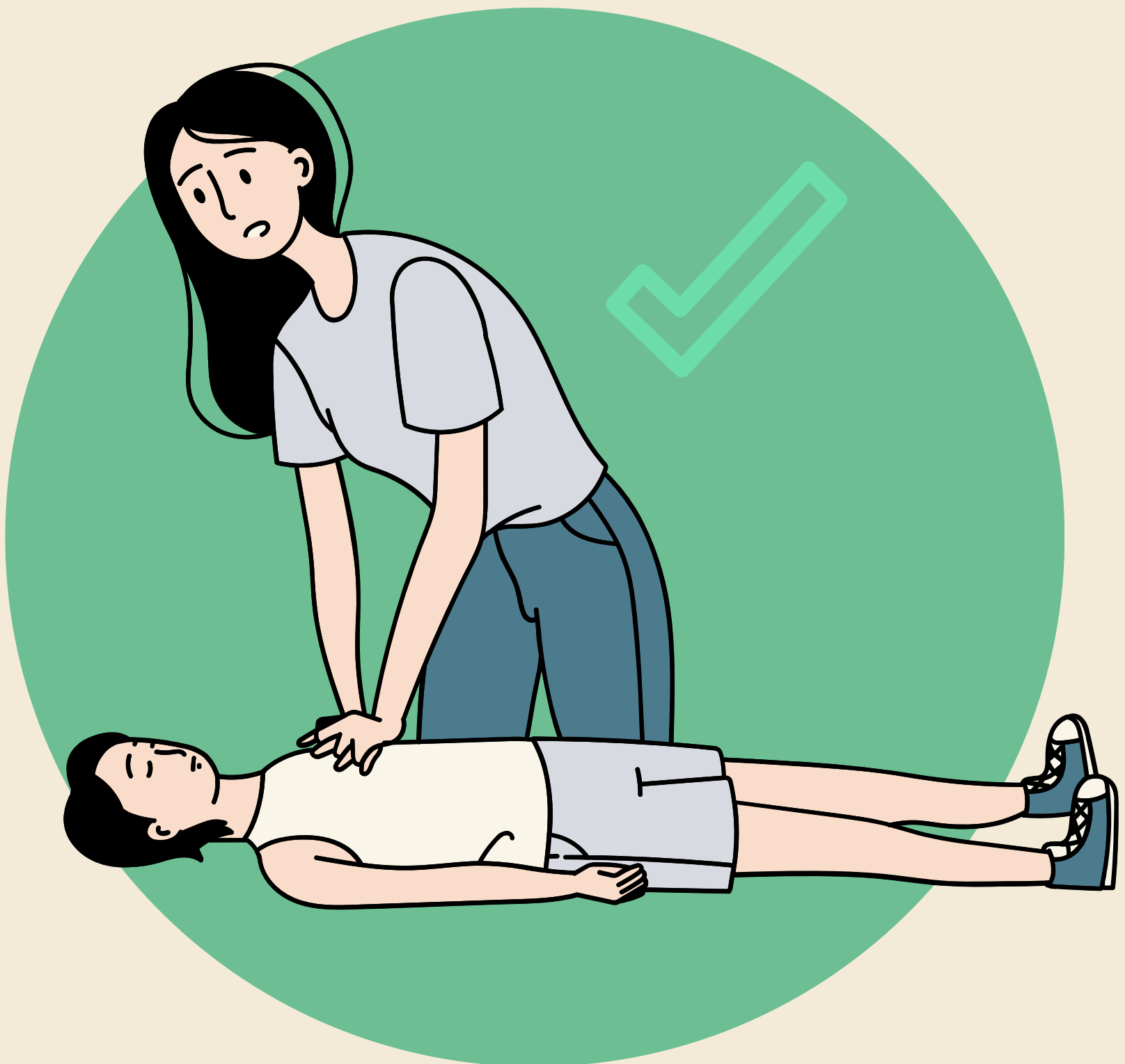


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ENSURE SAFETY

Before starting CPR, ensure that the area is safe from fire and smoke. Your safety is a priority.



CHECK RESPONSIVENESS

Shake and shout to check if the person is responsive. If there's no response, call for emergency help immediately if possible.



PERFORM CPR

Airway

Tilt the victim's head back and lift the chin to open the airway.



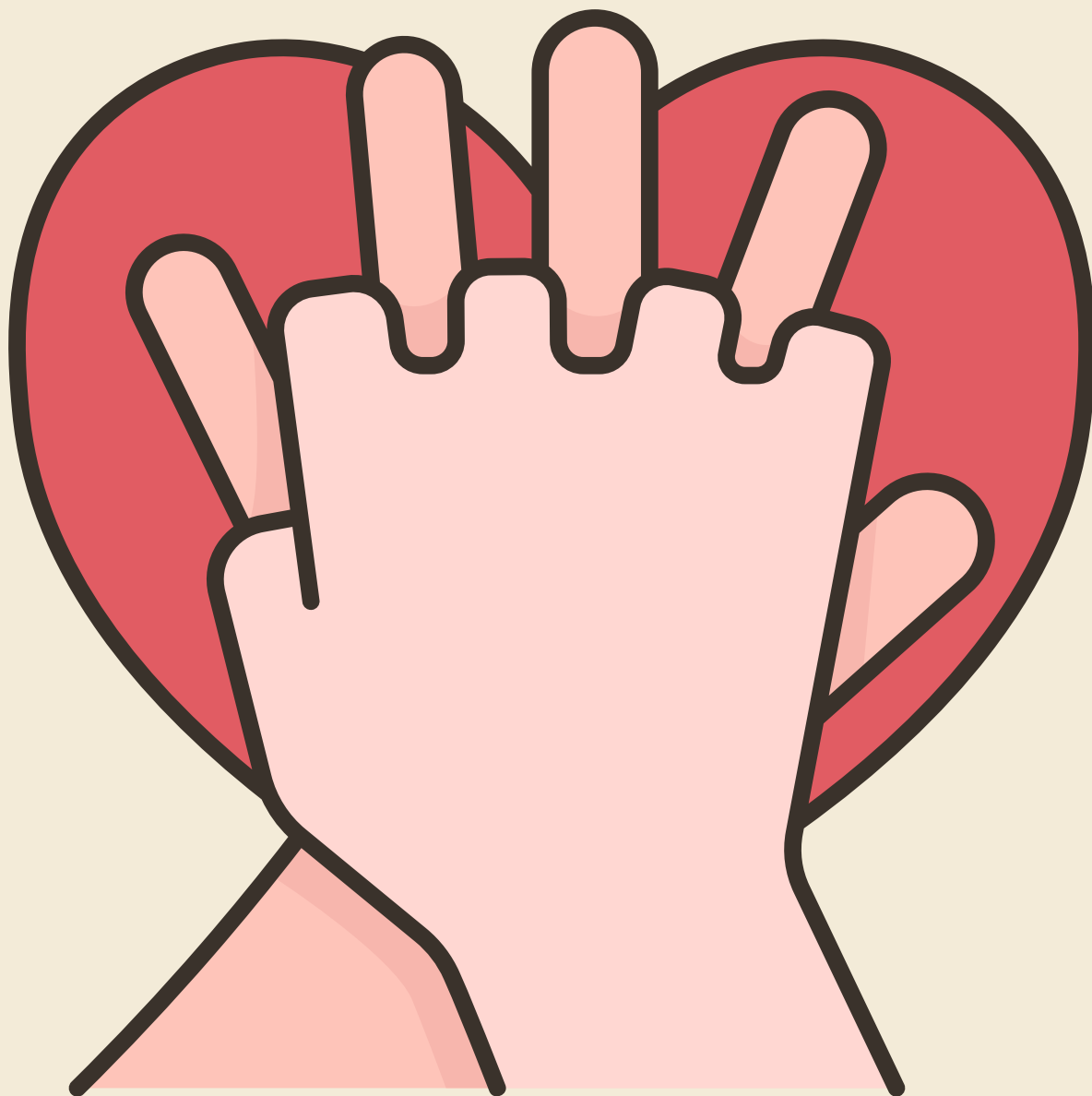
Breathing

Check for breathing; if there isn't any, start CPR immediately.



Compressions

Place the heel of your hand on the center of the person's chest. Place your other hand on top, interlocking your fingers. Keep your arms straight and your shoulders directly over your hands. Compress the chest at least 2 inches deep at a rate of 100 to 120 compressions per minute.



Breaths (if trained)

After every 30 compressions, give 2 rescue breaths by pinching the nose shut, covering the person's mouth with yours, and blowing to make the chest rise.



DEFIBRILLATOR (IF AVAILABLE)

Apply an automated external defibrillator (AED) if one is available and you are trained to use it. Follow the spoken directions provided by the AED.



SAFE USE OF FIRE TOOLS



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When dealing with wildfires, citizens who may find themselves in a situation to use fire tools need to do so with extreme caution. The primary concern is safety, as improper use can exacerbate the fire or cause personal injury. Here's how citizens can use fire tools safely in the context of wildfire preparation or protection.



UNDERSTAND THE TOOLS

Research and training

Before using any fire tools, it's important to understand their purpose and operation. If possible, seek training from local fire authorities or watch accredited online tutorials.



Common fire tools

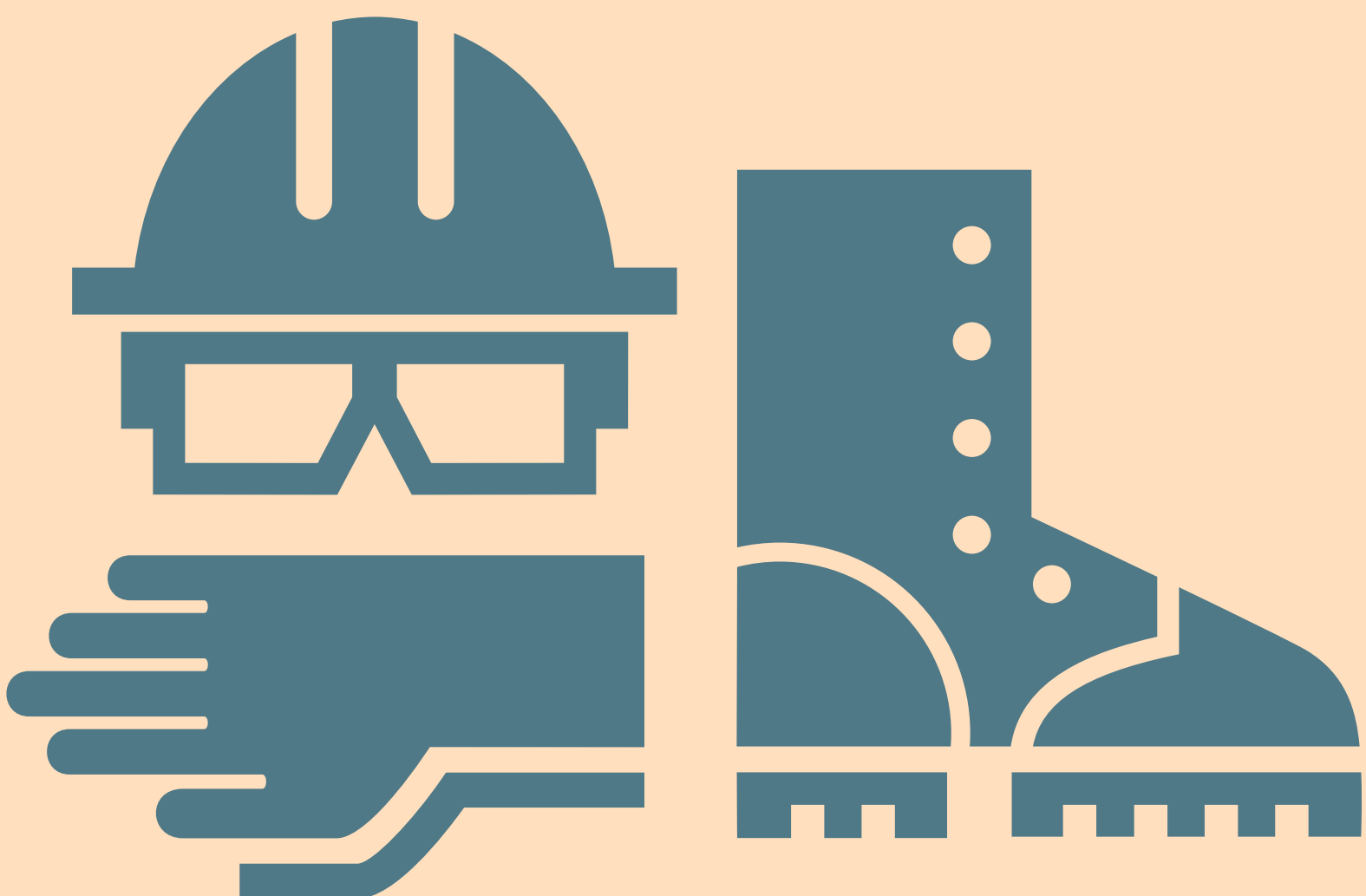
These include shovels, rakes, axes, chainsaws, and fire extinguishers. Each tool has a specific use, such as creating firebreaks or cutting down potentially flammable vegetation.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Wear protective clothing

Use heavy-duty gloves, long sleeves, long trousers, sturdy boots, and eye protection. This equipment protects against burns, flying debris, and other hazards.



Respiratory protection

Wear a mask or respirator to avoid inhaling ash, smoke, or dust, especially during intense physical activity.



PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE OF TOOLS

Inspect tools before use

Ensure that all tools are in good working condition. Check for loose parts, dull blades, or any damage that could make the tool unsafe.



Proper maintenance

Clean and sharpen tools regularly to keep them effective and safe to use.



SAFE OPERATION

Follow instructions

Use each tool according to its intended purpose and follow the manufacturer's guidelines.



Stay aware of your surroundings

Be conscious of others around you and maintain a safe distance to prevent accidents.



Avoid working alone

If possible, work in teams or have someone nearby in case of an emergency. This is particularly important when using power tools like chainsaws.



Creating Defensive Space

Use tools to create a buffer zone around your property by removing dead plants, grass, weeds, and fire-prone vegetation. This space can help slow the fire's spread and reduce its intensity.



Proper disposal

Gather and dispose of debris and cut vegetation safely to prevent them from becoming potential fuel for the fire.



HYDRATION AND BREAK

Stay hydrated

Always carry water and drink regularly, especially when working in hot conditions or engaging in physically demanding activities.



Take regular breaks

Manage fatigue by taking frequent breaks in a shaded or cooler area to avoid heat exhaustion or heat stroke.



USING FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Know the operation

Make sure you understand how to use a fire extinguisher (remember the PASS technique: Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep). Keep extinguishers accessible around your property.



Choose the right type

Ensure you have the appropriate type of extinguisher for different kinds of fires that might occur in your area (e.g., Class A for wood, paper; Class B for oils and fuels).



HOW TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO WILDFIRE SMOKE



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Reducing exposure to wildfire smoke is crucial for maintaining health, especially for sensitive groups such as children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular conditions. Here are effective strategies to minimize your exposure to harmful particles in wildfire smoke.

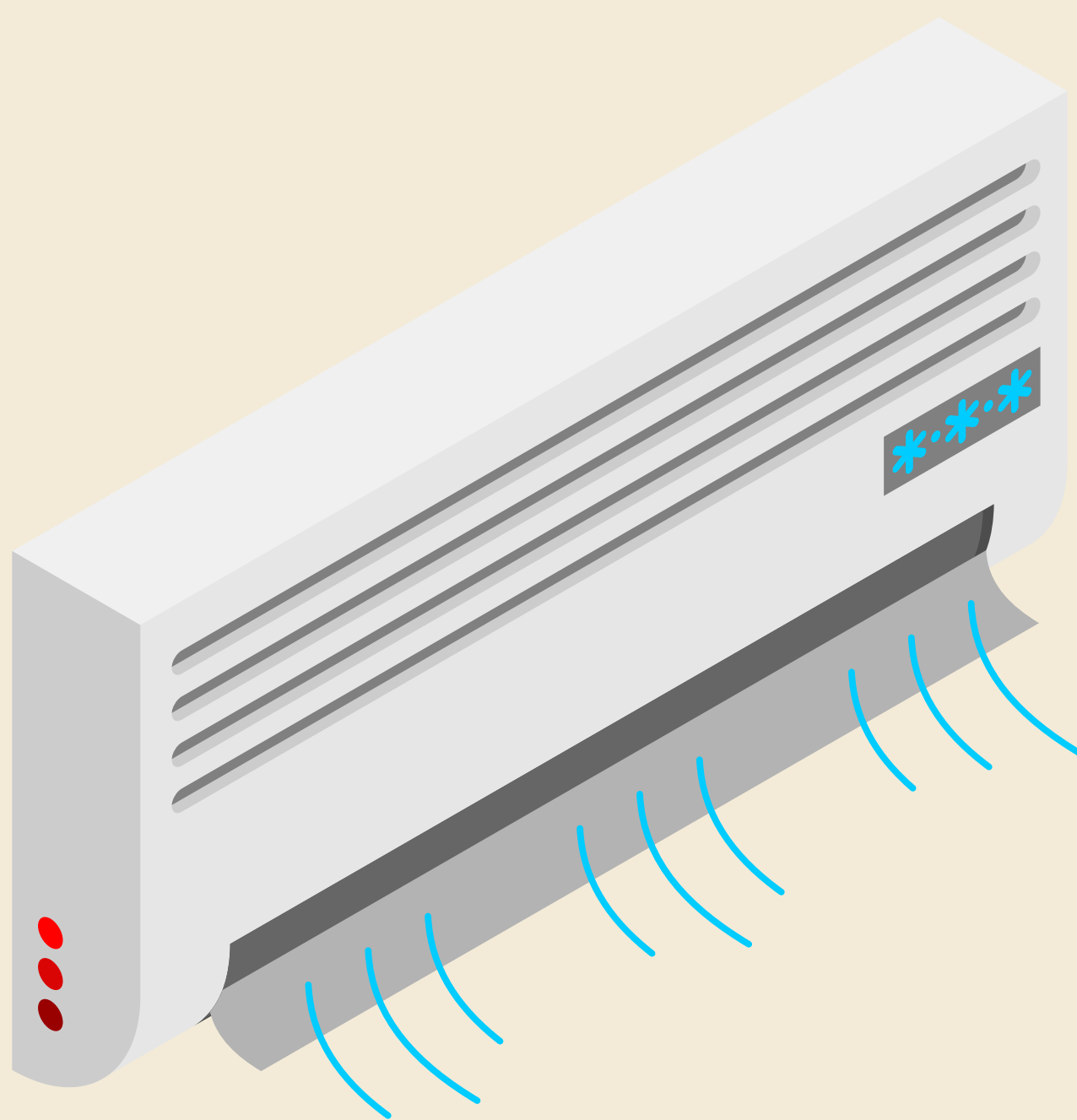


STAY INDOORS

Keep windows and doors closed
to prevent smoke from entering
your home.



Use air conditioning if available, setting it to recirculate to avoid drawing smoke-laden air from outside into the building.



Avoid activities that increase indoor pollution, like smoking, using candles, frying food, or using wood-burning stoves.



IMPROVE INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Use air purifiers with HEPA filters to remove particulate matter from the air inside your home.



If air conditioning is not available or does not have a recirculation option, create a clean room with an air purifier to provide a space with filtered air.



REDUCE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Limit physical exertion, especially outdoors, to reduce the amount of smoke inhaled.



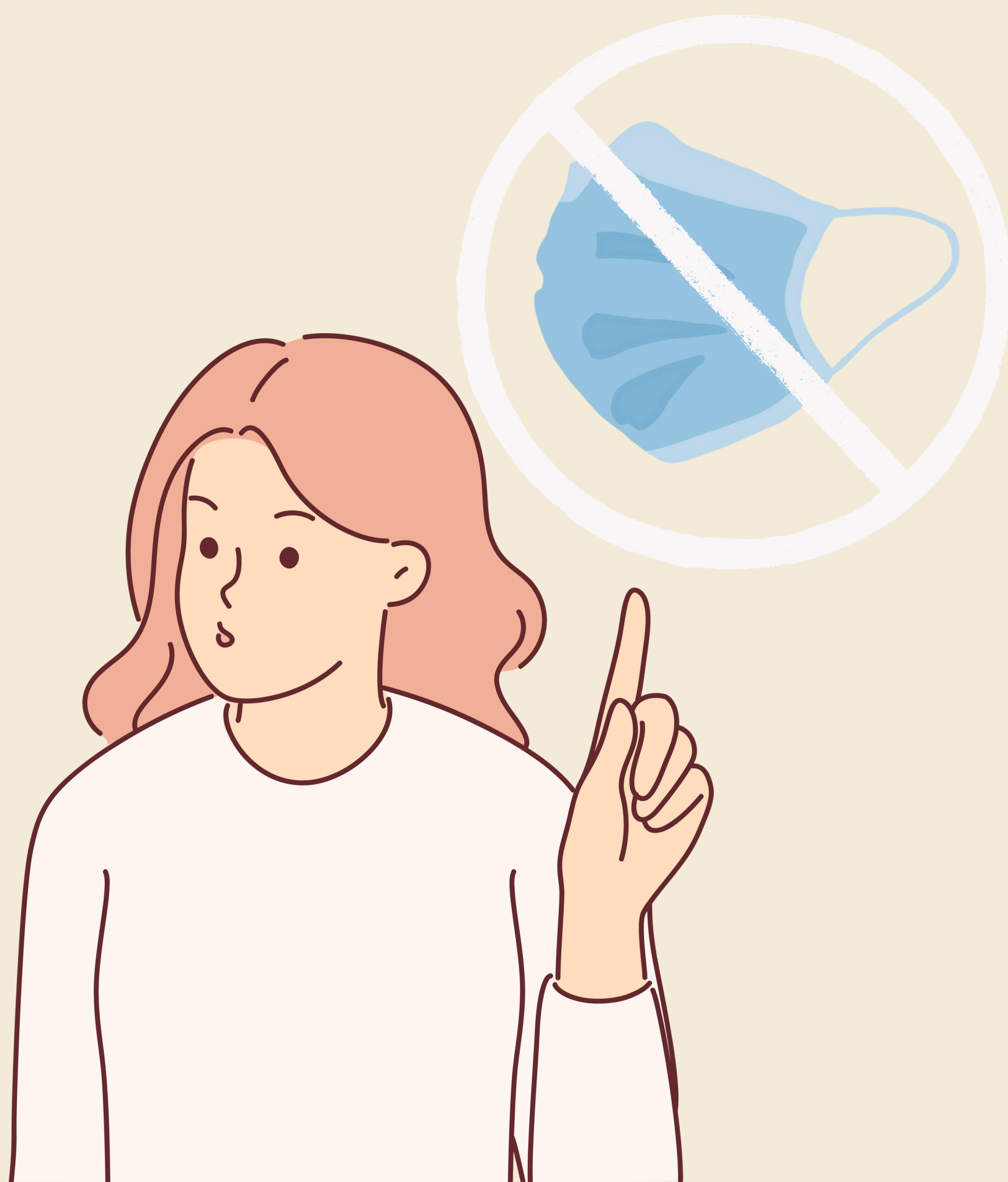
Even indoors, try to keep activities light, particularly on days when the air quality is very poor.

USE MASKS

If you must go outside, wear a mask designed to filter out fine particles. N95 respirators are effective if worn correctly. Ensure the mask fits tightly to your face, forming a seal.



Be aware that cloth and surgical masks do not protect against smoke particles.

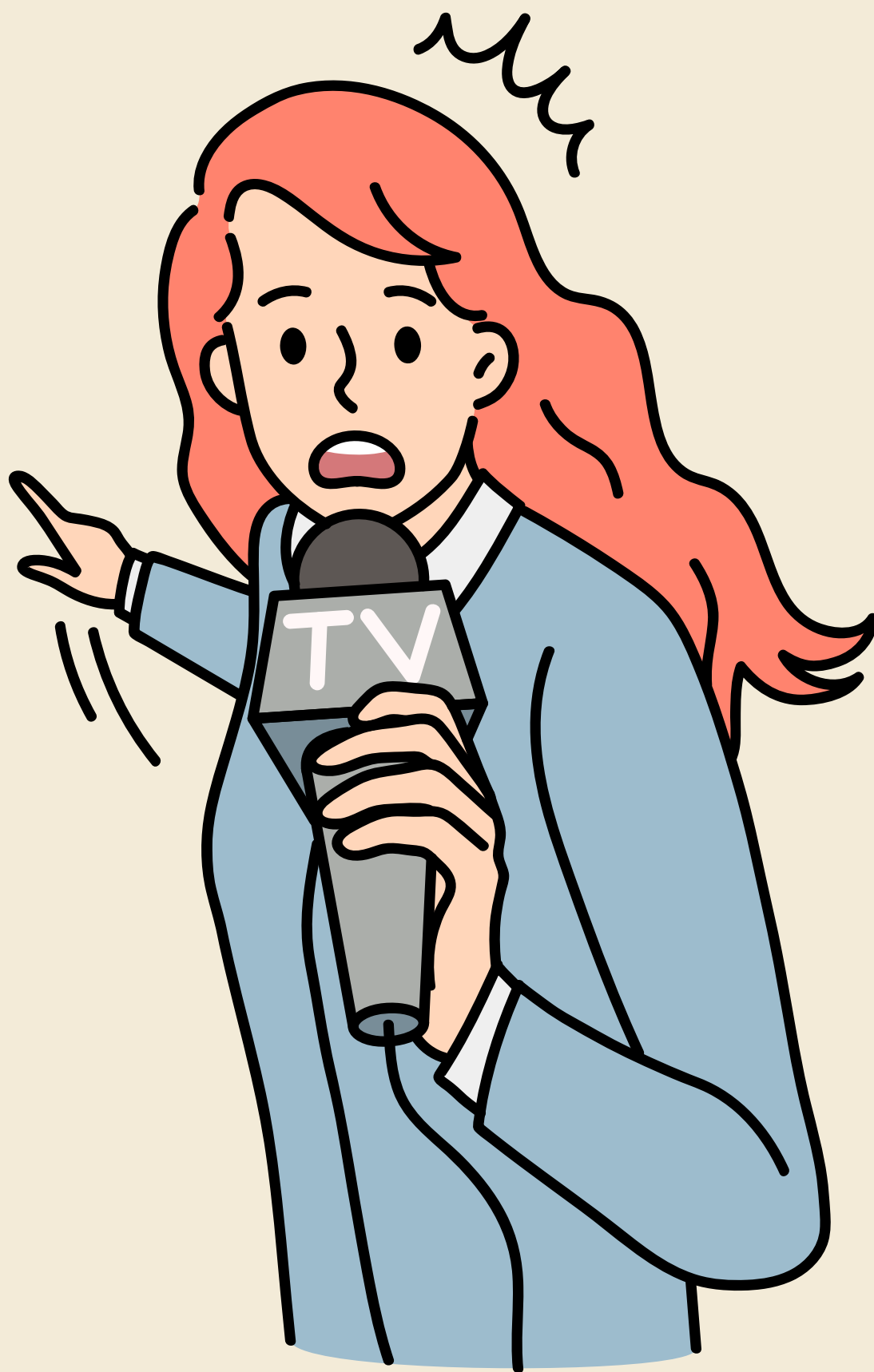


STAY INFORMED

Monitor local air quality reports through websites, specific to each country, that provide real-time air quality information and forecasts.



Listen to local news and health warnings, and be ready to follow evacuation orders.



SEEK CLEANER AIR SPACES

If indoor air quality worsens and it's unsafe to stay at home, consider relocating temporarily to a community building or facility with better air filtration systems. Local authorities often designate clean air shelters during severe wildfire smoke events.



PLAN AND PREPARE

Develop an action plan for wildfire smoke days. This should include identifying when to use air purifiers, when to stay indoors, and where you can go if the air quality in your home becomes unsafe.



Stock up on supplies,
including non-perishable
food items, to minimize the
need to go outside.



HEALTH MANAGEMENT

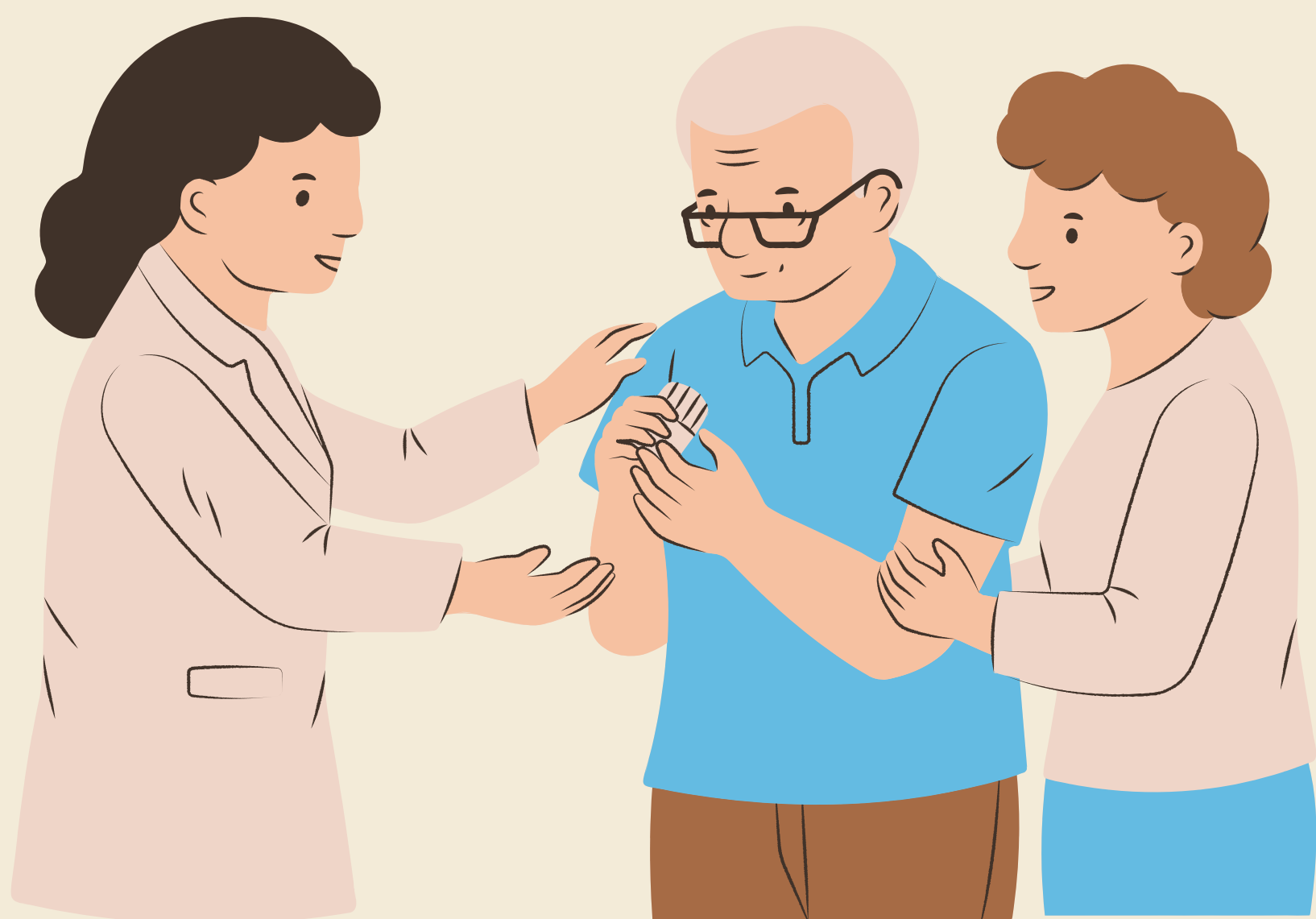
Stay hydrated to help your body naturally flush out any inhaled particles.



If you have respiratory conditions like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), make sure your medication is easily accessible, and follow your doctor's advice on managing your condition during smoke exposure.



Consult with healthcare providers for more personalized advice, especially if you experience smoke exposure symptoms like coughing, shortness of breath, or other respiratory difficulties.



ORIENTATION AND PATHFINDING FOR EVACUATION



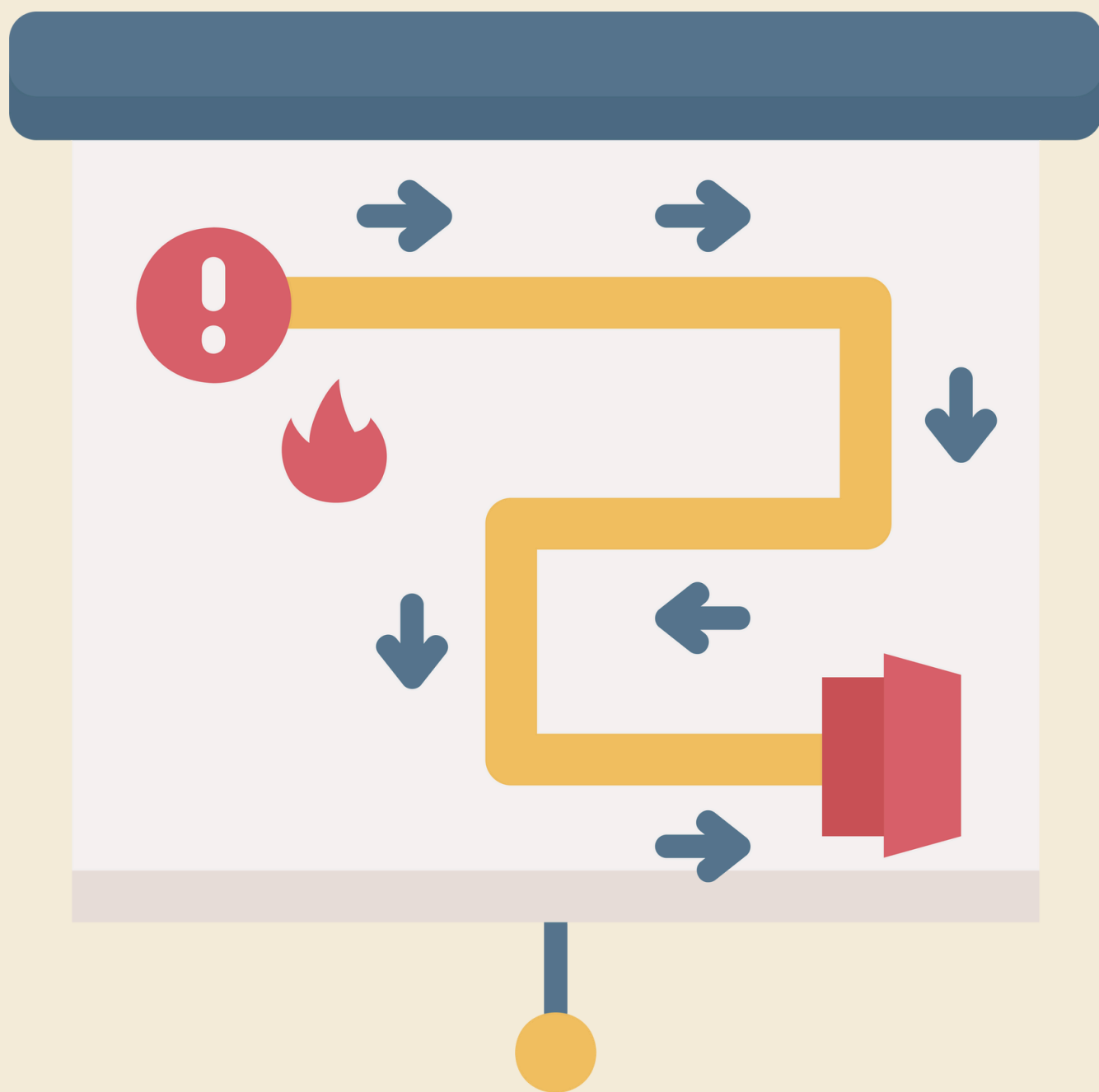
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During a wildfire, quick and safe evacuation is critical. Understanding orientation and pathfinding can significantly enhance your ability to evacuate efficiently and safely.



Here's a detailed guide on how to prepare and execute evacuation effectively, with a focus on orientation and pathfinding.

PRE-EVACUATION PREPARATION

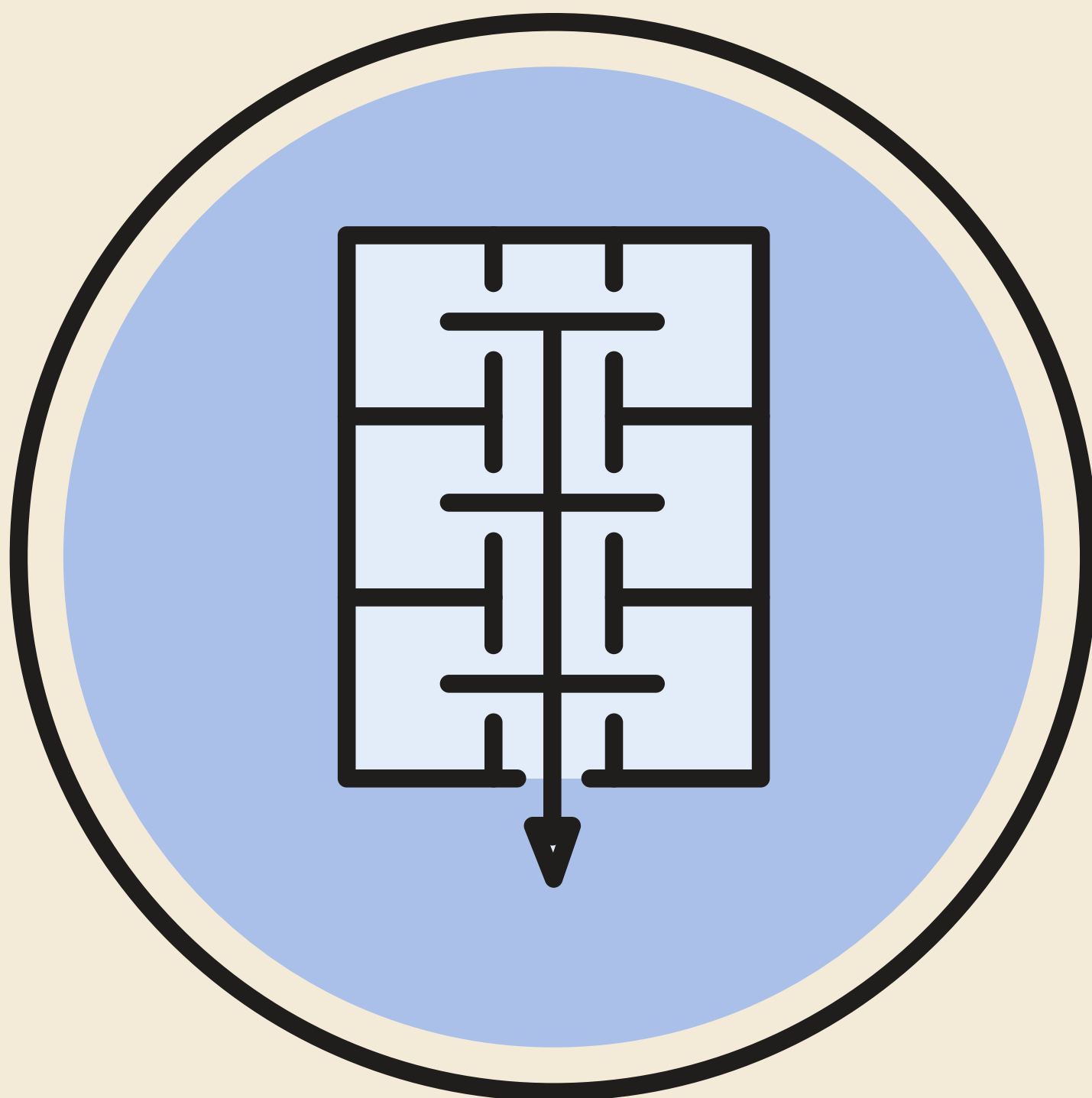
Know Your Area

Familiarize yourself with the local geography, main roads, and possible secondary routes. Use maps and GPS but don't rely solely on technology as it might fail during emergencies.



Create an Evacuation Plan

Develop a plan that includes multiple escape routes. Practice these routes to ensure everyone in your household knows them in case of visibility issues due to smoke.



Community Resources

Identify which local authorities provide real-time information during wildfires, such as emergency services or local municipality websites and social media.



MAP AND COMPASS BASICS

Understanding Map Symbols



Learn to read maps, focusing on understanding the symbols, scale, and topography depicted. This knowledge can be crucial when alternate routes are needed.

Using a Compass

Know how to use a compass in conjunction with a map. Practice finding north and setting a path using landmarks.



GPS Device

Keep a GPS device handy and ensure it's charged. It can be an invaluable tool for navigating when visibility is poor.



SIGNS AND MARKINGS

Follow Official Signs

Pay attention to any official signs or instructions set up to guide evacuations. These might include temporary signs placed by emergency services to direct traffic away from danger.



Marked Routes

Some communities have predetermined and marked evacuation routes. Familiarize yourself with these and follow them during evacuations.



USING LANDMARKS

Identify Landmarks

Before an emergency, identify landmarks that can guide you during evacuation. These can be hills, large buildings, or distinctive natural features.



Nighttime Navigation

Understand how to find your way during low visibility, such as at night or in heavy smoke. Use headlights sparingly, as smoke can reflect light and impair vision.



COMMUNICATION

Stay in Touch

Keep communication lines open with family members during the evacuation. Have a predetermined meeting point in case anyone gets separated.

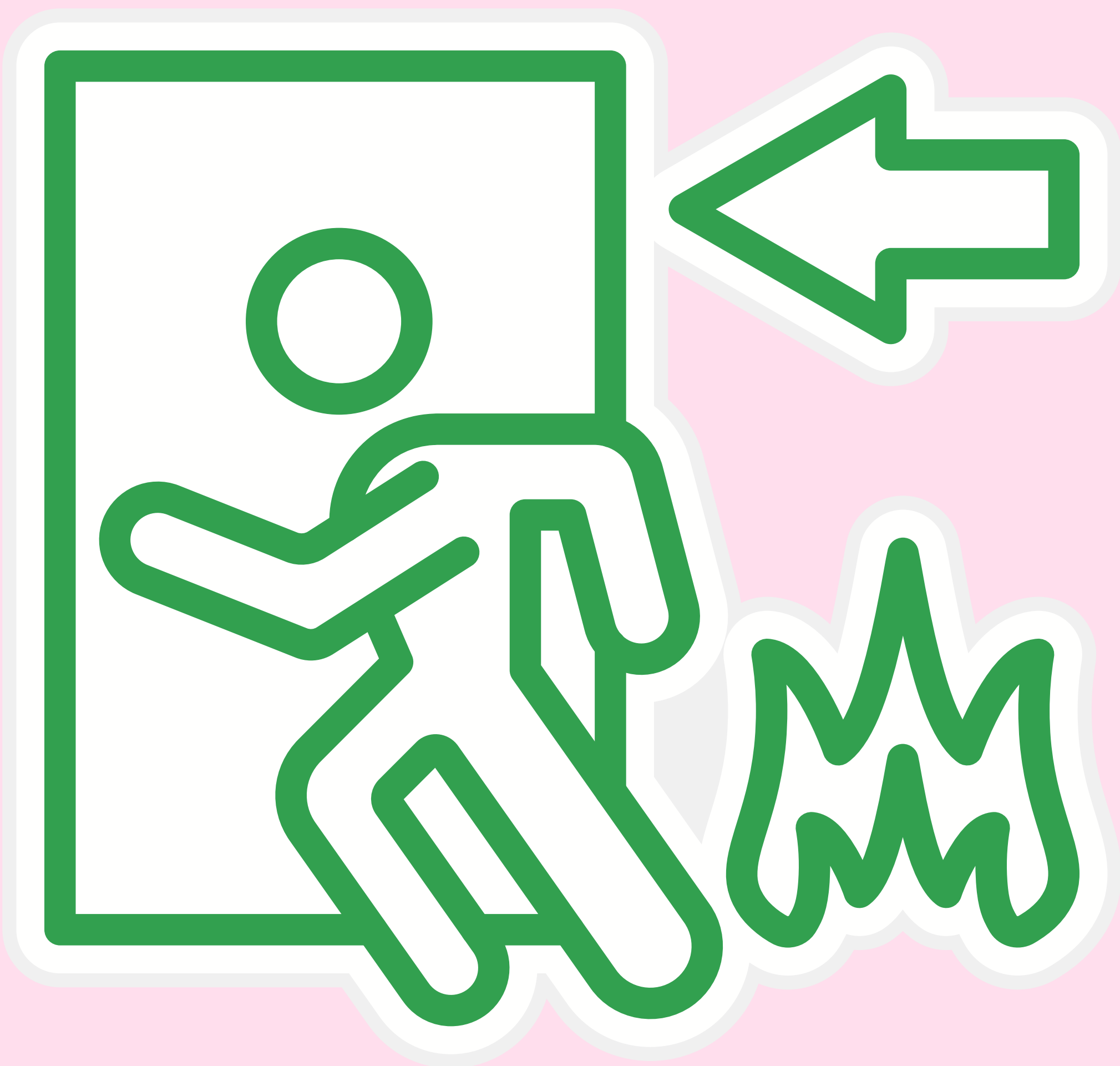


Emergency Services

Keep a list of contact numbers for emergency services, and don't hesitate to call them if you become lost or need assistance.



EVACUATION



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Evacuation during a wildfire is a critical process that requires quick, organized action to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

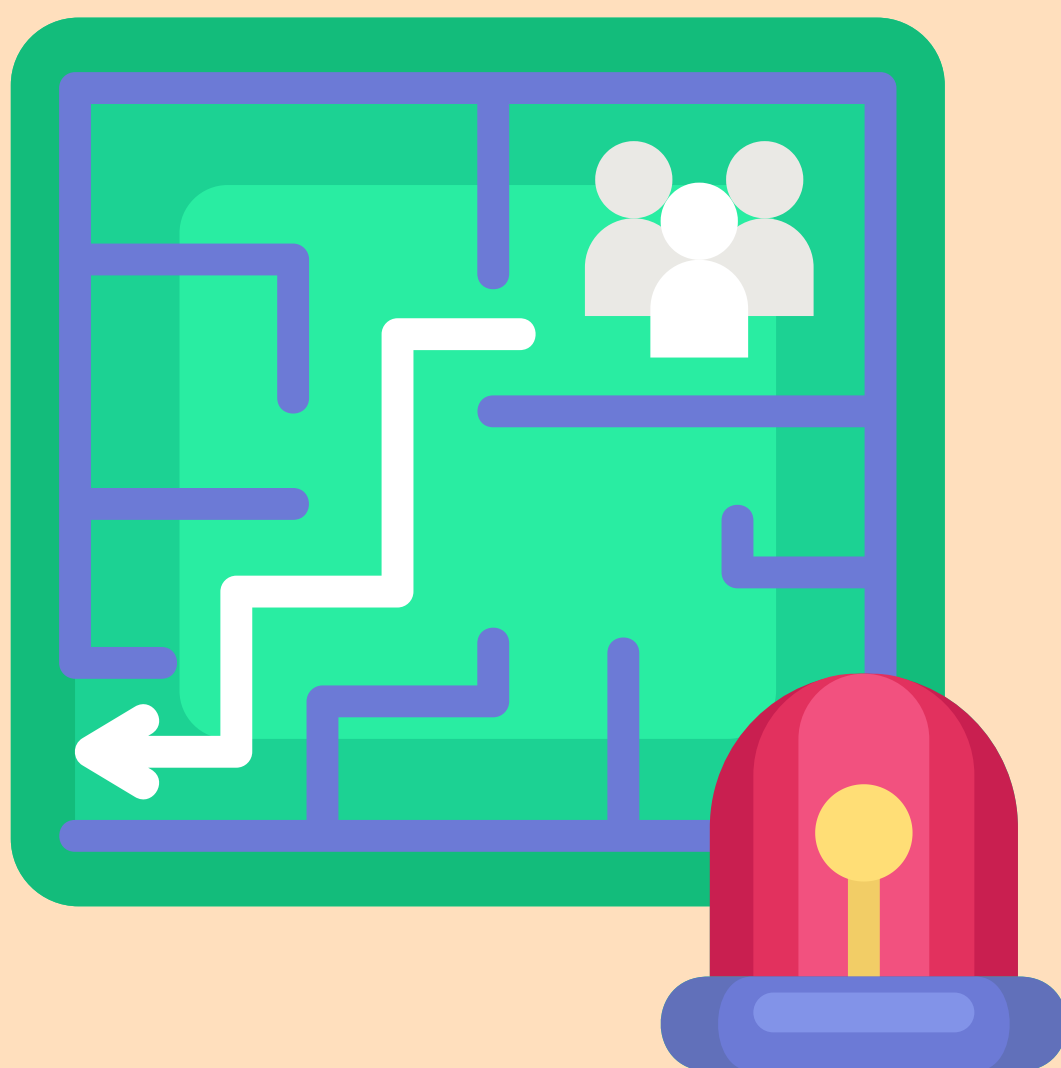
Proper planning and understanding the evacuation process can make a significant difference in preventing injuries and fatalities.



PREPARATION PHASE

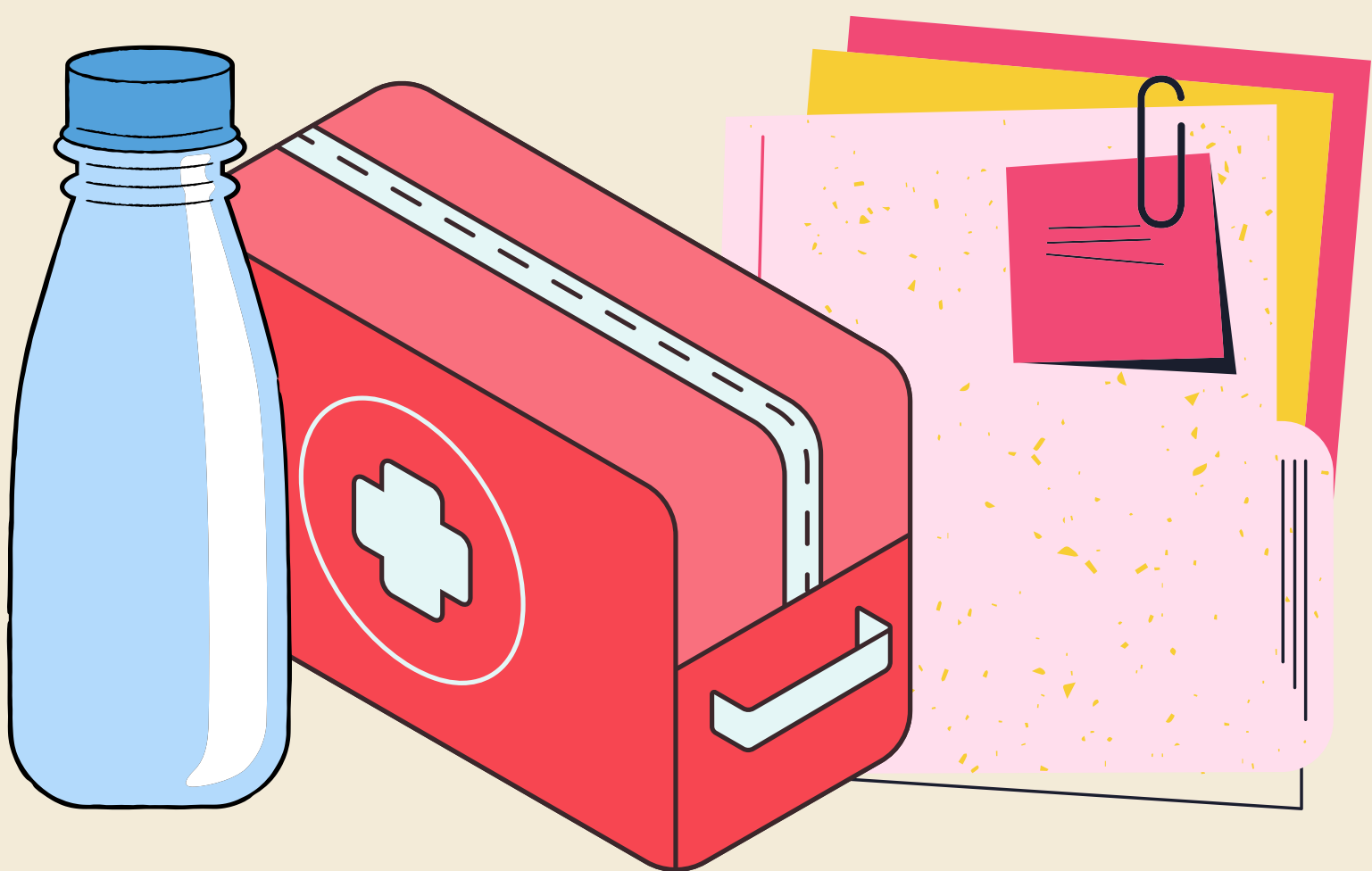
Evacuation Plan

Develop a comprehensive evacuation plan for your family. This should include multiple escape routes, methods of communication, and a designated meeting place outside the danger zone. Regularly practice this plan to ensure everyone knows what to do.



Emergency Kit

Prepare an emergency kit with essential items such as water, non-perishable food, first aid supplies, medications, copies of important documents, clothes, and personal hygiene items. Also include items for pets if applicable.



Stay Informed

Keep informed about the wildfire status through local media, emergency apps, or alerts from local authorities. Understanding the behaviour of the fire and potential changes in conditions is crucial for timely evacuation.



ALERT PHASE

Warning Systems

Pay attention to local warning systems such as sirens, phone alerts, or announcements from emergency personnel. Different levels of evacuation orders (Advisory, Warning, and Mandatory) may be issued, each requiring different actions.



Communication

Ensure all family members are aware of the situation and review your evacuation plan. Contact neighbours, especially the elderly or those with disabilities, to see if they need assistance.



Evacuation Execution

When an evacuation order is given, act immediately.

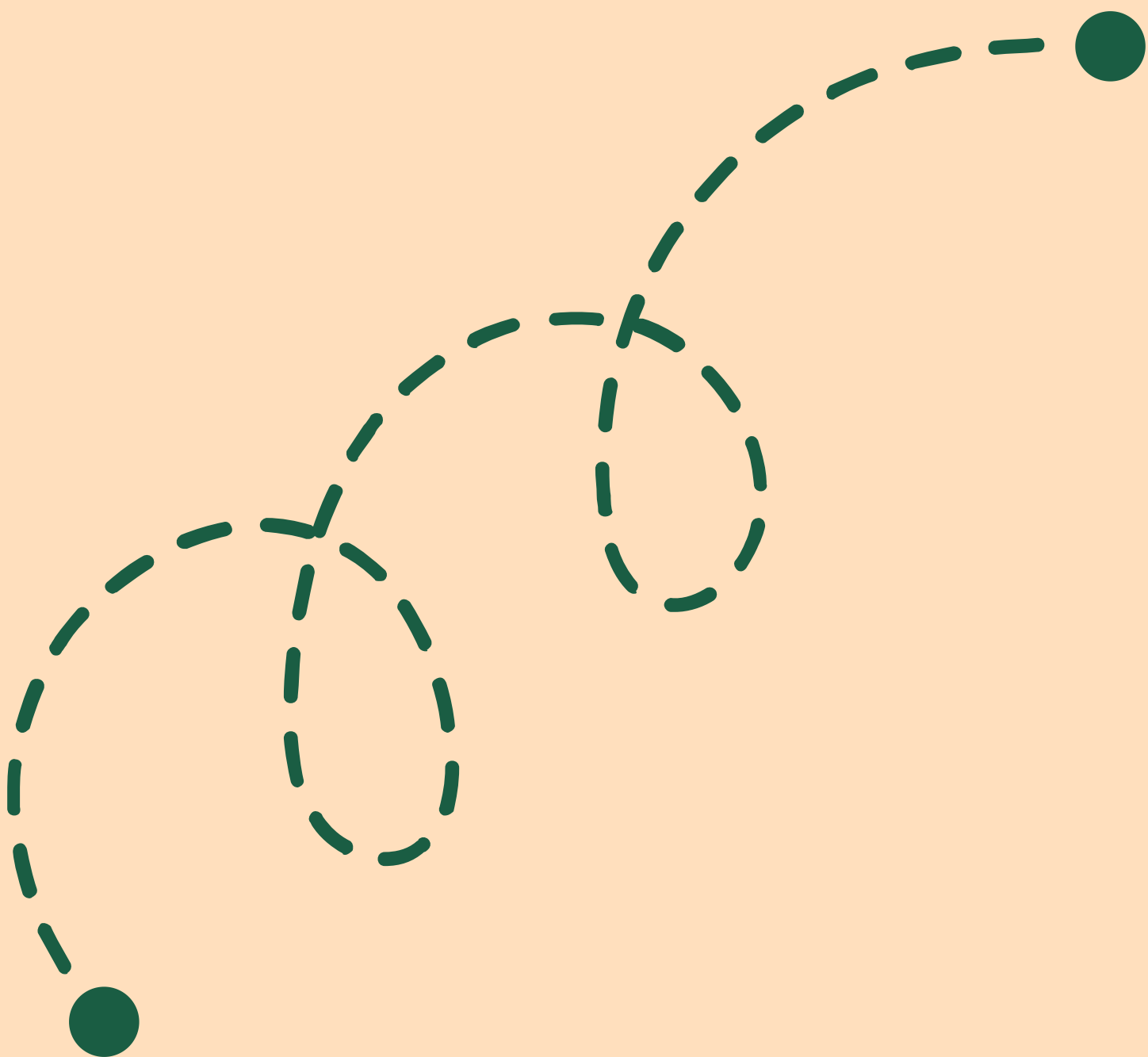
Delays can result in being caught in traffic, smoke, or even flames.



Routes

Follow the predetermined evacuation routes. Avoid shortcuts as they may be blocked or unsafe.

Authorities often provide route information during a wildfire based on the fire's behaviour and prevailing conditions.



Pets and Livestock

Evacuate pets and livestock if possible. Make sure they have enough food and water and are secured during transport.



Valuables

If time allows, for example, if there is preparation of a potential evacuation, take irreplaceable valuables. However, prioritize life over property always.



DURING EVACUATION

Stay Calm

Keep calm and follow your plan. Panic can lead to poor decisions.



Communication

Use a car radio or your mobile device to stay updated on the fire's progress and any changes in evacuation instructions.



Safety Measures

Drive carefully but swiftly. Keep windows and vents closed to avoid smoke inhalation. If trapped, call for help and turn on lights to make yourself visible to rescuers.



POST-EVACUATION

Check-in

Once you reach safety, check in at a designated shelter or with an emergency response team. Let family and friends know you are safe.



Stay Updated

Continue to monitor the situation. Do not return home until authorities declare it safe to do so. There may be hidden dangers such as hot spots, damaged structures, or live electrical wires.



Recovery and Assistance

After the wildfire, contact local authorities or organizations for information on assistance with housing, food, and recovery.

Document property damage with photographs and detailed notes for insurance claims.



COPING WITH WILDFIRE STRESS



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Coping with wildfire stress as a citizen, especially if you live in a fire-prone area or are directly affected by wildfires, involves several strategies to manage emotional and psychological distress effectively.



Stay Informed

Obtain accurate and timely information from reliable sources. Understanding the situation can reduce anxiety caused by uncertainty. However, be cautious about information overload, which can increase stress.



Emergency Preparedness

Prepare an emergency plan and a go-bag with essential items, including documents, medications, and basic supplies. Knowing you are prepared can significantly reduce anxiety.



Practice evacuation routes and family communication plans. Familiarity with what to do and where to go can ease stress during an actual emergency.



Community Support

Stay connected with your community.

Support from neighbours, local organizations, and community groups can provide emotional comfort and practical help.



Engage in community preparedness activities

Being part of a community effort can provide a sense of control and solidarity.



Rely only on official sources

Always prioritize information from official sources such as local news stations and radio broadcasts, local emergency services and government agencies. These channels provide the most accurate updates on fire locations, evacuation orders, and safety instructions.

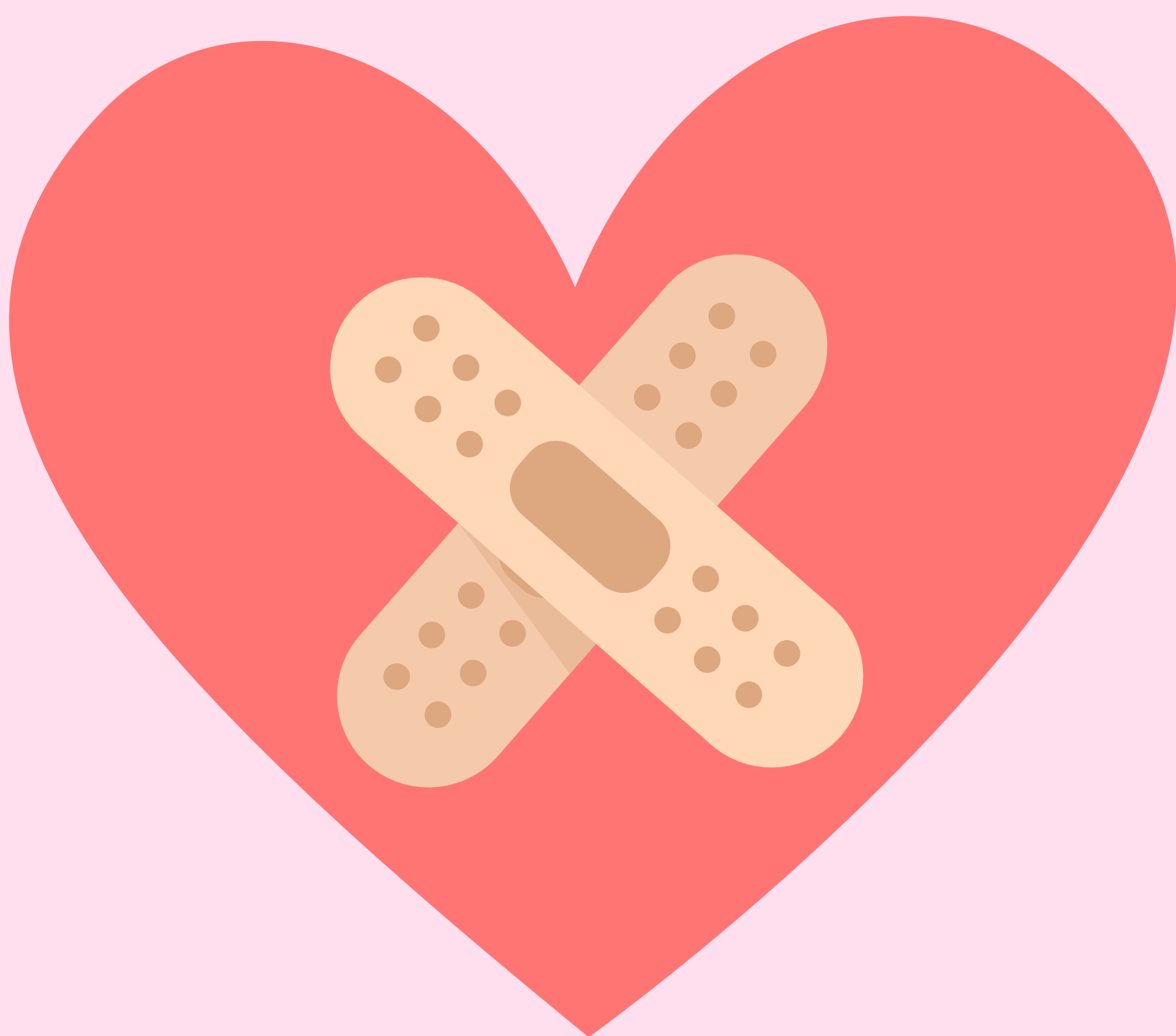


Avoid Misinformation

Be cautious of rumors or unverified information on social media. During emergencies, misinformation can spread quickly and cause unnecessary stress, panic or confusion.



COMPONENTS OF RECOVERY



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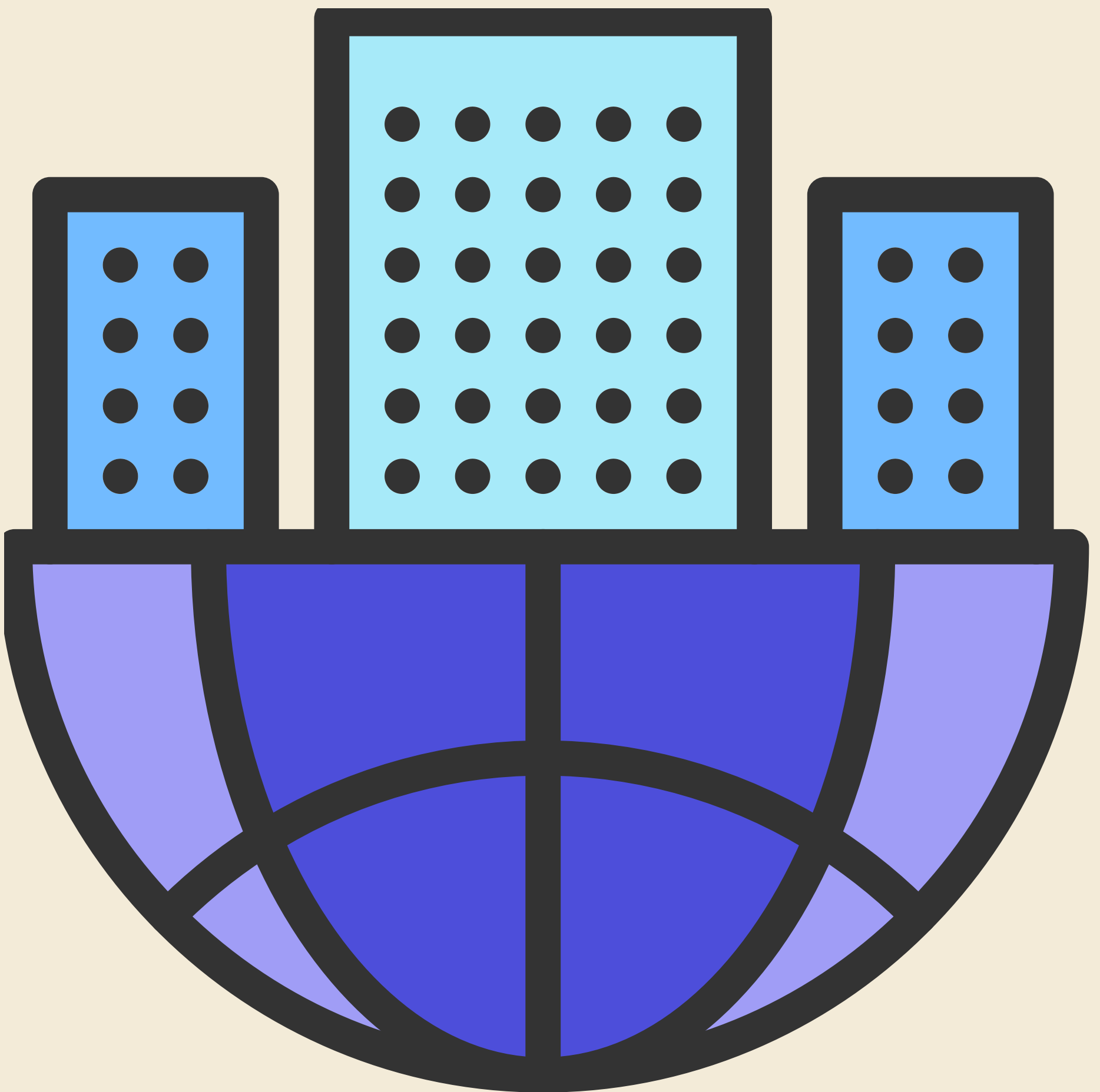


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PHYSICAL RECOVERY

Infrastructure Repair and Rebuilding



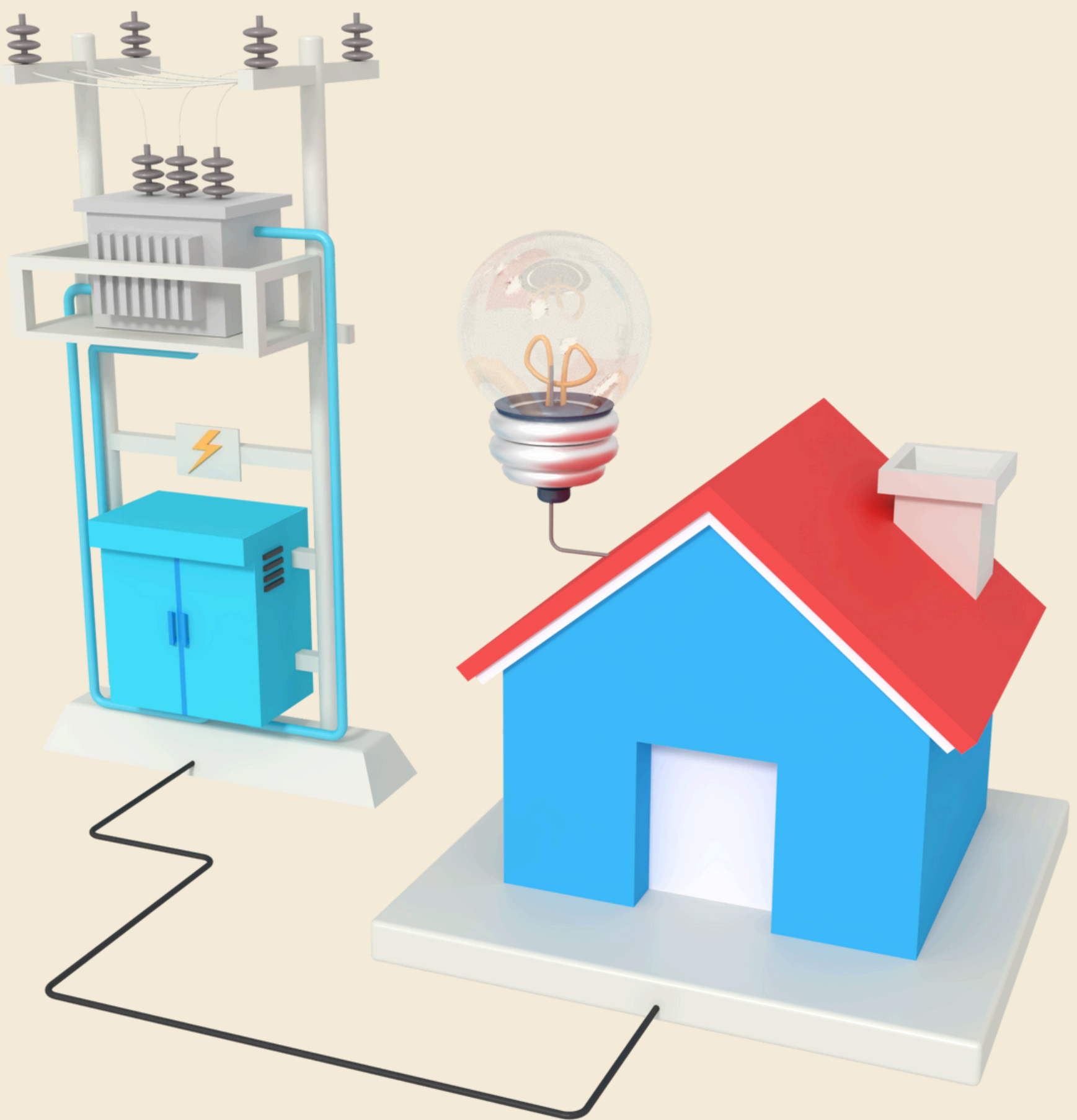
Homes and Buildings

Reconstructing or repairing homes, businesses, and public buildings damaged or destroyed by the wildfire.



Utilities and Services

Restoring essential services such as electricity, water, sewage systems, and telecommunications.



Transportation Networks

Repairing roads, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure to ensure accessibility and connectivity.



ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION

Reforestation and Replanting

Planting trees and vegetation to restore natural habitats, prevent soil erosion, and enhance ecological recovery.



Soil Stabilization

Implementing measures to stabilize soil and prevent landslides or erosion, which are common after wildfires due to the loss of vegetation.



Water Quality Management

Protecting and restoring water sources affected by wildfire debris and runoff, ensuring clean water for the community and ecosystem.



ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Financial Assistance and Support



Aid Programmes

Accessing and distributing financial aid from government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community funds to support affected individuals and businesses.



Insurance Claims

Assisting residents and businesses in filing insurance claims to cover damages and losses incurred during the wildfire.



REVITALIZING LOCAL ECONOMY

Supporting Local Businesses

Encouraging community members to support local businesses to help them recover economically.



Job Creation

Developing job creation programmes related to rebuilding efforts, such as construction, landscaping, and environmental restoration projects.



EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RECOVERY

Mental Health Support



Counseling Services

Providing access to mental health professionals for counseling and therapy to help individuals cope with trauma and stress.



Support Groups

Establishing support groups where community members can share their experiences and provide mutual support.



RETURNING HOME AFTER A WILDFIRE



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Returning home after a wildfire can be a challenging and emotional experience. It's crucial to prioritize safety and take specific measures to ensure that the environment is safe for reoccupation. Here are essential safety measures to consider.



CHECKING FOR OFFICIAL CLEARANCE

Official Announcements

Only return home when local authorities have declared it safe to do so. Pay attention to updates from emergency services, local municipalities, and news sources.



Road Condition

Ensure that roads leading to your home are passable and have been cleared of debris and hazards.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

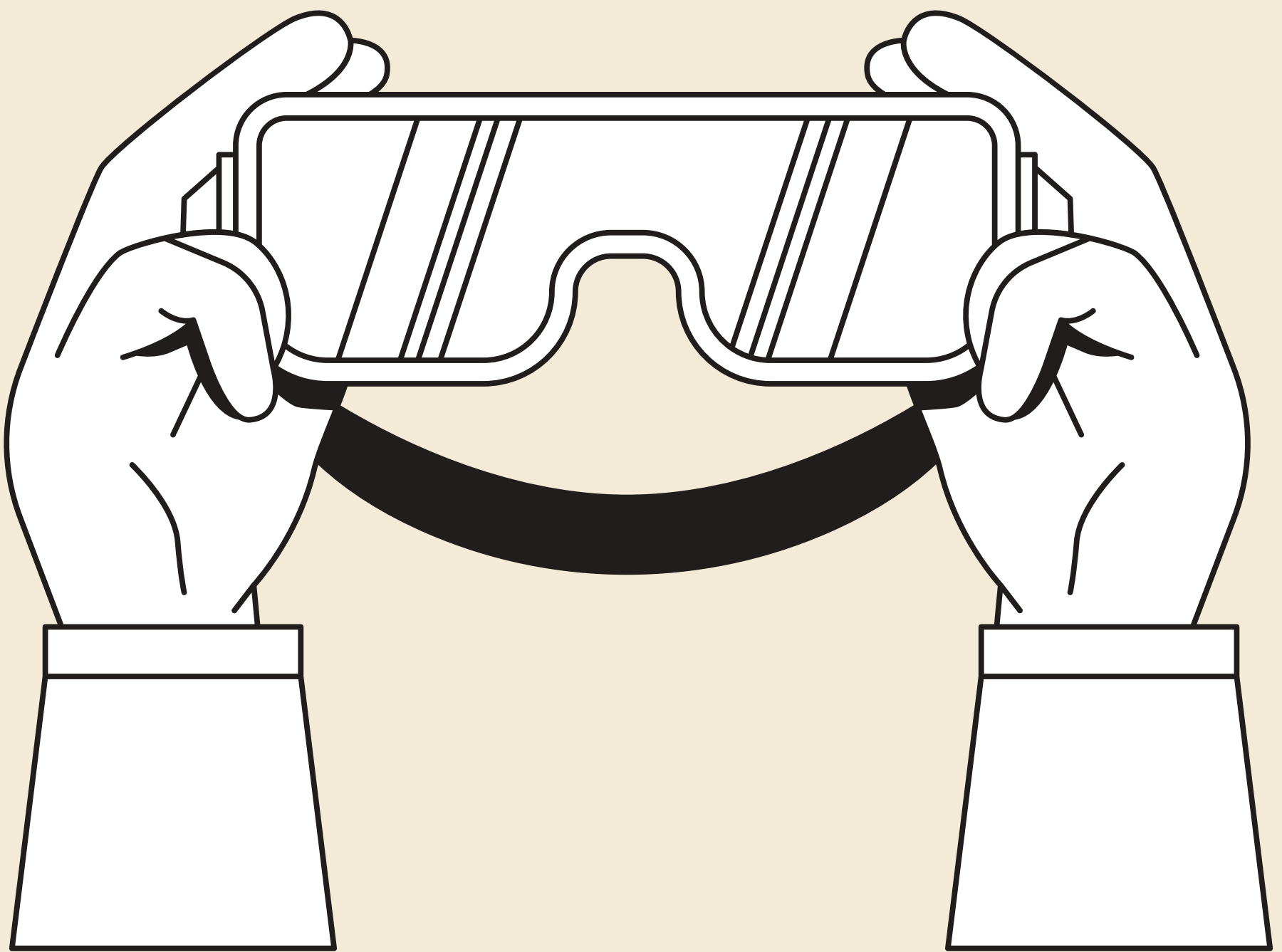
Appropriate Clothing

Wear long sleeves, long trousers, gloves, sturdy boots, and a mask (preferably an N95) to protect against ash, debris, and potential contaminants.



Eye Protection

Use safety goggles to protect your eyes from dust, ash, and irritants.



INSPECTING THE PROPERTY

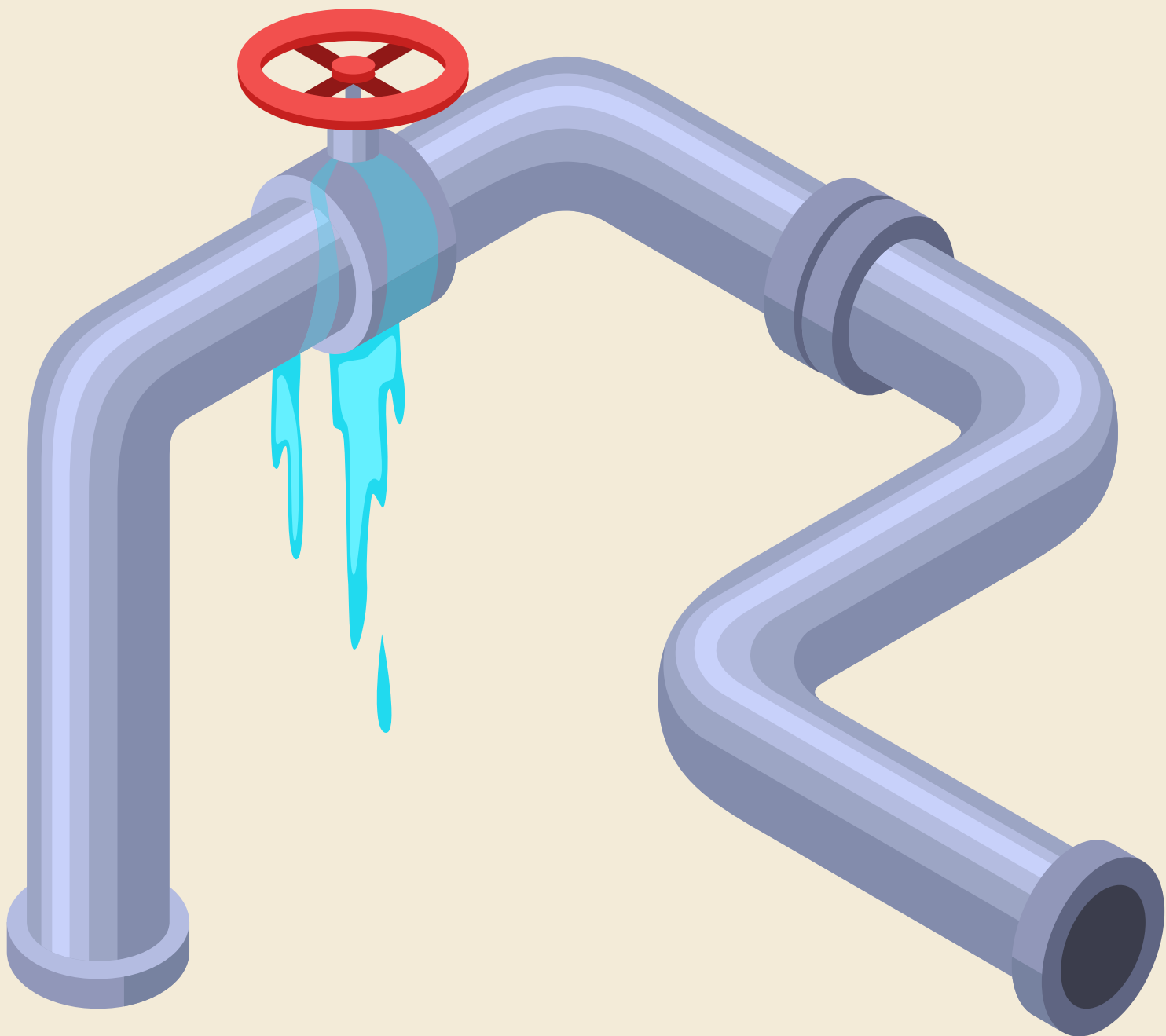
Structural Integrity

Check for visible signs of structural damage, such as cracks in the foundation, walls, or roof. Do not enter buildings that appear unstable.



Utilities and Services

Ensure that electricity, gas, and water are turned off before inspecting the property. Look for damaged power lines, gas leaks (identified by the smell of gas), and broken water pipes.



Hazardous Materials

Identify and safely remove hazardous materials such as chemicals, batteries, and fuel containers that may have been damaged or exposed.



CHECKING FOR HEALTH HAZARDS

Air Quality

Be aware of air quality reports.
Wildfire areas can have lingering
smoke and particulate matter. Use
air purifiers if necessary.



Ash and Debris

Clean up ash and debris carefully. Avoid stirring up dust. Wetting down ash before cleaning can prevent it from becoming airborne.



Contaminated Water

Verify that water is safe to drink. Boil water advisories may be in effect if water systems were compromised.



CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Ash Removal

Carefully remove ash from surfaces, using damp cloths or mops. Avoid using leaf blowers or vacuums that can recirculate ash into the air.



Disinfecting

Clean and disinfect surfaces that may have been contaminated by ash or firefighting chemicals.



Food Safety

Dispose of any food, including canned goods, that may have been exposed to heat, smoke, or firefighting chemicals.



ASSESSING AND ADDRESSING UTILITY ISSUES

Electricity

Have a licensed electrician inspect your electrical system before turning the power back on, especially if there was damage to the wiring or breaker box.



Gas

Contact your gas company to inspect and restore gas service. Do not attempt to turn gas back on yourself.



Water

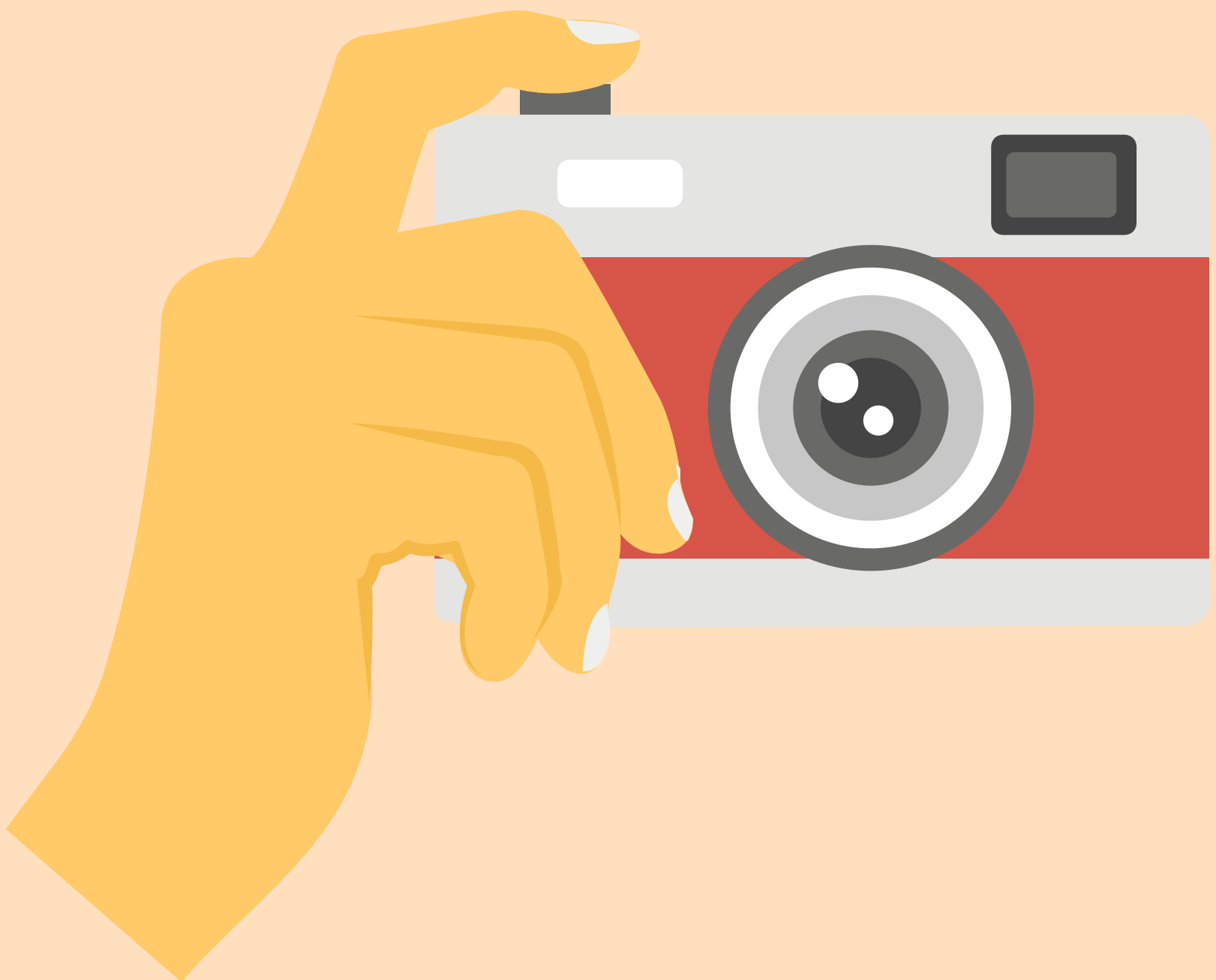
Check for leaks and damage to your plumbing. Consider having your water quality tested before using it for drinking or cooking.



DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING

Photographic Evidence

Take photos and videos of all damage for insurance claims and disaster assistance applications.



Record Keeping

Keep detailed records of all damage, including dates, descriptions, and receipts for any repairs or expenses incurred.



Contacting Insurance

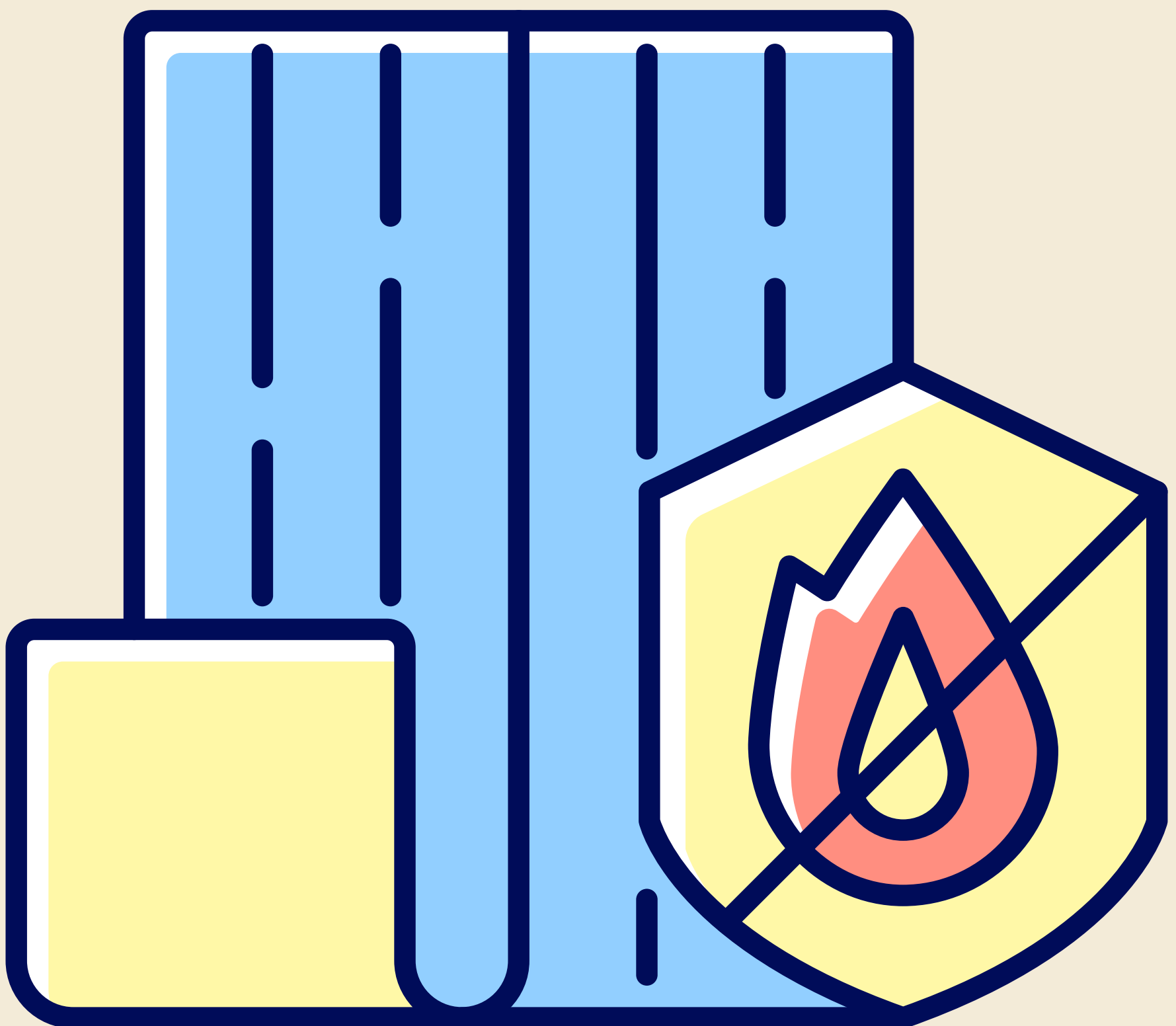
Contact your insurance provider to start the claims process and understand what documentation is needed.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Mitigation Measure

Consider implementing fire-resistant building materials and landscaping techniques to reduce future fire risk.



Emergency Kits and Plans

Replenish emergency supplies
and update your family
emergency plan based on
lessons learned.



Community Involvement

Participate in local fire safety programmes and advocate for community-wide preparedness initiatives.



FOLLOWING LOCAL GUIDANCE

Local Authorities

Follow any additional guidance and requirements provided by local authorities, such as specific cleanup protocols or health advisories.



Updates and Alerts

Stay informed about ongoing risks and updates through local news, government websites, and emergency alerts.

