

Wildfire Defense To Help Your Home

No home is fireproof, but by taking precautions, you can help prepare your home.

Help Protect Your Home Against Wildfire Damage

What can you do to help protect yourself, your home and property from wildfires? Here are some tips for preparing your home and yard against a wildfire.

Creating Defensible Space

Create a zone around your house that will slow the wildfire down and possibly direct it around your home. To do this, you must view your yard as a fuel source. Fire will only burn if fuel is present. Fuel can be your landscaping, woodpiles, decks, etc. To create your defensible space, take the following steps within 30 feet of your home, 50 feet if you live in a heavily treed area or 100 feet if your home is on a hillside. If you live in California, a minimum of 100 feet is required.

- Introduce more native vegetation.
- Space trees at least 10 feet apart.
- Remove dead or dying trees and shrubs.
- Keep trees and shrubs pruned. Branches should be a minimum of 6 feet from the ground and shrubs under trees should be no more than 18 inches high.
- Mow your lawn regularly and dispose promptly of cuttings and debris.
- Maintain your irrigation system.
- Clear your roof, gutters and eaves of debris.
- Trim branches so they do not extend over roof or near the chimney.
- Move firewood and storage tanks 50 feet away from home and clear areas at least 10 feet around them.
- Store flammable liquids in approved metal safety cans.
- Do not connect wooden fencing directly to your home.
- Keep the grounds around your home free of pine needles.

Build or Retrofit Your Home with Non-Flammable Materials

If the wildfire gets to the house, another line of defense is the type of materials used on your home's exterior.

- Use only non-combustible roofing materials.
- Box in eaves, fascias, soffits and subfloors with fire resistant materials like treated wood, reducing the vent sizes.
- Apply ¼" non-combustible screening to all vent or eave openings.
- Install spark arresters in chimneys.
- Enclose undersides of decks with fire resistant materials.
- Cover exterior walls with fire resistant materials like stucco, stone, or brick. (Vinyl siding can melt and is not recommended).
- Use double paned or tempered glass for all exterior windows.
- Install noncombustible street signs.
- Make sure your address is visible from the street.

Create a Plan

Become familiar with your community's disaster preparedness plans and create a plan for your family. Identify escape routes from your home and neighborhood and designate an emergency meeting place for your family to reunite if you become separated. Put together an emergency kit that includes first aid supplies; a portable radio; basic tools; a flashlight; work gloves; fresh batteries for each piece of equipment; clothing; blankets; baby items; prescription medications; extra car and house keys; extra eyeglasses; credit cards and cash; important documents, including insurance policies.