

Reducing your Home's Wildfire Risk

HOME:

1. Use metal vent screens with 1/8" mesh or special fire-safe vents.
2. Keep wooden fencing and patio decks away from the house. Leave a gap or install flashing so fire will not spread from fencing or decks to the house.
3. Chimneys should be inspected and cleaned by professionals. A recommendation is to have your fireplace and chimney cleaned every two years if it is used often.
4. **MAKE SURE THERE ARE WORKING SMOKE DETECTORS IN YOUR HOME** at least in every sleeping area and in hallways.
5. Have fire extinguishers and know how to use them. Check them annually.
6. Sweep your walkways, patios, and decks regularly to remove leaves, needles and other combustible materials that may gather against your house.
7. Remove vegetative debris (leaves, pine needles, twigs) from your gutters and roof.
8. Remove combustible materials from under your deck.
9. Caulk any openings along the top or bottom of wall siding or around windows where gaps could allow embers to enter your home.
10. Store your deck furniture, children's toys, and other combustible items inside or far away from your structures if a wildfire threatens.

GARDEN:

1. Remove woody, fire prone vegetation, especially within the 0-5 foot "no fire" zone around your structure. Juniper, rosemary, and other mature plants tend to have new growth on top of woody stems. Replace with stone mulch and succulents that are easy to maintain at 6" high or less.
2. While there are no "fire-proof" plants, choose plants that are low to the ground and have a low sap or resin content.
3. Choose fire retardant plant species that resist ignition such as rockrose, ice plant and aloe. Fire-resistant shrubs include hedging roses, bush honeysuckles, currant, cotoneaster, sumac, and shrub apples.
4. Group plants by water needs. Create "islands" of plants with space in between to break the fuel bed into non-continuous stretches.
5. Replace bare, weedy, or unsightly patches near your home with ground cover, rock gardens, vegetable gardens, or bare mineral soil.
6. Mulch is a fire hazard when it dries out. Rake it back by at least 2 feet from the side of your house and from combustible fencing. Use non-combustible materials such as stones, gravel, or bare mineral soil.
7. Remove fallen pine needles and leaves near structures to avoid fire embers igniting them. Do not allow leaves or mulch to exceed a depth of 3 inches within 30 feet of your house.
8. Create a separation between trees and shrubs or the ground - at least 6 vertical feet on flat ground, greater on steep slope - to eliminate a "ladder" of fuels that can spread flames to tree crowns or structures.
9. Move flammable material such as stacked wood at least 30 feet from your home or other structure.
10. For both drought and wildfire prevention, remember that less vegetation is better and easier to maintain.

WEED ABATEMENT:

1. Properties need to be maintained throughout the year. You may need to provide additional abatement throughout the fire season.
2. Cut as soon as practical, once annual grasses have died and turned brown (typically May or early June). Mow before 10:00 a.m. with wind speed < 5 MPH.
3. Never mow dry grass during Fire Weather Watches or Red Flag Warnings.