

REDUCE YOUR WILDFIRE RISK

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Get In The Zone

The threat of wildfire is real. And although the land we call home is beautiful, it can also be deadly. The same climate and vegetation we prize for recreation, beauty and comfort fuels the risk for wildfire, especially as more people settle in wildland/urban interface areas.

But there are steps you can take to reduce the wildfire risk to your home. Just follow the Ten Tips of the FireFree Program™ and you'll create the most effective safeguard against wildfire for your home: defensible space.

1. Define Your Defensible Space

Defensible space is a buffer zone, a minimum 30 foot non-combustible space around your house that reduces the risk of a wildfire starting or spreading to your home. Defensible space not only helps protect your home in the critical minutes it takes a fire to pass, it also gives firefighters an area to work in. During a large-scale fire, when many houses are at risk, firefighters must focus on houses they can safely defend.

2. Reduce flammable vegetation, trees and brush around your home.

When needed, replace flammable landscaping with their fire-resistant counterparts. Choose plants with loose branching habits, non-resinous woody material, high moisture content in leaves, and little seasonal accumulation of dead vegetation.

3. Remove or prune trees

If you live in a wooded area, reduce the density of surrounding forest by removing or thinning overcrowded or weakened trees. Be sure to prune low-hanging branches to keep a ground fire from climbing into upper branches. Limbing up these 'ladder fuels' reduces the risk of ground fires climbing into tree canopies and becoming unpredictable flame throwers.

4. Cut grass and weeds regularly

Fire spreads rapidly in dry grass and weeds. Mow grasses and other low vegetation and keep them well-watered, especially during periods of high fire danger.

5. Relocate wood piles and leftover building materials

Stack all wood, building debris and other burnable materials at least 30 feet away from your home and other buildings.

6. Keep it clean

Especially your roof. Clear pine needles, leaves and debris from your roof, gutters and yard to eliminate an ignition source for tinder-dry vegetation. Remove dead limbs and branches within 10 feet of your chimney and deck. Tidying up is especially important during the hot, dry months of fire season when a single spark can lead to an inferno.

7. Signs, addresses and access

Easy to read road signs and address numbers that are visible from the road allow firefighters to find your home quickly during a wildfire or other emergency. Safe, easy access to your property includes two-way roads that can accommodate emergency vehicles and give them space to turn around. Bridges should support the weight of emergency vehicles. Driveways should also be trimmed of peripheral vegetation to allow emergency equipment to reach your home.

8. Rate your roof

Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your house in a wildfire. If you have a wood shake roof, consider treatment or replacement to make it more fire resistant. If you have a fireplace or woodstove, install an approved spark arrestor on your chimney to prevent sparks from reaching your roof or flammable vegetation.

9. Recycle yard debris and branches

Check into alternative disposal methods like composting or recycling. Burning may be restricted and should be used as a last resort. Check with [ODF](#) before burning.

10. What to do when wildfire strikes

Monitor radio and television stations for fire reports and evacuation procedures and centers. Keep an emergency checklist handy and prepare to evacuate if your neighborhood is threatened. Proper preparation includes closing windows and doors, arranging garden hoses so they can reach any area of your house, and packing your car for quick departure.

Congratulations! You're in the Zone!