

Wildfire Safety Checklist

Wildland fire is an element of nature just like weather, soils, minerals, plants, animals, and water. In fact, some landscapes depend on occasional fire to maintain a healthy ecosystem. As with other natural elements, fire is unpredictable and cannot always be stopped. Householders must adjust their living spaces to make them “defensible” against wildfire.

You can do many things to make your home more likely to survive a wildfire. Use this checklist to determine whether your home and community are wildfire safe. Check with local agencies for additional laws or regulations specific to your area.

Around Your Home

- At least 30 feet of “defensible space” is maintained around the home or other structures. This space is kept free of flammable plant material and firewood. In some areas, an additional 70 feet of a “reduced fuel zone” may also be required.
- The grass is mowed regularly, and leaves and pine needles are cleared within the defensible space.
- Any firewood is stacked or stored at least 30 feet away from the house.
- A hose that reaches all the way around the house is readily available (a 100-foot hose is recommended).
- Any propane (LPG) tanks are located at least 10 feet from the house, and weeds, tall grasses, and vines have been cleared from around them.
- Any gas grills are located at least 15 feet from the house.
- There are no dead tree branches hanging over the roof, and no branches are closer than 15–20 feet from the chimney.
- A spark arrester has been installed on the chimney.
- The gutters are free of dead leaves, moss, pine needles, and twigs.
- For a deck or mobile home, there is a skirting all the way around to keep leaves and other flammable debris from accumulating underneath.
- Fire-resistant plants, shrubs, and trees are used in landscaping.
- The driveway is at least 12 feet wide and can accommodate local fire department vehicles.
- The house number is at least 4 inches tall and is easily visible on the home and at the entrance of the driveway, even at night.
- A fire extinguisher; hand tools such as rakes, shovels, and axes; and a ladder are readily available.
- An escape plan has been developed and discussed with family members.

Community

- There are at least two access roads into and away from the community.
- Flammable vegetation (including overhanging tree branches) is cleared at least 10 feet back from roads.
- Any dead-end roads or cul-de-sacs have turn-around areas wide enough for emergency vehicles.
- All road signs are visible and reflectorized.
- There is an emergency water supply such as a community water hydrant system or cooperative emergency storage tank.
- The community has a wildfire preparedness plan in place.