

WILDFIRE DEFENSE

Wildfires may seem rare, but they do happen. Before a wildfire strikes, there are measures you can take to reduce danger to homes and businesses. The following fire awareness tips may be useful for many across the nation.



A building's ability to survive a wildfire is based on its roofing material and the quality of the "defensible space" surrounding it. Defensible space is an area around a structure where fuel and vegetation are cleared or reduced to slow the spread of a wildfire toward a structure. It also provides room for firefighters if a fire approaches a structure.

Roof

Wildfires often spread to homes and buildings when burning debris is carried by wind and falls on roofs.

- » When building a new home or replacing nonfire-resistant asphalt shingles or wood shakes, consider fire-resistant materials such as slate, tile or standing-seam metal roofing.
- » Keep roof and gutters clear of leaves, pine needles and branches.

Defensible space

Develop defensible space around each building by establishing fire zones.

- » Zone 1 consists of an area 15 feet around each building. This area should have little or no fire fuel and obstacles. Ideally, all trees from Zone 1 should be removed as well. Trees that remain in Zone 1 should be considered part of the structure and the defensible space should be extended accordingly.

- » Isolate any tree in this zone from other surrounding trees. Prune it to at least 10 feet above the ground. Remove branches that interfere with the roof.
- » Plant nothing within three to five feet of the home or business. Frequently prune and maintain any other plants located in this zone to ensure low growth.
- » Do not store flammable materials, such as propane tanks or firewood, in Zone 1.
- » Post the address so firefighters and emergency personnel can easily and clearly see it.
- » Have an outdoor water supply with a hose and nozzle that can reach all parts of the structure. If fire does approach a structure, to conserve water, do not turn the water on until the fire is near.
- » Check fire extinguishers to ensure they are in good working condition and serviced annually.
- » Do not store boats, recreational vehicles and other machinery in Zone 1.



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- » Zone 2 extends 75 to 125 feet from the structure. This area of fuel reduction reduces the intensity of approaching fire.
 - › Remove stressed, diseased, dead or dying trees and shrubs.
 - › Thin trees so their crowns are at least 10 feet apart. This prevents fire from climbing into treetops and creating a fast moving “crown fire.” Fire intensity decreases when flames stay on the ground.
 - › Prune tree limbs near the ground.
 - › Mow grasses to keep them low (no higher than six to eight inches).
 - › Stack firewood and locate liquid propane tanks at least 30 feet from the home or business. Keep vegetation cleared within 10 feet of tanks.
 - › Remove yard trash.
 - › Make sure driveways allow easy access for emergency vehicles.
- » Zone 3 extends from 125 feet to the property line.
 - › Cut smaller trees to thin forest, leaving the biggest and best trees. Thinning reduces fuels and the intensity of an approaching fire.
 - › Have an easily accessible tool storage area with rakes, hoes, axes and shovels for use in case of fire.

Taking the necessary precautions against potential wildfires can save you time and money, and the inconvenience of having to rebuild your home or business.

For more information about American Family's Safety Consulting Services, visit www.amfam.com

DISCLAIMER

The recommendations printed here follow generally accepted safety standards. Compliance with these recommendations does not guarantee that you will be in conformance with any building code, or federal, state or local regulations regarding safety or fire. Compliance does not ensure the absolute safety of you, your operations or place of business.



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