

OAKMONT FIREWISE TASK FORCE

IN THE VALLEY OF THE MOON

Dear Homeowner:

Thank you for requesting a Firewise Defensible Space and Home Hardening Assessment. The certified Firewise Task Force Assessor will send you a report outlining recommended actions after completing the assessment. Please inform the Assessor if you do not have an email address available so that a hard copy can be mailed to your address.

The Firewise Task Force compiled the enclosed materials to provide homeowners with information about how to make their properties more resilient to the threat of wildfires. Wildfire is an increasing reality throughout California, including in the City of Santa Rosa. Understanding and implementing these Firewise recommendations will help make Oakmont Village less vulnerable to flying embers from nearby wildfires. We hope you find these materials informative and useful in protecting your home.

If you have any questions regarding these materials or the Firewise Landscape Policy, please reach out to the Firewise Task Force at Firewise@OakmontVillage.com.

This packet contains the following:

- Release of Reliability Form – A signed copy will be provided with the report
- Assessment Checklist – A completed copy will be provided with the report
- Understanding the Firewise Landscape Policy
- The Use of Wood Mulches in a Firewise Landscape
- Oakmont Village Do Not Plant List
- Fire Safety and Control Policy Rules, Regulations and Best Practices
- California Fire Safe Council Brochures for Defensible Space and Home Hardening
- Wildfire Evacuation Checklist
- Firewise USA Certificate of Recognition

Additional information is available online at <https://oakmontvillage.com/firewise-actions/> and <https://oakmontvillage.com/firewise-resources/>. For ideas about Firewise landscaping please visit Fire Safe Marin at <https://www.firesafemarin.org/landscaping> or Sonoma Master Gardeners at http://sonomamg.ucanr.edu/Firewise_Landscaping/. If you prefer to hire a contractor for any of the changes recommended, a list of service providers is available at <https://oakmontvillage.com/article/service-provider-list/>.

Please Note: Written approval from the Oakmont Village Association (OVA) Architectural Committee is required prior starting of work on any additions or modifications to Oakmont residential properties. This includes all landscaping projects in the front, back and side yards, attached or detached exterior structures, roofing, fences, gates, or anything that alters the exterior appearance of a residence. Application forms are available at the Architectural Office or online at <https://oakmontvillage.com/docs/> under the “Forms: Architectural Only” section. Please visit the Architectural Office for more information on OVA policies or the application process.

Thank you again for being Firewise!



OAKMONT VILLAGE ASSOCIATION
DEFENSIBLE SPACE & HOME HARDENING ASSESSMENT
RELEASE OF LIABILITY

The Oakmont Firewise Defensible Space and Home Hardening Assessment is provided free of charge as a service to the community. Upon request, a representative of the Firewise Resource Task Force, who is certified under the Wildland Fire Assessment Program, will conduct a home assessment with the resident. The assessment provides a record for the resident and is also used for educational purposes.

The goal of this assessment is to:

- 1. Improve awareness of existing conditions and/or hazards around the home that may be susceptible to wildfire.
2. Prevent property damage and loss.
3. Provide data and applicable information to be used for wildfire mitigation efforts in maintaining Oakmont's Firewise Community status.

In exchange for participation in this assessment, I agree for myself (and if applicable), members of my family, and others residing on my property, to the following:

- I understand that the assessment is merely an advisory service and not an inspection of applicable code enforcements.
I agree that participation in this assessment will not guarantee that a fire, injury, death and/or property damage or loss will not occur.
I understand that modifications I make to my property based on the recommendations of the assessment do not guarantee that a fire, injury, death and/or property damage or loss will not occur.
I agree to voluntarily assume full responsibility for any decisions I make based on this assessment and indemnify Oakmont Village Association against all potential claims, causes of actions, damages, or other consequences arising from its recommendations.

By signing this disclaimer, I agree that members of the household will be bound by the terms of this disclaimer. In recognition of these facts, I agree to hold harmless Oakmont Village Association and the assessor representative of the Firewise Resource Task Force, for any effects of actions I may take as a result of this assessment.

To be completed by the resident: Print Name, Phone, Signature, Date, Address of home being assessed

To be completed by the assessor: Print Name, Phone, Signature, Date

Questions? Contact the Firewise Resource Task Force at firewise@oakmontvillage.com.

OAKMONT VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

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FIREWISE DEFENSIBLE SPACE & HOME HARDENING ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

This checklist includes both required and recommended actions. Required actions (on the first/front page) are from the Oakmont Village Firewise Landscape Policy. Recommended actions (on the second/back page) are from various authoritative sources, including the Firewise Landscape Policy, the Safer From Wildfire initiative from the California Department of Insurance and the Wildfire Prepared Home program from the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety.

Zone	Firewise Landscape Policy Requirements	Yes	No
0-5'	Are plants on the OVA Do Not Plant List removed?		
0-5'	Are wood and rubber mulches removed?		
0-5'	Are approved shrubs healthy and maintained free of dead wood?		
0-5'	Are roof and gutters cleaned of debris as needed to avoid accumulation?		
0-30'	Are firewood and combustible materials stored at least 30 feet from the home, garage, attached deck or other structures?		
0-30'	Are dead and dying branches and limbs overhanging the roof removed?		
0-30'	Are healthy branches and limbs trimmed 6 feet from the roof or structures and 10 feet from the chimney?		
0-30'	Are tree limbs removed that extend within 5 feet of the home?		
Entire Property	Are dead branches removed from shrubs and trees?		
Entire Property	Are dead shrubs and trees removed?		
Entire Property	Are shrubs trimmed and debris cleared to eliminate ladder fuel under trees?		
Entire Property	Are all junipers removed?		
Entire Property	Are wildland grasses cut/mowed to 4 inches?		
Entire Property	Have gorilla hair and rubber mulch been removed?		
Entire Property	Have all trees 18 feet or taller been limbed at least 6 feet from the ground?		

This information is provided for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for homeowners consulting with qualified professionals and government agencies.

FIREWISE DEFENSIBLE SPACE & HOME HARDENING ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Zone	Firewise Landscape Recommendations	Yes	No
0-5'	Have all in-the-ground plants and vegetation, along with combustible mulches, artificial turf, fallen leaves and needles been removed from Zone Zero?		
0-5'	Have vines growing on pergolas, trellises or fences been removed?		
Entire Property	Has all dead vegetation, dried leaves, pine needles and other flammable debris around all structures (home, sheds, decks and fences) been removed?		
Entire Property	Are large contiguous swaths of combustible wood mulch areas broken up by noncombustible fire-breaks such as rock or concrete pavers?		
Entire Property	Are single shrubs or a small group of shrubs in the landscape separated from each other to break up a continuous path to the home?		
Entire Property	Have old shrubs past their prime that have lots of dead wood and debris within them been removed?		
Other			

Structure	Home Hardening Recommendations	Yes	No
Vents	Are all vents made of noncombustible, ember-resistant 1/8-inch mesh?		
Roof	Is the roofing material Class A fire-rated?		
Roof	Are all gutters, gutter guards and downspouts noncombustible?		
Walls	Is there at least 6 vertical inches of noncombustible siding (or exposed concrete foundation) at the base of all exterior walls?		
Fence(s)	Are only noncombustible fencing materials used within 5 feet of the wall, attached deck(s) or roof eave above the fence?		
Deck(s)	Have all combustible items stored on or underneath been removed?		
Deck(s)	Is the area underneath decks less than 4 feet above the ground screened with 1/8-inch mesh or fully enclosed with adequate ventilation?		
Deck(s)	Is there at least 6 vertical inches of noncombustible material at the base of all deck enclosures and posts?		
Shed(s)	Are accessory structures 15 square feet or larger at least 10 feet from the home?		
Shading	Are retractable awnings and shade screens enclosed in noncombustible housing, and are fixed attached awnings, pergolas and patio covers noncombustible?		
Other			

This information is provided for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for homeowners consulting with qualified professionals and government agencies.

UNDERSTANDING THE FIREWISE LANDSCAPE POLICY

The purpose of the Firewise Landscape Policy (FLP) is to create defensible space around homes and other structures in Oakmont and to reduce the risk of wildfire to lives and property.

Defensible space is either a managed vegetation buffer between your property and surrounding wildlands or a managed vegetation buffer between your property and your neighbor's property. Defensible space is needed to slow or stop the spread of a wildfire and it helps to protect homes from catching fire from either direct flame, radiant heat or embers. Wind-blown embers can travel miles from a wildfire and are a major cause of home loss during a wildfire. Defensible space is important for the protection of firefighters and for their access to defend a home or property.

It is important to point out that the FLP's focus on defensible space with its vegetation concerns is only one part of a coupled approach in making our homes and community less risky to wildfires. The other part of the coupled approach is home hardening actions such as installing ember resistant vents. Home hardening is addressed in other venues.

Creating defensible space is important because all of Oakmont is located either in or adjacent to the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) which means that all of Oakmont is at a heightened risk from wildfires. California Government Codes and the City of Santa Rosa require that property owners create a defensible space from their homes of 100 feet or up to one's property line, whichever is less.

To lessen Oakmont's wildfire risks it is vital to take appropriate actions in all of CAL FIRE's Defensible Space Zones: **Zone Zero** (0-5 feet from a home and attached deck), **Zone 1** (5-30 feet from a home and attached deck) and **Zone 2** (30 to 100 feet from a home and attached deck.)

Firewise landscaping is a combination of plant selection, design and maintenance that helps to create a landscape that is resistant to wildfires. FLP requirements assist in this endeavor. A Firewise landscape can be aesthetically pleasing and attractive. It is not a landscape devoid of plants resembling a moonscape.

The FLP's intent is to encourage residents to take actions that make a significant difference in reducing the risk of a wildfire to a resident's home and to our community at large. To accomplish this intent the following list of FLP requirements were established.

Note: Many FLP requirements are already part of existing OVA landscape requirements. The Architectural Committee (AC) has the task of checking for compliance with the FLP and OVA landscape requirements. Residents are encouraged to contact the OVA's Architectural Office for any questions on implementation of FLP requirements for either existing landscapes or for installing new landscapes.

Note: Homeowner's insurance policies may have more stringent requirements than OVA's Firewise Landscape Policy.

Note: A full copy of the OVA's Firewise Landscape Policy may be found at: <https://oakmontvillage.com/article/firewise-landscape-policy/> or a copy may be obtained from the OVA's Architectural Office.

UNDERSTANDING THE FIREWISE LANDSCAPE POLICY

1. Trees, shrubs and all plants on the entire property must be pruned to remove any dead material for fire safety and appearance.
2. All dying or dead trees and shrubs must be removed and can be replaced with new plants **with prior AC approval.**
3. No trees, shrubs, or plants listed on the OVA's Do Not Plant List are allowed within the 5-foot defensible space next to the home. Any existing trees and shrubs not on the OVA Do Not Plant List may remain in the 5-foot defensible space. These shrubs should be healthy and maintained free of dead wood.
4. No plants on the OVA Do Not Plant List shall be allowed in **new** landscaping on the remainder of the property.
5. Property owners shall remove all junipers (*Juniperus* spp.) from their entire property.
6. Lawns must be mowed, kept weed free and watered sufficiently to maintain a healthy and green appearance.
7. Wildland grasses must be cut or mowed down mechanically or with sheep to a maximum height of 4 inches annually.
8. Trees:
 - (a) Remove dead branches from trees on one's entire property while keeping the integrity of the trees.
 - (b) Limbs within 10 feet of a chimney shall be removed.
 - (c) Remove all dead and dying branches overhanging a roof.
 - (d) Healthy overhanging limbs shall be trimmed to a minimum of six-feet from the roof of a home or any other structure.
 - (e) Established trees shall be limbed to a minimum of at least 6 feet from the ground but not to exceed 1/3 of the tree height.
 - (f) Areas under tree canopies shall be maintained free of weeds and dry plant material.
 - (g) Shrubs should be pruned so they do not create ladder fuel on the property.
 - (h) Remove tree limbs that extend into the 5-foot ignition zone around the home.
 - (i) No new trees shall be planted within 10 feet of the home or within 10 feet of canopies of other trees on the property.
 - (j) **Exceptions to tree guidelines may be granted as deemed appropriate by AC inspectors.**

UNDERSTANDING THE FIREWISE LANDSCAPE POLICY

9. The use of combustible mulch such as wood or rubber is not allowed in the 5-foot defensible space next to the house. Noncombustible rock, gravel, concrete and pavers are allowed.
10. New plantings of Firewise shrubs, perennials, ground covers and flowers are allowed in the 5-foot defensible space but shall be maintained at 18” high or less and irrigated.
11. Finely shredded redwood or cedar bark, such as Gorilla hair, or rubber mulches are not allowed on the entire property and shall be removed.

Rock used as mulch between plants is exempt from the 15% rock rule calculation. Front yard plantings and side-yard street frontage plantings shall be mulched with rock, gravel, or allowed wood mulches. **The AC shall deem what are appropriate amounts of rock and wood mulch in a landscape and may grant exceptions as they deem appropriate.**

The amount of wood mulch allowed in large areas without live plants depends on the size of the lot. A study entitled Combustibility of Landscape Mulches can be obtained from the AC office. Plans must specify what rock, wood mulch, gravel, etc., color and size, is desired. A sample of mulch material must be submitted with the application and must be approved by the AC.

12. New landscaping choices must be made with consideration of a plant’s mature height and spread.
13. All new installations such as gates, protective patio golf screens, sheds, or a portion of fence that attaches directly to a home, and out a distance of five feet from the home, attached deck or structure, must be made of metal or approved nonflammable material.
14. Chimney spark arrestors that are code compliant are required on all wood burning fireplaces.
15. Keep gutters clean of debris. Property owners shall remove all leaves and needles from a structures’ roof and rain gutters as needed to avoid accumulation.
16. All firewood and any combustible materials must be stored at least 30 feet away from the home, garage or attached deck or other structures.
17. **Note: Landscaping plans for front, side and back yards must be submitted to the Architectural Committee (AC) using the AC Application, which can be obtained from the AC office or found under Architectural on the OVA website. All landscaping projects require prior written approval by the AC before any work may begin.**

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THE USE OF WOOD MULCHES IN A FIREWISE LANDSCAPE

The ecological benefits of using wood mulches are many, such as soil enhancement, water conservation, weed control and aesthetics. Their use in landscapes should be encouraged but moderated because of Firewise concerns.

Wood mulches should not be installed in a widespread or continuous manner. Wood-mulched areas should be separated from each other by hardscape elements, such as concrete, rock or other noncombustible materials.

Do not place **any type** of wood mulch immediately adjacent to a home, deck, fence or other structures made from combustible materials. Composted wood mulches tend to burn at the lowest speed and lowest flame length but can still ignite siding, plant debris, and other combustible materials. They tend to smolder which can go undetected by firefighters during a wildfire.

*Note: Actions that are **Required** by the Oakmont Village Associations' Firewise Landscape Policy are identified as such. All other actions mentioned are recommended by experts in order to enhance a community's resiliency to wildfires.*

In the 0-5 foot zone from buildings and attached decks:

- No wood or rubber mulches are allowed. **(OVA Required.)**
- Remove accumulated dead plant leaves and debris on the ground.
- Rock or gravel mulches are acceptable.

In the 5-30 foot zone and further zones:

- No shredded redwood or cedar gorilla hair mulches or rubber mulches are allowed. **(OVA Required.)**
- It is highly recommended that dyed wood mulches not be used.
- The use of composted wood chips or screened composted organic mulches are highly recommended.
- Leaves are a natural beneficial mulch for plants but limit their depth to 2 inches except during the declared fire season when no leaves should be kept in the 5-30 foot zone.
- Wood mulches should be less than 3 inches thick.

Note: A landscape plan, along with wood mulch and rock samples, must be submitted to the Architectural Committee before work can begin. Approval for both wood-mulched areas and rock-mulched areas will depend on site-specific conditions. **(OVA Required.)**

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OAKMONT VILLAGE DO NOT PLANT LIST

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Botanical Name</i>
<u>Trees</u>	
Acacia	<i>Acacia</i> spp.
Arborvitae	<i>Thuja</i> spp.
Australian tea tree	<i>Leptospermum laevigatum</i>
Black walnut	<i>Juglans nigra</i>
California bay	<i>Umbellularia californica</i>
California pepper tree	<i>Schinus molle</i>
Cedar	<i>Cedrus</i> spp.
Cypress	<i>Cupressus</i> spp.
Eucalyptus	<i>Eucalyptus</i> spp.
False cypress	<i>Chamaecyparis</i> spp.
Fir	<i>Abies</i> spp.
Giant chinquapin	<i>Chrysolepis chrysophylla</i>
Hemlock	<i>Tsuga</i> spp.
Honeylocust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>
Juniper	<i>Juniperus</i> spp.
Leyland cypress	<i>Cupressus x leyandii</i> (used as a hedge)
Palm	<i>ALL genera</i>
Paperbark tree	<i>Melaleuca</i> spp.
Pine	<i>Pinus</i> spp.
Spruce	<i>Picea</i> spp.
Sweet gum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>
Tamarisk	<i>Tamarix</i> spp.
Tan Oak	<i>Notholithocarpus densiflorus</i>
Tree of heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Botanical Name</i>
<u>Shrubs/Vines</u>	
Bamboo	<i>ALL genera</i>
Bluebeard	<i>Caryopteris</i> spp.
Broom	<i>ALL genera</i>
California buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i>
Chamise or greasewood	<i>Adenostoma fasciculatum</i>
Chaparral pea	<i>Pickeringia montana</i>
Coyote brush	<i>Baccharis</i> spp.
Evergreen huckleberry	<i>Vaccinium ovatum</i>
Gas plant	<i>Dictamnus albus</i>
Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera japonica</i> 'Halliana'
Hopbush or hopseed bush	<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>
Juniper	<i>Juniperus</i> spp.
Manzanita	<i>Arctostaphylos</i> spp. (Ground cover variety okay)
New Zealand tea tree	<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>
Rosemary	<i>Rosmarinus</i> spp.
Sagebrush	<i>Artemisia californica</i>
Scrub oak	<i>Quercus berberidifolia</i>
Grevillea	<i>Grevillea noellii</i>
Yew	<i>Taxus</i> spp. (Also a tree)

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Botanical Name</i>
<u>Grasses</u>	
Fountain grass	<i>Pennisetum</i> spp.
Maiden grass	<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i>
Pampas grass	<i>Cortadaria selloana</i>
<u>Ground Cover</u>	
Big leaf periwinkle	<i>Vinca major</i>
Ivy	<i>Hedera</i> spp.
Juniper	<i>Juniperus</i> spp.
<u>Mulch</u>	
Woodchips and bark <u>are not</u> allowed in the 0–5-foot defensible space. The mulch types listed below are not allowed anywhere on residential property.	
Gorilla-hair	
Finely shredded redwood/cedar	
Rubber	

Title and Spelling Corrections Only: 01/31/2021
Fourth Revision: 08/19/2018

FIRE SAFETY AND CONTROL POLICY RULES, REGULATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

The Oakmont Village Association (OVA) Board of Directors approved the OVA Vegetation Management Plan (VMP), prepared by the General Manager, on April 21, 2020. The following Fire Safety and Control Policy Rules, Regulations and Best Practices are utilized in conjunction with the VMP, the duty to maintain enforcement policy, and the Association's protective restrictions (CC&Rs.)

It shall be each property owner's responsibility to maintain their property in such a manner that it will not constitute a fire hazard to the residents, other properties, or surrounding forest of the OVA.

Rules, Regulations, and Best Practices for Residential Properties:

1. All combustible materials shall be removed from beneath decks, stairways, and roof overhangs.
2. All leaves and pine needles shall be regularly removed from a structure's roof and rain gutters.
3. The street address of each residential property shall be posted street side and visible night and day to emergency personnel.
4. All combustible branch piles, dry slash, scrap lumber, and woody materials shall be removed from residential properties.
5. All dry, flammable vegetation within 100 feet (if appropriate, based on yard size) of any structure and within 30 feet of any driveway and roadway shall be removed.
6. Non-irrigated sections of grass shall be cut to 4-inch stubble through the fire season to a distance of 100 feet of any structure. (An example would be a large lot with a non-irrigated open field adjacent to Annadel Park).
7. Trees that are considered a potential fire hazard (as specified in the VMP) should be limbed to a minimum of 6 feet from the ground, not to exceed 1/3 of the tree height, and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. All hanging limbs on such trees will be cut to a minimum of 6 feet off the ground.
8. To help in the reduction of ladder fuels, the area under each tree shall be maintained free of weeds and tall, dry grasses.
9. Following the VMP and Sonoma County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), standing dead trees and dead bushes shall be removed from each property.
10. Limbs on a homeowner or association property within 10 feet above any chimney shall be removed. Chimney spark arresters are recommended.
11. All loose wood material (e.g., firewood, lumber, and wood pieces) shall be removed from within 30 feet of any structure. Where this is not attainable, a fireproof tarp may be approved.
12. Properties within highly wooded areas or within 100 feet of High Fire Severity Zones such as Annadel State Park shall not have an excessively dense tree and brush cover (as defined in the CWPP).
13. A 5-foot defensible space shall be maintained around the perimeter of all homes and related structures.

FIRE SAFETY AND CONTROL POLICY RULES, REGULATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Common Area Fire Hazard Inspections

OVA-authorized fire inspectors will annually conduct fire inspections on OVA Common Area Parcels (which are identified in the VMP). OVA will execute remediation projects as necessary and appropriate.

Homeowner Fire Hazard Inspections

Authorized inspectors will annually conduct fire inspections. Inspectors will use OVA's most current Homeowners Fire Safety Inspection Forms on all properties within OVA, which will help homeowners and sub-association leaders identify hazardous fire conditions and will make recommendations or require remediation as necessary and appropriate.

Non-Compliance

If upon inspection of a property by an OVA-authorized inspector, a fire hazard is observed, notice for correction will be served. The inspector will specify an appropriate time period to address the extreme fire hazard.

Each case will be handled individually. Inspectors will consider all appropriate findings (including, but not limited to, urgency, project size, and project cost) in setting remediation guidelines.

If the fire hazard is not remediated within the prescribed time, a hearing may be conducted. Such hearings will be conducted according to the OVA Enforcement Policy. A fine may be assessed against the property owner. Should there be continued non-compliance, the matter may be referred to the Board of Directors for additional action. Compliance may be obtained by the Association based on the Duty to Maintain Enforcement Policy, which was approved on July 17, 2018.

If the OVA or its designee must enter a non-compliant property to correct one or more violations, the cost of such action may become a special individual assessment levied on the property owner. Such assessment may be collected in a manner consistent with the OVA's Collection Policy.

In the event of demonstrated hardship, the initial remediation period may be extended by the inspector or management for an additional period, to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Fire safety and the protection of life and property are the primary considerations in such judgments. Economic hardship alone will not justify such an extension.

Appeal

If a member or Association opposes the requests made by the authorized inspector, they may appeal the inspector's decision to the Board of Directors. The appeal procedure is available from the Administrative Office and online on the Oakmont's website. The appeal will be heard in a closed meeting by the Oakmont Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled Executive Session Board meeting. The appeal/reconsideration decision by the Oakmont Board of Directors shall be final.

Right to Change

The Board of Directors may, from time to time, amend this document as it deems necessary.



Creating Defensible Space to Help Survive a Wildfire Ember Storm

DURING AN EMBER STORM, flying embers can ignite anything combustible in their path, including your home and anything near it, such as plants or patio furniture.

Defensible homes should have nothing ignitable within the first 5 feet, and reduced fuels out to 100 feet or the property line (whichever is closer).

Creating and maintaining defensible space around a house—while hardening the home against wind- or heat-driven embers, flames, and heat—will increase the likelihood that it survives a wildfire. Defensible space also helps firefighters be safer while protecting property.

If a home is difficult to find, is surrounded by dense vegetation, or doesn't provide enough safe space for firefighters to work, it may be too dangerous to attempt to save.

This brochure is a guide to help you create your defensible space and find additional information and resources.

THREE WAYS YOUR HOME CAN BE EXPOSED TO FIRE



EMBER STORM

Embers are small pieces of burning material that can travel more than a mile ahead of a wildfire. They can create spot fires when they land on combustible materials, such as leaves in your gutter or plants under your windows.



RADIANT HEAT

Radiant heat generated from burning structures or plants can be hot enough to ignite a house without direct flame contact. This is particularly challenging in densely populated areas, where the heat from one burning home can ignite the next.



DIRECT FLAME

Depending on time and exposure, direct flame contact can ignite your home. The flaming front of a wildfire is often not hot enough to ignite a house, but plants under windows ignited by embers or direct flame can break glass, allowing fire to enter the house.

Embers are responsible for most damage during wildfires. They can accumulate on your home, deck, or porch and ignite plants, mulch, leaves, fencing, or furniture. They can also be forced into gaps in the home (e.g. attic vents or an open or broken window) and burn the home from the inside out. When this happens, there can be little damage to the surrounding vegetation, leaving people puzzled as to what caused the home to burn.

Embers cause the majority of wildfire home ignitions.

PHOTO CREDITS: INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS & HOME SAFETY (above left); TENNESSEE DIVISION OF FORESTRY (center)

Home and Property

WE'VE LEARNED FROM RECENT FIRES. Hardening your home and keeping the 5 feet closest to your house clear of flammable materials greatly improves the chance of surviving a fire.

Maintaining defensible space is the law within 100 feet of a home in wildfire-prone areas, and highly recommended elsewhere. If a garage, shed, your neighbor's house, or the property line is closer than 100 feet, it is especially important to "harden" the home itself to reduce vulnerability to radiant heat, and to work together with your neighbors to reduce risk—a great way to build community while protecting assets.

See the *California Fire Safe Council, Home Hardening* brochure for more information on structure protection.



Ladder Fuels and Fuel Continuity

Fire needs fuel to burn. A *fuel ladder* occurs when grass or other surface fuel carries flames into shrubs or small trees and then the fire climbs into larger trees—a continuous vertical line of fuel. Surface and ladder fuel is almost always necessary to sustain fire in upper tree branches. Defensible space breaks up the continuity of fuel both horizontally and vertically, to interrupt the spread of fire to your home.

EXAMPLE OF A FUEL LADDER
Continuous vegetation reaches into upper tree branches, providing a "ladder" for the fire to climb.



Helpful Resources

The **CALIFORNIA FIRE SAFE COUNCIL** (CFSC) helps coordinate a strong network of partnerships with local, regional, state, and national organizations in order to help California residents acquire the education, resources, and tools they need to be better prepared for wildfire.

Defensible Space is the law in wildfire-prone areas. Contact CAL FIRE or your local fire department for specific defensible space information and local ordinances.

ReadyForWildfire.org/Defensible-Space

Contact your local Fire Safe Council to get involved.

FireSafeCouncil.org



Sign up for CAL FIRE Alerts:

ReadyForWildfire.org/Ready-for-Wildfire-App

Look for an emergency alert system in your county.

ALWAYS CALL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

This publication is made possible through a grant from the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region Cooperative Fire Program. The California Fire Safe Council is an equal opportunity provider.



Recommendations for Creating Defensible Space

HOMES SURVIVE WILDFIRE THROUGH A COMBINATION OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:

- 1) Awareness and management of combustible materials on the property, especially within the first 5 feet of the home.
- 2) Incorporation of fire- and ember-resistant construction materials, installation details, and maintenance.
- 3) Careful landscape selection, placement, and maintenance.

For best practices to protect your home and other structures, see the *California Fire Safe Council, Hardened Homes* brochure.

Defensible Space is the law in wildfire-prone areas. These condensed recommendations address legal requirements and best practices for preparing and protecting your property.

For more information contact CAL FIRE or your local fire department.

ZONE 0

0 feet – 5 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures

The goal is to avoid home ignition from blowing embers.

- Use noncombustible materials such as rock, stone pavers, cement, bare earth, gravel, or sand.
- Remove all plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove leaves and needles from your roof and rain gutters.
- Clear vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Remove dead branches that overhang or touch your roof. Keep branches 10 feet away from your chimney.
- Remove all leaves, needles, or other debris that fall in this zone.

ZONE 1

5 feet – 30 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures

The goal is to reduce heat and movement of flame.

- Remove all dead plants, grass, and weeds.
- Actively prune live shrubs.
- Relocate woodpiles outside of this zone.
- Avoid extensive use of mulch, which can convey fire to the house.
- Limit fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches to a depth of 2 inches.
- Move all gas and propane tanks outside of this zone.

ENTIRE PROPERTY

5 feet – 100 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures, or to the property line

- Create islands of vegetation with horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
- Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees.
- Choose low-growing, irrigated, non-woody plants such as vegetables, succulents, erosion-control grasses, flowers, or lawn to create landscaping in this zone.
- Mow or remove dead or dried vegetation.
- Trim trees regularly to maintain a minimum of 10 feet of clearance between branches of adjoining trees or shrubs.
- Mow any grass to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- To protect water quality, maintain vegetation near waterways; do not clear to bare soil. Vegetation removal can cause soil erosion that damages streams, especially on steep slopes. Remove dead trees and shrubs, leaving the roots in place, if practical.
- Break up dense shrub cover on slopes by creating small islands of pruned shrubs staggered horizontally.
- Prior to evacuation, pull patio furniture, play sets, and gas BBQ tanks as far as possible from any structure, and bring cushions inside.



LANDSCAPING TIPS

Proper Placement Makes A Difference

Remember, any plant can burn under the right conditions. For all plants, maintenance is key.

When choosing species to plant in your 5- to 30-foot defensible space zone, look for plants with these characteristics:

- Able to store water in leaves and stems.
- Produce limited dead and fine material.
- Maintain high moisture content with limited watering.
- Low-growing or open form.
- Open loose branches with a low volume of total vegetation.
- Low levels of volatile oils or resins.
- Slow growing with little maintenance needed.
- Not considered invasive.

How Homes Catch Fire



Is Your Home Hardened to Survive a Wildfire Ember Storm?

FIRE HARDENED means your home is prepared for wildfire and an ember storm. It does not mean fireproof. Home hardening addresses the most vulnerable components of your house with building materials and installation techniques that increase resistance to heat, flames, and embers that accompany most wildfires.

Learning to live with wildfire includes taking steps to reduce the risk to homes. Homes built to modern (2008 or later) building codes, with an adjacent and well-maintained defensible space, have a much better chance of surviving wildfire. Maintenance and upgrades to older homes can significantly improve the chance of your home surviving a fire.

Part of learning to live with wildfire is understanding that we have some control in how we prepare for and address this hazard, and how we manage fire in our individual communities.

This brochure can help you better understand options for hardening your home and where to find more information.

THREE WAYS YOUR HOME CAN BE EXPOSED TO FIRE



EMBER STORM
Embers are small pieces of burning material that can travel more than a mile ahead of a wildfire. They can create spot fires when they land on combustible materials, such as leaves in your gutter or plants under your windows.



RADIANT HEAT
Radiant heat generated from burning structures or plants can be hot enough to ignite a house without direct flame contact. This is particularly challenging in densely populated areas, where the heat from one burning home can ignite the next.



DIRECT FLAME
Depending on time and exposure, direct flame contact can ignite your home. The flaming front of a wildfire is often not hot enough to ignite a house, but plants under windows ignited by embers or direct flame can break glass, allowing fire to enter the house.

Embers are responsible for most damage during wildfires. They can accumulate on your home, deck, or porch and ignite plants, mulch, leaves, fencing, or furniture. They can also be forced into gaps in the home (e.g. attic vents or an open or broken window) and burn the home from the inside out. When this happens, there can be little damage to the surrounding vegetation, leaving people puzzled as to what caused the home to burn.

Embers cause the majority of wildfire home ignitions.

PHOTO CREDITS: INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS & HOME SAFETY (above left); TENNESSEE DIVISION OF FORESTRY (center)

Home and Property

WE'VE LEARNED FROM RECENT FIRES. HARDENING YOUR HOME and keeping the 5 feet closest to your house clear of flammable materials (including patio furniture and décor) greatly improves its chance of surviving a fire.

Maintaining defensible space is the law within 100 feet of a home in wildfire-prone areas, and highly recommended elsewhere. If a garage, shed, your neighbor's house, or the property line is closer than 100 feet, it is especially important to harden your home to reduce vulnerability to radiant heat and to work together with your neighbors to reduce risk—a great way to build community while protecting assets.



See the *California Fire Safe Council, Defensible Space* brochure for more information.

KEY ELEMENTS OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE

- ✓ Keep your gutters and roofs clear of leaves and debris.
- ✓ Maintain a 5-foot noncombustible zone around your home and deck.
- ✓ Break up fuel by creating space between plants, and between the ground and the branches of trees.
- ✓ Mow grass to a height of 4 inches.
- ✓ Keep mulch away from the house. Bark mulch helps plants retain water but ignites and becomes flying embers during a wind-driven fire.
- ✓ During a wildfire move anything burnable—such as patio furniture or gas BBQ tanks—30 feet away from structures.

Helpful Resources

The **CALIFORNIA FIRE SAFE COUNCIL (CFSC)** helps coordinate a strong network of partnerships with local, regional, state, and national organizations in order to help California residents acquire the education, resources, and tools they need to be better prepared for wildfire.

For more information:

FireSafeCouncil.org • ReadyForWildfire.org

Contact your local Fire Safe Council to get involved.



For building codes in California, visit Office of the State Fire Marshal:

OSFM.Fire.ca.gov/CodeDevelopment/WildFireProtectionBuildingConstruction

Additional Hardened Home Information:

ReadyForWildfire.org/Hardening-Your-Home
DisasterSafety.org/ibhs/ibhs-Wildfire-Publications
UCANR.edu/Sites/Fire/Prepare/Building

Sign up for CAL FIRE Alerts:

ReadyForWildfire.org/Ready-for-Wildfire-App

Look for an emergency alert system in your county.

ALWAYS CALL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

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Recommendations for Hardening Your Home to Better Survive Wildfire

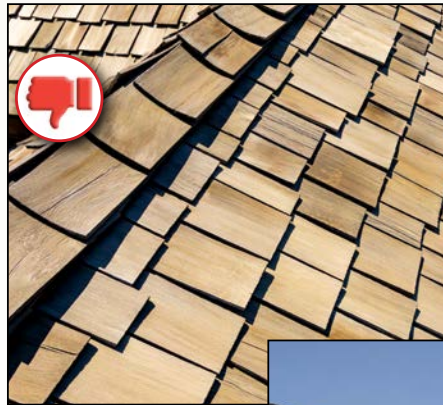
EMBER-RESISTANT CONSTRUCTION RELIES ON BOTH MAINTAINING DEFENSIBLE SPACE AND HARDENING YOUR HOME. HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HARDEN YOUR HOME TO MAKE IT MORE FIRE-RESISTANT.

YOUR TOP 3 PRIORITIES SHOULD BE YOUR ROOF, VENTS, AND NEAR-HOME VEGETATION.

- 1) Avoid combustible materials on the property, especially within the first five feet of the home.
- 2) Incorporate fire- and ember-resistant construction materials, installation details, and maintenance.
- 3) Be thoughtful about landscaping choices and maintenance.

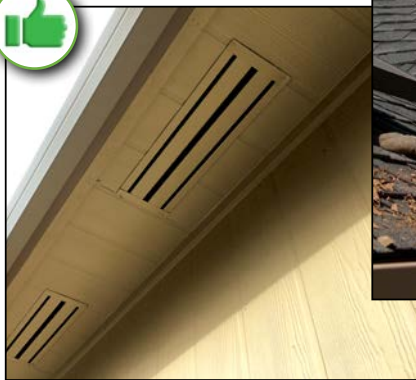
THE ROOF has the greatest exposure to fire embers.

- Inspect and repair or replace your roof with tile, metal, asphalt, or shingles (materials with a Class-A fire rating).
- Plug gaps between your roof covering and sheathing to prevent ember entry.
- Install a metal drip edge (i.e., metal angle flashing) at the roof edge.
- Cover tile caps to prevent bird nesting.



VENTS can allow embers to enter a crawl space, the attic, soffit, or foundation.

- Upgrade vents with 1/8-inch metal mesh, or install vents approved to resist embers and flames (see resources).



EAVES AND SOFFITS with open-eave construction should be inspected.

- Wherever possible enclose open eaves.
- Caulk and plug gaps around exposed rafters and blocking.



CHIMNEY

- Cover your chimney and stovepipe outlets with a noncombustible mesh screen.

RAIN GUTTERS should be cleared of leaves and needles that embers can easily ignite.

- Inspect and clean gutters regularly.
- Install a noncombustible gutter guard to reduce accumulated debris.

GARAGES are especially vulnerable to embers and ash. Embers can enter a garage as easily as dust, potentially igniting a house from the inside.

- Install weather stripping, or gaskets, around and under the garage door to limit ember entry.
- Store all combustible and flammable liquids away from ignition sources.
- Know how to operate your garage door when there is no power.

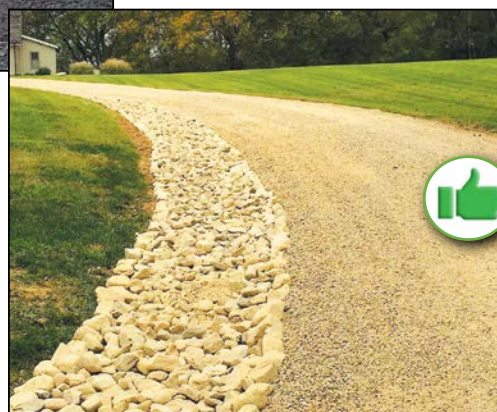
WINDOWS can break from the heat, even before a home ignites, allowing burning embers or flames into the home.

- Install or upgrade to multi-pane tempered glass.
- Ensure there is no vegetation or other combustible materials within 5 feet of windows and glass doors.



SIDING is vulnerable if exposed to flames or radiant heat for periods of time.

- Inspect all siding. Plug or caulk gaps and joints.
- Maintain 6 inches of vertical noncombustible material between the ground and the start of the siding.
- Replace shingle or shake siding with ignition-resistant materials.
- If a neighboring home or outbuilding is closer than 30 feet, be sure to use noncombustible or ignition-resistant materials.
- Use a noncombustible louvered or self-closing dryer vent cover.

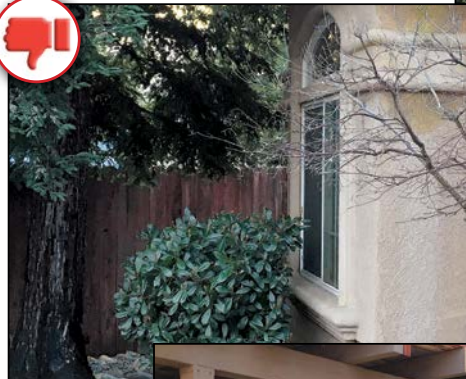


FENCES

- Fences or gates that connect to structures should use noncombustible materials within 5 feet of the building, to prevent the fence from burning up to the structure.

DRIVEWAYS AND ACCESS ROADS should be built and maintained according to state and local codes so that emergency vehicles can safely reach your home.

- Maintain access roads with a minimum of 10 feet of clearance on either side.
- Ensure that all gates can open without power to accommodate emergency equipment.
- Trim overhanging trees up to 15 feet from the ground in order to allow emergency vehicles to pass.



ADDRESS

- Make sure your address is clearly visible from the road.

WATER SUPPLY can be enhanced by having multiple garden hoses long enough to reach all areas of the structures on your property.

- If you have a pool or well, consider getting a fuel-powered pump.
- Best practice is to provide a 2½-inch water line from a water tank to a standpipe fitted with 1½-inch fire hose fittings coordinated with your local fire department.



For best practices to protect your home and property, see the *California Fire Safe Council, Defensible Space* brochure.

Wildfire Evacuation Checklist

Review this information now to prepare yourself for a quick and safe evacuation.

GO BAG ESSENTIALS:

- Important documents (bank, IRS, trust, investment, insurance policy, birth certificates, medical records)
- ATM, credit and debit cards and cash in small bills
- Medications, Rx numbers and vaccination records for humans and pets
- Non-perishable food and water for 72 hours
- Driver's license, passport
- Computer backup files & passwords
- Inventory of home contents (consider making a video inventory now, prior to an emergency)
- Photographs of the exterior of the house and landscape
- Address book including medical and veterinarian contact information
- Cell phone charger, car charger and battery packs
- Personal toiletries
- Enough clothing for 3-5 days
- Family heirlooms, photo albums and videos
- Batteries

PREPARE FAMILY MEMBERS:

- If possible, evacuate all family members not essential to preparing the house for wildfire
- Plan several evacuation routes from your home
- Designate a safe meeting place and contact person
- Relay your plans to a contact person
- Designate a "safe area" where people can wait out a wildfire (i.e., ballfields, irrigated pastures or parking lots)
- Register for a local emergency notification system such as "reverse 911" or "CodeRED"
 - » Ask your county emergency management for details
 - » Update personal information and cell phone numbers in databases

WHAT TO WEAR:

- Wear only cotton or wool clothes, including long pants, long-sleeved shirt or jacket, a hat, and boots
- Carry gloves, water to drink, and goggles
- Keep your cell phone, a flashlight, and portable radio with you at all times
- Tune in to a local radio station and listen for instructions
- NIOSH N95 or P100 mask

PREPARE VEHICLE:

- Keep your vehicle's gas tank full
- If you can lift your garage door manually, place vehicle in the garage pointing out with the keys in the ignition and disconnect the electric garage door opener. If not, park in your driveway facing out
- Roll up the car windows
- Close the garage door
- Place essential items in the car
- If you do not drive, make other arrangements for transportation in advance
- Close garage door when you leave

INSIDE THE HOME:

- Close all interior doors
- Leave a light on in each room
- Remove lightweight, non-fire-resistant curtains and other combustible materials from around windows
- Close fire-resistant drapes, shutters, and blinds
- Turn off all pilot lights
- Move overstuffed furniture, such as couches and easy chairs, to the center of the room
- Close fireplace damper
- Close or block off any doggie-doors
- Lock-up firearms or valuables

Be prepared! It will likely be dark, smoky, windy, and hot. There may be airborne burning embers, no power or telephone, and poor water pressure. Remember, there is nothing you own worth your life! Please evacuate immediately when asked.

OUTSIDE THE HOME:

- Place combustible patio furniture and barbecues in the house, garage or away from the home
- Shut off propane at the tank or natural gas at the meter, and clear the area of combustible material
- Close all exterior vents, doors, and windows
- Leave gates unlocked
- Turn on outside lights
- If available and if there's time, cover windows, attic openings, and vents with plywood that is at least one-half inch thick
- Ensure that all garden hoses are connected to faucets and turned off
- Don't leave sprinklers on, or water running; they can affect critical water pressure
- Ensure that house numbers and street signs are visible and reflective if possible

PREPARE PETS:

- Have identification on your animal
 - » Many animal species can be microchipped (Microchipping is a permanent form of identification for your pet)
- Have veterinary records and medications in one easy-to-find place
 - » Pro Tip: A gallon ziplock bag can keep them dry and catch any pills that may fall out of a container that isn't securely shut
- Transport food, water and bowls in easy-to-carry, sealed containers
- Have a buddy system
 - » Can your neighbors help if you are not home during an evacuation?
 - » Do you have a family member or friend that can help house your animals should you need to be evacuated for an extended time? This can be especially helpful for livestock and poultry
- Dogs and small pets should be securely crated with only one animal per carrier
 - » Normally well-behaved pets can panic and run away during a stressful event; a carrier can keep them safe
- Remove any non-essential items from carriers or cages, as unsecured items can injure a pet during transport

PREPARE HORSES, LIVESTOCK & OTHER LARGE ANIMALS:

- Have a livestock trailer and reliable vehicle for towing the trailer
- Practice loading your livestock into the trailer and towing it before an emergency

IF YOU MUST LEAVE ANIMALS BEHIND, NOTIFY YOUR LOCAL ANIMAL SERVICE AGENCY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Remember, animals are likely to be stressed due to the smell of smoke, the sounds of sirens or the flashing lights of first responder vehicles. Remain calm and do not wait until the last minute to evacuate.



This checklist was adapted from Wildfire Evacuation Checklist, University of Nevada, Reno Extension publication #FS-06-07. Funding for this project provided in part by a Community Fire Assistance Agreement with the Bureau of Land Management – Nevada State Office in cooperation with University of Nevada, Reno Extension. University of Nevada, Reno is an EEO/AA institution.

2025

NATIONAL FIREWISE USA® PROGRAM
CERTIFICATE
OF RECOGNITION

The National Fire Protection Association acknowledges that

Oakmont Village Association

located in Santa Rosa, CA

has successfully completed the Firewise USA® program's annual requirements for 2025
and is a participating site in good standing throughout the 2026 calendar year.



James T. Pauley, President, NFPA



FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

November 14, 2025

Date Issued