

WILDFIRES

Before wildfire threatens. Design and landscape your home with wildfire safety in mind. Select materials and plants that can help contain fire rather than fuel it. Use fire resistant or non-combustible materials on the roof and exterior structure of the dwelling. Or treat wood or combustible material used in roofs, siding, decking or trim with UL approved fire retardant chemicals. Plant fire resistant shrubs and trees. For example, hardwood trees are less flammable than pine, evergreen, eucalyptus or fir trees.

Create a 30 to 50 foot safety zone around your home. Within this area, you can take steps to reduce potential exposure to flames and radiant heat. Homes built in pine forests should have a minimum safety zone of 100 feet. If your home sits on a steep slope, standard protective measures may not suffice.

- Rake leaves, dead limbs and twigs. Clear all flammable vegetation.
- Remove leaves and rubbish from under structures.
- Thin a 15 foot space between tree crowns and remove limbs within 15 feet of the ground.
- Remove dead branches that extend over the roof.
- Prune tree branches and shrubs within 15 feet of a stovepipe or chimney outlet.
- Ask the power company to clear branches from powerlines.
- Remove vines from the walls of homes.
- Mow grass regularly.
- Clear a 10 foot area around propane tanks and the barbeque. Place a screen over the grill, use non-flammable material with mesh no coarser than one quarter inch.
- Regularly dispose of newspapers and rubbish at an approved site. Follow local burning regulations.
- Place stove, fireplace and grill ashes in a metal bucket, soak in water for two day, then bury the cold ashes in mineral soil.
- Store gasoline, oily rags and other flammable materials in approved safety cans. Place cans in a safe location away from the base of buildings.
- Stack firewood at least 100 feet away and uphill from your home. Clear combustible material within 20 feet. Use only UL approved wood burning devices.

When wildfire threatens.

- If you are warned that a wildfire is threatening your area, listen to your battery operated radio for reports and evacuation information. Follow the instructions of local officials.
- Back your car into the garage or park it in an open space facing the direction of escape. Shut doors and roll up windows. Leave the key in the ignition. Close garage windows and doors, but leave them unlocked. Disconnect automatic garage door openers.
- Confine pets to one room and make plans to care for your pets in case you must evacuate.
- Arrange temporary housing at a friend or relative's home outside the threatened area.
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Wear protective clothing such as sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothing, long pants, a long sleeved shirt, gloves and a handkerchief to protect your face.
- Take your disaster supplies kit and lock your home. Tell someone when you left and where you are going. Choose a route away from fire hazards. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of fire and smoke.