

Do You Have Defensible Space?

Danger Spots Around Your Home and What you Can Do to Eliminate Them

1 Wood Shake Roofs:

Wood shake roofs that can catch windblown sparks are the number one cause of home losses in wildland areas.

Solution:

When you re-roof, install a fire-resistant roof. Consider applying a fire-retardant treatment to your existing roof.

2 Debris on Roofs:

Tinder-dry needles and leaves on your roof and in your rain gutters can easily catch fire and endanger your home.

Solution:

Clear your gutters and roof on a regular basis, especially during the dry, hot weather of the fire season.

3 Tree Limbs Too Close to Your Chimney and Roof:

Tree limbs near your chimney can easily ignite and endanger your home. Dead limbs overhanging your home may ignite and spread a fire to your home.

Solution:

Trim all tree limbs that are within 10 feet of your chimney and remove all dead limbs overhanging your home or garage.

4 Unscreened Attic and Foundation Vents:

Sparks or embers from an approaching wildland fire can get into your home through unprotected vents.

Solution:

Cover your attic and foundation vents with wire mesh that has openings no larger than 1/2 inch. Consider applying plywood skirting to your low decks.

5 Missing Spark Arrester on Your Chimney:

A spark from your chimney can ignite the surrounding wild vegetation.

Solution:

To insure that you don't create your own spark hazard, screen your chimneys with 1/2-inch, non-combustible mesh screening.

6 Address Numbers Not Visible from the Street:

The lack of visible address numbers will delay the arrival of emergency personnel. Remember the fire, police and emergency services can not help you if they can not find you.

Solution:

Ensure that your house numbers are clearly visible both day and night.

7 Combustible Materials Stored Too Close to Your Home:

Firewood or other combustible materials stored too close to your home can ignite and spread a fire.

Solution:

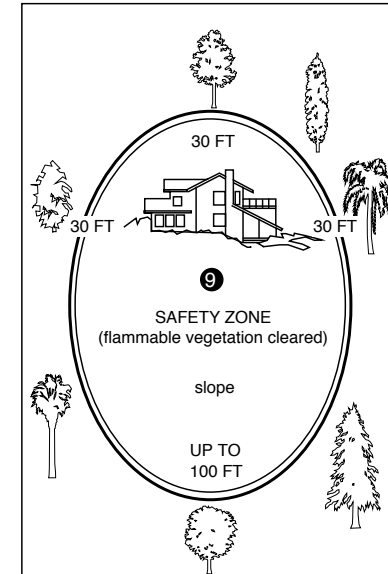
Store all combustible materials away from your home, and keep the lids on your garbage cans.

8 Overgrown, Dry Landscaping:

Overgrown, dry or dead plants can ignite and endanger your home.

Solution:

Maintain your landscaping. Trim and remove dead vegetation. Remember to look inside plants like ivy and junipers that hide their dead leaves and needles. Remove the loose bark on eucalyptus trees. Remove broom, blackberries, Monterey pine and other hazardous plants.



9 Inadequate Defensible Space Around Your Home:

Flammable wildland vegetation around your home will make it almost impossible for firefighters to save it in the event of a fire.

Solution:

In most areas, a safety zone should be cleared around your home for a distance of not less than 30 feet (or to your property line if you live on a small lot). As the slope of your lot increases, additional clearance may be necessary as far out as 100 feet. Clear low-hanging branches and tall shrubs to remove "fire ladders" that could enable fire to climb into trees.