



## Wildfire — Are You Prepared? (Part 1 of 2)

No. CR-2014-8 May 7, 2014

**Learning Objective:** The student will be able to identify the steps necessary to prepare his or her home and its surroundings within the minimum safety zone.

**D**esign 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 noncombustible materials on the roof and exterior structure of the dwelling, or treat wood or combustible material used in roofs, siding, decking or trim with fire-retardant chemicals evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory. Fire-resistant shrubs and trees should be planted around your home. For example, hardwood trees are less flammable than pine, evergreen, eucalyptus or fir trees. Specific tips include:



Graphic used with permission from the National Fire Protection Association Firewise Communities program.

### Prepare Your Home and Its Surroundings Within 100 Feet:

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. Contact your local fire department or forestry office for additional information.

- Create a 100-foot safety zone around your home.
- Remove leaves, needles, and/or rubbish from gutters and under structures.
- Prune tree branches and shrubs within 15 feet of a stovepipe or chimney outlet.
- Clear a 10-foot area around propane tanks and the barbecue.
- Review your homeowner's insurance policy, and also prepare/update a list of your home's contents.
- Select building materials and plants that resist fire.

### Protect Your Home:

- Post emergency phone numbers by every phone in your home.
- Inspect chimneys at least twice a year. Clean them at least once a year. Keep the dampers in good working order. Equip chimneys and stovepipes with a spark arrester that meets the requirements of National Fire Protection Association Standard 211, *Standard for Chimneys, Fireplaces, Vents, and Solid Fuel-Burning Appliances*. (Contact your local fire department for exact specifications.)
- Use 1/8-inch mesh screen beneath porches, decks, floor areas and the home itself. Also, check screen openings to floors, roof and attic.
- Install a dual-sensor smoke alarm on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms; test monthly and change the batteries at least once each year.
- Keep items close by that can be used as fire tools: a rake, ax, handsaw or chain saw, bucket, and shovel. You may need to fight small fires before emergency responders arrive.

### Additional Resources

- U.S. Fire Administration's Wildfire ... Are You Prepared? [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)
- Be Red Cross Ready: [www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster-safety-library](http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster-safety-library).
- Ready.gov: [www.ready.gov/wildfires](http://www.ready.gov/wildfires).