

HOME IGNITION PREVENTION

It's
the
LITTLE
Things

It's about taking responsibility for the condition of your house, before the fire, because nobody else can.

*Jack Cohen,
Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory*



Federal wildland firefighters are not trained nor are they mandated to protect structures on private lands. There are not enough fire suppression resources anywhere in the country that would cover the sheer number of homes at risk for being destroyed by wildfire. Wildfire is a naturally occurring and necessary part of our landscapes.

PEOPLE MUST LEARN TO LIVE WITH FIRE

So what can you do?

LANDSCAPING



SLOPE:

The slope of the property around your home is a major consideration in the ignition risk to your home. A steeper slope will result in a faster moving fire with longer flame lengths. Extend the length of the zones on the slope.

ZONE 1 0-5 foot perimeter

The first 3-5 feet should be basically free of flammable material. Fire resistant plants in isolated clusters are fine here, just keep them away from windows and vents, and regularly rake up dead leaves and debris. These plants should be trimmed and well watered.

ZONE 2 5-30 foot perimeter

Create and maintain a landscape that, if ignited, will not readily transmit fire to the home. Trees and shrubs should be well-spaced and well maintained. Keep smaller shrubs out from under any taller trees to reduce the chance of fire climbing into the upper area of the tree (crown).

ZONE 3 30-100 foot perimeter

This area should reduce the energy and speed of the fire. Create breaks in the spacing of vegetation so that fire does not have a continuous path of fuel. Creating walking paths free of vegetation through this area is one idea to reduce risk.





We see the gutters igniting and putting flame right up against the eave line. What if we don't have pine needles in the gutters, right? Then the firebrands, it doesn't matter from how far they come, don't ignite anything.

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STRUCTURE

ROOF DESIGN:

Locations where the roof covering meets another material can be vulnerable. Debris can accumulate at these locations, and so can wind-blown embers. Inspect these areas to make sure they don't become "weak links" in your home's defense.

SKYLIGHTS:

Watch for debris collection on the upside of skylights, or all around them on flat roofs, and make sure the structure is not cracked or damaged. Weakened skylights can break and be an entry point for embers into your home. Inspect the flashing to make sure it hasn't lifted from the roof. Make sure operable skylights are closed if you need to leave ahead of a fire.

VENTS:

Through-roof vents and vents on vertical surfaces of the home are vulnerable to allowing embers into the interior spaces of your home. If any are open or unscreened, consider placing 1/8" construction screening behind them to block ember entry.

DEBRIS:

Before fire season, check your roof for any accumulated debris that may have blown onto it, and remove. Dried leaves, needles and other flammable material can easily be ignited by embers falling onto your roof.





We don't have a fire problem, we have a people problem.

We have defined it as a wildfire control problem, when in reality, homeowners themselves can make the biggest difference in reducing the number of structures lost each year.

STRUCTURE

WALL VENTS and OPENINGS:

Vents located on a vertical wall, including crawl space vents (also called foundation vents), gable end vents, and other openings such as a dryer vent, will be very vulnerable to the entry of wind-blown embers. Inspect these to make sure they have screens in place.

WINDOWS:

An open window is the most vulnerable window when a wild fire threatens - embers can easily enter the home. Closed windows are vulnerable to radiant heat and direct flame contact exposures. If the frame ignites or melts, the fire may burn into the stud cavity and into the living space of the home. If glass breaks, embers and flame can easily enter the home.

GARAGE:

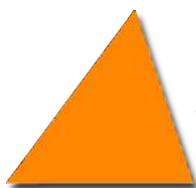
Most people store combustible materials in their garage. Garage (vehicle access) doors, particularly on older garages, can have small gaps at the top, sides and bottom that can allow embers to enter. These embers can ignite combustible materials stored in the garage. Fill gaps with weatherseal around the doors, inspect for cracks or other openings.

DECKS:

A burning deck will expose the building to radiant heat and flames, potentially igniting combustible siding or breaking glass in windows and doors. The materials used to build the deck, combustible materials you store under your deck, vegetation around it and the location of your deck relative to the slope around your house all contribute to how vulnerable your deck will be. Keep decks free from debris accumulation and remove any flammable furniture cushions.

FENCES:

.Combustible fences attached to homes are like candle wicks, drawing fire right to your home. Consider removing the section that attaches to the home with non-combustible material such as metal or install a metal gate. Keep climbing vegetation off of fences, and remove (or mow) vegetation at the base of the fence.



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