

Firewise tips checklist for homeowners

WILDFIRE DOESN'T HAVE TO BURN everything in its path. In fact, cleaning your property of debris and maintaining your landscaping are important first steps to helping minimize damage and loss.

The work you do today can make a difference. Follow these simple action steps now and throughout the year to prepare and help reduce the risk of your home and property becoming fuel for a wildfire:

- Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
 - Remove dead vegetation from under your deck and within 10 feet of the house.
 - Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches.
 - Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
 - Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, dry vegetation) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.
 - Wildfire can spread to tree tops. If you have trees on your property, prune so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.
 - Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire.
 - Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
 - Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.
 - Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.
 - Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screen with metal mesh to prevent ember entry.
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Learn more about how to keep your family safe and reduce your home's risk for wildfire damage at www.firewise.org.