



FEMA

# PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY FROM WILDFIRES







Owning a property is one of the most important investments most people make in their lives. We work hard to provide a home and a future for ourselves and our loved ones. Why risk losing it when fire hits close to home?

Wildfires dramatically alter the terrain and ground conditions of the affected area and can destroy homes, businesses, infrastructure, natural resources, and agriculture.

While you can't prevent all wildfires from happening, there are some ways to secure your property to minimize damage and keep your home and your future safe.

Here's how you can help protect your home from wildfires.



## OUTSIDE THE HOME

### FORTIFY YOUR ROOF

The likelihood your home will survive a wildfire is based largely on how your home is built and what materials are used. Install or replace your roof with a Class A-rated roof with noncombustible coverings.

### CONSTRUCT YOUR ROOF WITH FIRE-RESISTANT MATERIALS

Install and replace eaves with short overhangs and flat ledges. Wildfires might cause embers to fly and latch on to your roof's ledges and eaves, resulting in a fire.

### KEEP EMBERS OUT

Wind-blown embers can be extremely dangerous during a fire. Cover exterior attic vents and under-eave vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to keep embers out. Install a fire block in the gap between the top of framed walls and the foundation of the house to starve the fire of oxygen and prevent it from spreading.



#### DID YOU KNOW?

The roof is the most at-risk in a wildfire because of its size and orientation.

## INSTALL AND REPLACE EXTERIOR WALL COVERINGS

Exterior wall coverings that are noncombustible or fire-resistant and not susceptible to melting are recommended. A minimum fire-resistance rating of one hour for the wall assembly is recommended.

## CREATE 30 FEET OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE AROUND YOUR HOME

Reduce or remove flammable vegetation, use fewer flammable species, and clear all combustibles from your exterior space. In the defensible space, use noncombustible materials such as gravel, brick, or concrete.

## REGULARLY CLEAN AND REMOVE DEBRIS FROM THE ROOF AND GUTTERS

Debris can catch fire from wind-blown embers. Regular maintenance reduces the likelihood of something catching on fire on top of your home.

## ENCLOSE YOUR FOUNDATION

Foundations of homes in fire-prone areas should be enclosed. This lowers the chance of wind-blown embers getting underneath your home.

## PLAN FOR ACCESS TO WATER

Purchase and install external sprinkler systems with dedicated power sources or a water tank, if no water source is available. Connect garden hoses long enough to reach any area of the home and fill garbage cans, tubs, or other large containers with water.

## PROTECT LARGE WINDOWS FROM RADIANT HEAT

Install multi-pane windows, tempered safety glass, or fireproof shutters.

## INSTALL HIGHLY VISIBLE STREET SIGNS AND PROPERTY ADDRESSES

Make sure street signs and address numbers are highly visible to help firefighters and other emergency responders quickly find your property.

## SEAL GAPS AROUND OPENINGS IN EXTERIOR WALLS AND ROOFS

Utility connections often go through exterior walls of your home. Seal gaps in exterior walls and roofs with fire-resistant caulk, mortar, or fire-protective expanding foam. Fill large gaps with heat-expanding sealant or fire-protective sheets or pillows.

# INSIDE THE HOME

## REVIEW YOUR INSURANCE POLICY

Taking a few minutes to check your homeowners or mobile home insurance policy and verifying your coverage can help you process a claim in the future and get back on your feet faster after a wildfire.

## PREPARE OR UPDATE A LIST OF YOUR HOME'S CONTENTS

Documenting all of your belongings will give you peace of mind and help with the insurance claims process. Consider documenting your contents visually, either by taking photos of high-value items or walking through your home and videotaping your belongings for reference.



### REMEMBER:

Some of these tips may work better together than others. Mitigation measures need to be tailored to your property.

Always consult professionals such as your insurance agent, architects, engineers, contractors, or other experts in design and construction before making changes to your home. Your local planning and zoning office or building department is a good place to start for advice.

Finally, be kind to your neighbors! Talk to adjacent property owners before you make changes, since some actions on your property may affect theirs.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### FEMA, PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

Learn how to protect your home or business from natural disasters

[fema.gov/protect-your-property](https://fema.gov/protect-your-property)

### FEMA, WILDFIRE MITIGATION FAQS AND RESOURCES

Find more resources and information on wildfire mitigation

[fema.gov/wildfire-mitigation-faqs-and-resources](https://fema.gov/wildfire-mitigation-faqs-and-resources)

### FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES LEARNING NETWORK

Connect to people and communities who are striving to live safely with wildfire

[fireadaptednetwork.org](https://fireadaptednetwork.org)

### NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

Find out more about Firewise USA, a national program that teaches people how to adapt to living with wildfires

[nfp.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA](https://nfp.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA)



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