



## HOME HARDENING FOR WILDFIRE

Embers are the most significant cause of home ignition in wildfires. Most structural losses from wildfires can be minimized with proper materials and maintenance. In addition, home hardening and defensible space can buy you and your family precious time to evacuate to safety in an emergency.

## Making Your Home More Wildfire Resistant

The following steps can help your home better resist a wildfire. Protection from embers, heat and flames should be every home owner's top priority!



### ZONE 0 DEFENSIBLE SPACE

The Noncombustible Zone 0'- 5' (Zone 0) around your house is the most critical area to ensure that there are no combustible materials present.

Remove/reduce fire hazards in this space!

- ❖ No vegetation is recommended within 5' of any structure.
- ❖ Replace jute or natural fiber doormats with heavy rubber or metal grates.
- ❖ Apply non-combustible mulch such as crushed stones or gravel next to the house.
- ❖ Remove flammable materials on and underneath decks, patios or porches.



### DURING A WILDFIRE

- ❖ Remove and store ignitable materials such as door mats, propane tank, patio furniture cushions, wicker furniture, etc.
- ❖ Remove combustible items away from windows, which may crack or break from the heat of a wildfire.

### EMBER PROTECTION

Prevent blowing embers from entering your house and from igniting objects on or near your house.



- ❖ Prevent embers from entering your home by installing mesh vents designed for fire and ember safety. A less expensive, although slightly less effective, alternative is to cover vents with 1/8 or 1/16-inch corrosion resistant metal mesh screen.
- ❖ Keep rain gutters clean and free of leaves and needles. Metal rain gutters with flashing and a metal cover provides the best protection.
- ❖ Remove combustible items away from the vents located in your attic and crawl space.
- ❖ A roof/eave foam or water sprinkler system may help douse embers and protect your house during a wildfire. However, these are significantly less effective during a major, high-wind driven wildfire with extreme heat.

## ROOF/SIDING

With its large, flat surface, the roof is the most vulnerable part of a house.

- ❖ Regularly clean the roof to keep it free of leaves, needles and debris, including the corners between the roof and any siding such as dormers or a split-level.
- ❖ Ensure that the roof covering has a Class A fire rating, such as with steel, tile or asphalt composition shingles.
- ❖ Siding, including fiber cement, stucco and masonry, are much more fire-resistant compared with wood or vinyl.



## ATTACHMENTS

Attachments to the house, such as a fence or deck, can become a fuel bridge into the structure.

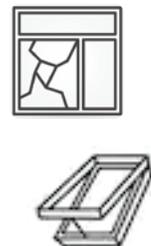
- ❖ Wood fences should not be attached directly to the house; separate the fence from the house with a masonry barrier or metal gate.
- ❖ Remove all vegetation and other combustibles within 5' of all attachments.



## WINDOWS/SKYLIGHTS

Windows and skylights can become entry points to embers and flame.

- ❖ Multi-pane or tempered glass provides the best protection and is less likely to break when exposed to heat.
- ❖ Vinyl windows and plastic skylights can fail when exposed to extreme heat.
- ❖ Ensure leaves and needles don't build up on top of or around skylights.



## GARAGE

Garages typically contain flammables including gasoline in vehicles and stored for small engines.

- ❖ Install weatherproof stripping around and under the garage door and ensure that the door is regularly adjusted for a tight seal.
- ❖ Keep combustibles elevated off the floor in case an ember gets in.
- ❖ Store gasoline and other flammable liquids in approved containers and away from sources of heat or flame.



## RESOURCES

There are many resources to further help you harden your home against a wildfire, including:

- ❖ National Fire Protection Association: [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)
- ❖ CAL FIRE: [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)
- ❖ Firesafe Marin: [www.firesafemarin.org](http://www.firesafemarin.org)
- ❖ Ready.gov: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

**OCP&R is a program of the Oakland Firesafe Council.**

Contact OCP&R for more information and assistance with home hardening for wildfire.

Thanking Firesafe Marin for their contribution to this content. Version 1.2 7/21/20

**OAKLAND COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE**

**[www.oaklandcpandr.org](http://www.oaklandcpandr.org) | 510.575.0916 | [info@oaklandcpandr.org](mailto:info@oaklandcpandr.org)**