





# Wildfire Risk Reduction

## 10 Safety Tips

Every year, wildfires burn across the U.S., and more and more people are living where wildfires are a real risk. But by working together, residents can make their own property — and their neighborhood — much safer from wildfire.

### Action Items to Improve Your Home's Survivability:

- **REMOVE** leaves, pine needles, and other flammable material from the roof, gutters, and on and under the deck to help prevent embers from igniting your home.
- **SCREEN** areas below decks and porches with 1/8" wire mesh to help prevent material from accumulating underneath.
- **COVER** exterior attic and soffit vents with 1/8" wire mesh to help prevent sparks from entering your home.
- **ENCLOSE** eaves to help prevent ember entry.
- **INSPECT** shingles or roof tiles. **REPLACE** missing shingles or tiles. **COVER** ends of tiles with bird stops or cement to help prevent ember penetration during a wildfire.

### Tips for Landscaping Around Your Home

- **REMOVE** dead vegetation and other flammable materials, especially within the first 5 feet of the home.
- **KEEP** your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to help reduce fire intensity.
- **PRUNE** tree limbs so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet above the ground to help reduce the chance of fire getting into the crowns of the trees.
- **MOVE** construction material, trash, and woodpiles at least 30 feet away from the home and other outbuildings.
- **DISPOSE** of branches, weeds, leaves, pine needles, and grass clippings that you have cut to reduce fuel for fire.

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Increase your wildfire safety. Make simple low-cost changes to your home and landscape starting today.



Visit [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) for more information.



IT'S A BIG WORLD.  
LET'S PROTECT IT TOGETHER.®

# HOW TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR WILDFIRES

WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION STEPS THAT CAN MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER DURING A WILDFIRE



## ■ VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

### 1. HOME IGNITION ZONES

To increase your home's chance of surviving a wildfire, choose fire-resistant building materials and limit the amount of flammable vegetation in the three home ignition zones. The zones include the **Immediate Zone**: (0 to 5 feet around the house), the **Intermediate Zone** (5 to 30 feet), and the **Extended Zone** (30 to 100 feet).

### 2. LANDSCAPING AND MAINTENANCE

To reduce ember ignitions and fire spread, trim branches that overhang the home, porch, and deck and prune branches of large trees up to 6 to 10 feet (depending on their height) from the ground. Remove plants containing resins, oils, and waxes. Use crushed stone or gravel instead of flammable mulches in the **Immediate Zone** (0 to 5 feet around the house). Keep your landscape in good condition.

## ■ FIRE RESISTIVE CONSTRUCTION

### 3. ROOFING AND VENTS

Class A fire-rated roofing products, such as composite shingles, metal, concrete, and clay tiles, offer the best protection. Inspect shingles or roof tiles and replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration. Box in eaves, but provide ventilation to prevent condensation and mildew. Roof and attic vents should be screened to prevent ember entry.

### 4. DECKS AND PORCHES

Never store flammable materials underneath decks or porches. Remove dead vegetation and debris from under decks and porches and between deck board joints.

### 5. SIDING AND WINDOWS

Embers can collect in small nooks and crannies and ignite combustible materials; radiant heat from flames can crack windows. Use fire-resistant siding such as brick, fiber-cement, plaster, or stucco, and use dual-pane tempered glass windows.

## ■ BE PREPARED

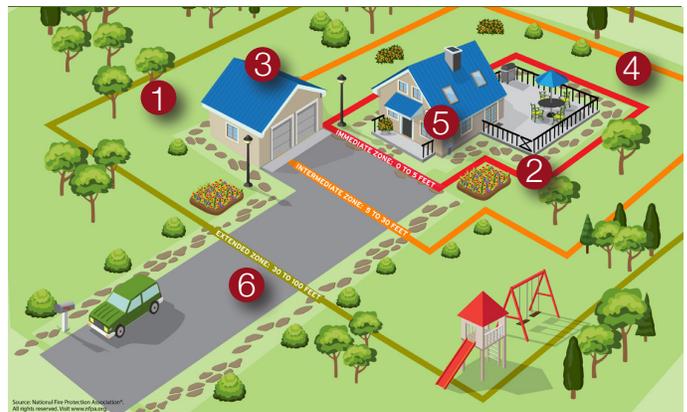
### 6. EMERGENCY RESPONDER ACCESS

Ensure your home and neighborhood have legible and clearly marked street names and numbers. Driveways should be at least 12 feet wide with a vertical clearance of 15 feet for emergency vehicle access.

- Develop, discuss, and practice an emergency action plan with everyone in your home. Include details for handling pets, large animals, and livestock.
- Know two ways out of your neighborhood and have a predesignated meeting place.
- Always evacuate if you feel it's unsafe to stay—don't wait to receive an emergency notification if you feel threatened from the fire.

*Conduct an annual insurance policy checkup to adjust for local building costs, codes, and new renovations.*

*Create or update a home inventory to help settle claims faster.*



**TALK TO YOUR LOCAL FORESTRY AGENCY  
OR FIRE DEPARTMENT TO LEARN MORE  
ABOUT THE SPECIFIC WILDFIRE RISK  
WHERE YOU LIVE.**



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VISIT [FIREWISE.ORG](https://www.firewise.org) FOR MORE DETAILS

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**Order a Reducing Wildfire Risks in the Home Ignition Zone checklist/poster at [Firewise.org](https://www.firewise.org)**

# IMMEDIATE (NONCOMBUSTIBLE) ZONE

Why is it important to create and maintain 5 feet of noncombustible space around the exterior of a building?

Wildfire risks are on the rise, but there are ways home and business owners can take control of their vulnerabilities. Changes made to a structure and its surroundings within 100 feet can make a big impact. Research from the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) shows that the first 0 to 5 feet around the structure, known as the immediate zone or noncombustible zone, has the greatest impact on your risk. IBHS and the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) recommend keeping this zone well-maintained and clear of combustible materials.

## IBHS Research

The main objective of the 0-to-5-foot zone is to reduce the potential that embers landing near a building will ignite fuels and expose the area around a home to a direct flame (Figure 1). Removing anything that can ignite from embers is critically important. To verify how effective a 5-foot noncombustible zone is around a building, more than 180 tests were conducted in 2018 at the IBHS Research Center to evaluate fire behavior and heating of buildings (Figures 2a & 2b).

## Key Observations

- For combustible landscaping, such as wood mulch, the thickness of the mulch bed, wind speed, and location of the flame and building all impact the potential of mulch to ignite and how quickly fire can spread to the building.
- Burning mulch generates embers that can ignite nearby mulch, increasing the chances of direct flame contact spreading to the building.
- When flames are 5 feet away, a building's surface temperature is below temperatures that could cause ignition. However, corners of a building (45-degree angles) experience a higher temperature when exposed to flames, even when a 5-foot space is present. Testing showed that corners can be more vulnerable due to fire spread through fuel (such as mulch) on the ground, because at the same wind speed, wind blowing directly at a wall (90-degree angle) will result in taller flames and more radiant heat, while wind on a corner (45-degree angle) will result in longer flames that are closer to the ground.

## Recommendations

- Keep the corner areas of a building clear of combustible materials due to the higher probability of having direct flame touching the surrounding ground.
- Keep gutters free of debris and use metal gutters.
- Install hard surfaces, such as a concrete walkway, or use noncombustible mulch products, such as rock.
- Keep the lawn well irrigated and use low-growing herbaceous (non-woody) plants. Shrubs and trees are not recommended in the 5-foot zone.
- Remove dead vegetation and implement a maintenance strategy to keep the 5-foot zone clear of dead plant materials.
- Mitigating home ignition zones shouldn't stop at 5 feet from the building. It should be combined with the footprint of an attached deck and area that extends away from the building up to 100 feet or to the property line.



**Figure 1** – Creating and maintaining home ignition zones (defensible space) around your property are proven ways to reduce risks of property damage during a wildfire, as tests at the IBHS Research Center have shown.



**Figure 2a** Experiments conducted at the IBHS Research Center to study the effectiveness of creating a noncombustible space around buildings.



**Figure 2b** Embers impacting a building: left side with combustible (wood) and the right side with noncombustible (rock) mulch.

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## Learn More

- ▶ For online training and other resources, see [nfpa.org/firewise](https://nfpa.org/firewise).
- ▶ Access the latest research from IBHS at [ibhs.org](https://ibhs.org).



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# Protect Your Home

## 7 Ways Residents Can Reduce the Risk that their Homes & Property Will Become Fuel for a Wildfire

#1

### Clear

*Clear off pine needles, dead leaves & anything that can burn from your rooflines, gutters, decks, porches, patios & along fence lines. Falling embers will have nothing to burn.*

#3

### Screen & Seal

*Wind-borne embers can get into homes easily through vents & other openings and burn the home from the inside out. Walk around your house to see what openings you can screen or temporarily seal up.*

#5

### Trim

*Trim back any shrubs or tree branches that come closer than 5 feet to the house and attachments, and any overhanging branches.*

#7

### Close

*If ordered to evacuate, make sure all windows & doors are closed tightly, and seal up any pet doors. Many homes are destroyed by embers entering these openings and burning the house from the inside out.*

#2

### Store Away

*Store away furniture cushions, rattan mats, potted plants & other decorations from decks, porches & patios. These items catch embers and help ignite your home if you leave them outside.*

#4

### Rake

*Embers landing in mulch that touches your house, deck or fence is a big fire hazard. Rake out any landscaping mulch to at least five feet away.*

#6

### Remove

*Walk around your house and remove anything within 30 feet that could burn, such as woodpiles, spare lumber, vehicles and boats – anything that can act as a large fuel source.*



NFPA has many more tips and safety recommendations on its websites, including [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org).

# Fire Spread on Ember-Ignited Decks

Wind-blown embers generated during wildfires are the single biggest hazard wildfires pose to homes, and homeowners should never overlook the potential risk that an attached deck can create. Recent testing by the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) offers important findings that can help minimize risk from wind-blown embers to decks.

**Nothing that can ignite should be stored under a deck.** This action, along with development of effective and well-maintained home ignition zones, will minimize the chance of all but a wind-blown ember exposure to your deck. An ignited deck can result, for example, in the ignition of combustible siding, or glass breakage in a sliding glass door.

## ABOUT THE RESEARCH TESTS

IBHS's tests evaluated how an ember-ignited fire on an attached deck can spread to the home, and yielded important guidance to minimize the chance of fire spread to the house. Tests showed that the fire was typically small (Figure 1), sometimes just smoldering (not flaming). It spread slowly, taking more than an hour to travel the 4 to 6 feet from the ignition point to the home. Research from IBHS showed all ember-ignited deck fires occurred in the gaps between deck boards and initially started as a small smoldering fire that transitioned to a flaming fire. Although these small fires self-extinguished during IBHS tests that did not include any wind, wildfires almost always involve elevated wind speeds. During lab tests, even mild wind speeds of 12 mph, enabled fires to spread. Under certain conditions, the small fire did grow, always in the under-deck area (see Figure 2). Our results demonstrated that fire growth occurred in the under-deck area when joist spacing was 8" to 12", less than the typical 16".

Wind blowing against a building has a return flow component, so if fire were able to burn to the home, it would have to travel there as a backing fire, or against the wind. Research shows the "fuel" has to be close together for this to occur. That "fuel" could be the deck boards, or a combination of deck boards and support joists.

## HOW DOES THE FIRE SPREAD?

IBHS tests demonstrated that fire spreads both toward, and away from, the house

regardless of the deck board's orientation (parallel or perpendicular). When deck boards were perpendicular to the building, the fire would spread in the gap between boards. The 1/8" gap between deck boards was narrow enough for the fire to continue burning into the unburned wood (the fuel), in both directions from the ignition point. The fire spread pattern was more complicated when deck boards were parallel to the test building. In this case, fire could spread parallel to the test building, or directly to it. Fire spread directly to the building included a smoldering mode that occurred in the space between the top of the joist and the bottom of the deck board. Flaming combustion occurred when smoldering reached a gap between deck boards. Lateral flame spread can result in the ignition of joist members, resulting in fire growth.

## IMPORTANCE of the HOME IGNITION ZONES

To minimize the possibility of deck ignitions, reduce fuels in the home ignition zones by carefully selecting and positioning vegetation and implementing regular maintenance. Pay particular attention to the area under the footprint of the deck, where storage of combustible materials should be avoided.

Although there are noncombustible deck board and decking options, many of the commercially available deck board products are combustible. IBHS research on deck materials is available at: [disastersafety.org/ibhs/wildfire-ignition-potential-decks-subjected-ember-exposure](https://disastersafety.org/ibhs/wildfire-ignition-potential-decks-subjected-ember-exposure).

## CONSTRUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS

IBHS research shows that, for medium density softwood decking products (such as redwood and cedar), which can be vulnerable to ignition from embers, the associated fire spread on the deck can be minimized by the following:

1. Increase the gap between deck boards from 1/8 inch to 1/4 inch.

Fire spread in the gap between deck boards. Note the small flame burned all the way to the test building.



2. Increase joist spacing from 16 inches to 24 inches.



Narrow joist spacing was a condition that could result in fire growth in the under-deck area.

3. Apply a foil-faced self-adhering adhesive flashing tape (foil-faced bitumen tape) on the top of each joist.

Using a foil-faced self-adhering bitumen flashing tape reduces flame spread by removing the joist as a fuel source for both parallel and perpendicular deck board installations.



FOIL-FACED BITUMEN TAPE



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# Roofing Materials:

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## Roofs are a highly vulnerable part of a home during wildfires

**HOMEOWNERS NEED TO IMPLEMENT RISK REDUCTION ACTIONS THAT MAKE HOMES BETTER ABLE TO SURVIVE A WILDFIRE - AND THE ROOF IS A GREAT PLACE TO BEGIN!**

### HOW HOMES IGNITE

Homes ignite in one of three ways: embers/firebrands, radiant heat exposure or direct flame contact. An example of an ember ignition is when wind-blown embers accumulate on combustible materials such as a wood shake roof. An untreated wood shake or shingle roof covering is the greatest threat to a home.

### ROOF COVERINGS AND ASSEMBLIES

Roof covering fire ratings are Class A, B, C, or unrated; with Class A providing the best performance. Common Class A roof coverings include asphalt fiberglass composition shingles, concrete and flat/barrel-shaped tiles. Some materials have a “by assembly” Class A fire rating which means, additional materials must be used between the roof covering and sheathing to attain that rating. Examples of roof coverings with a “by assembly” fire rating include aluminum, recycled plastic and rubber and some fire-retardant wood shake products. If a wood shake roof does not have the manufacturer’s documentation specifying the fire retardant, assume it’s untreated.

### TILE AND ROOF COVERINGS WITH GAPS BETWEEN THE COVERING AND ROOF DECK

Flat and barrel-shaped tiles, metal, and cement roof coverings can have gaps between the roof covering and sheathing, which typically occur at the ridge and edge of roofs. These openings can allow birds and rodents to build nests with materials that are easily ignited by embers. Flames from this type of ignited debris can spread to the structural support members, bypassing the protection offered by a Class A rated roof covering. Plugging these openings between the roof covering and the roof deck, is commonly called “bird stopping”. Regularly inspect and maintain these areas.

### DEBRIS ACCUMULATION – ROOF AND GUTTERS

Wind-blown debris (including leaves and pine needles from nearby and overhanging trees) will accumulate on roofs and in gutters. Dry debris can be ignited by wind-blown embers. These flames can extend to the edge of the roof and adjacent siding. Even with Class A fire-rated roof coverings, vertical surfaces next to the roof edge will be exposed to flames from the ignited debris. Regularly remove vegetative debris from your roof and gutters.

### ATTICS, CRAWLSPACES, SOFFITS AND EAVES

Post-fire research has shown attic vents, roof and gable end vents and under-eave areas are entry points for embers and flames. Reduce the size and number of embers that pass through vents into attic and crawlspaces by covering them with a ⅜-inch metal mesh screen. When wildfires threaten, vents can be covered with ½-inch or thinner plywood, or a thin metal plate. Ensure these are removed when the threat has passed.

## REDUCE YOUR ROOF'S VULNERABILITY TO WILDFIRE

**1** Roofs should be Class A fire-rated, such as asphalt composition shingles. If you're unsure about your roof's rating, hire a professional roofer to make a determination.

**2** Remove debris on the roof and in the gutters at least twice a year, or more often if necessary.

**3** Remove tree branches that overhang the roof.

**4** Periodically inspect exposed areas under eaves and soffits to ensure construction materials are in good condition.

**5** Cover vents, e.g., with noncombustible, corrosion-resistant ⅜-inch metal mesh screens.

**6** Inspect and maintain your roof on a regular basis. Replace when necessary.



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## HOMEOWNER CHECKLIST

**Wildfires don't have to destroy everything in their path. Science and research have proven that using Firewise principles in your landscaping can minimize damage and prevent losses. 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 needles, leaves and other debris from the roof, gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This reduces the chances of embers igniting your home.
- » To reduce ember penetration, replace or repair loose or missing roof shingles or tiles, and caulk any gaps or openings on roof edges.
- » Cover exterior attic vents, and enclose under-eave and soffit vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent embers from entering the home.
- » Remove items stored under decks or porches; replace vegetation in these areas with rock or gravel.
- » Replace mulch with hardscaping, including rock, gravel or stone. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- » Remove flammable items within 30 feet of all structures including firewood piles, portable propane tanks and dry and dead vegetation.
- » Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire so keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, trim it to reduce fire intensity, and don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
- » Fire can spread to tree tops. If you have tall trees on your property, prune low hanging branches 6 to 10 feet from the ground and for smaller trees, prune low hanging branches no more than a third of the tree's height. Remove tall grasses, vines and shrubs from under trees.
- » Talk to your neighbors and create a plan for how to address your wildfire safety challenges together.

**Learn more about how to keep your family safe and reduce your home's risk for wildfire damage at [firewise.org](http://firewise.org).**

**All of the hours you spend performing these tasks can go towards keeping DRPOA Firewise certified.**





# Wildfire Preparedness for Household Pets

## Pet Evacuation Checklist

**Simple tools you'll need to build your pet's evacuation kit.**

### **Pet Vaccination Records**

**Copies of all current vaccination records for each pet**



### **Medications**

- Keep a list of all current medicines and their associated doses.
- If possible, keep an extra supply of medicines that your pet takes on a regular basis.

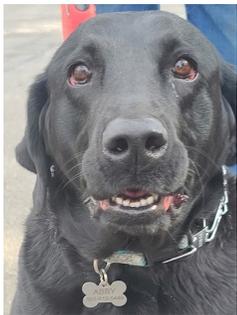
### **Microchip Paperwork**

- Include copies of the animal's microchip paperwork. Update the address listed on the paperwork as needed to keep it accurate and current.
- Consider enrolling your microchipped pet(s) in a recovery database.
- Verify your pet's microchip enrollment information with AKC Leash, Harness and Collars.
- Have your phone number and address on an I.D. tag attached to the pet's collar.
- List of important pet related phone numbers (remember cellphones and Internet access could be temporarily out of service and you'll need a printed list to connect with these resources):
  - 1) Veterinarian
  - 2) Local animal control agency.
  - 3) Animal shelter/boarding facility.
  - 4) List of pet friendly hotels/motels near your community.
  - 5) Friends that may be willing to temporarily take your pet while you're evacuated and out of your home.



### **Photos with your pet**

- This will help identify you are the pet's owner when no physical records are available to claim your rescued animal.

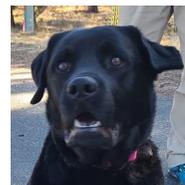


- A picture will help you document ownership and could also help in locating a missing pet



### **Pet food and treats**

- Food for three to seven days
- If your pet eats canned food - include a manual can opener and spoon.
- Feeding bowl



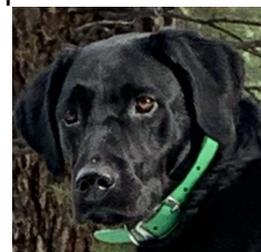
### **Water**

- Pack enough clean water to meet each pet's individual needs for a minimum of three days and up to one week
- Water bowl(s)



### **Miscellaneous items**

- Cat litter, tray and scoop
- Bedding/blanket
- Toys
- Leather gloves and towels (in case your pet is upset or scared)
- Dog crate, cat carrier, or cage for birds and other small pets
- Muzzle (if needed)
- Grooming supplies
- Dog waste bags



### **Cleaning supplies**

- Paper towels, trash bags, spray cleaner, disinfectant and hand sanitizer

### **Storing your kit**

- Keep your pet emergency kit in a dry location where the temperature does not get hot or below freezing.
- Make sure the kit is in a spot that's easy to reach for quick access when loading a car or truck.

### **Evacuation is called when you are not at home**

- Officials will not allow you to re-enter an evacuated area so make an agreement with neighbors, tell them where your spare key is so that they will grab your pet if you cannot.



# PRE-EVACUATION PREPARATION STEPS

When an evacuation is anticipated, follow these checklists (if time allows) to give your home the best chance of surviving a wildfire.

**Check on neighbors and make sure they are preparing to leave. To notify neighbors via email, click on the last email you have received from the community, hit “reply all” with “FIRE ALERT” as subject line.**

## Home Evacuation Checklist – How to Prepare for Evacuation:

### Inside the House

- Have your Emergency Supply Kit/Evacuation Bag ready to go - (see page 14)
- Ensure a Wildfire Action Plan is prepared ahead of time
- Make sure you know your community’s emergency response plan and have a plan on where to go when it is time to evacuate, and best routes for leaving your location.
- Shut all windows and doors, leaving them unlocked.
- Remove flammable window shades, curtains and close metal shutters.
- Remove lightweight curtains.
- Move flammable furniture to the center of the room, away from windows and doors.
- Shut off gas at the meter; turn off pilot lights.
- Leave your lights on so firefighters can see your house under smoky conditions.
- Shut off the air conditioning.

### Outside

- Gather up flammable items from the exterior of the house and bring them inside (patio furniture, children’s toys, door mats, trash cans, etc.)
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Move propane BBQ appliances away from structures.
- Connect garden hoses to outside water valves or spigots for use by firefighters. Fill water buckets and place them around the house.
- Don’t leave sprinklers on or water running, they can affect critical water pressure.
- Leave exterior lights on so your home is visible to firefighters in the smoke or darkness of night.
- Put your Emergency Supply Kit in your vehicle.
- Back your car into the driveway with vehicle loaded and all doors and windows closed. Carry your car keys with you.
- Have a ladder available and place it at the corner of the house for firefighters to quickly access your roof.
- Patrol your property and monitor the fire situation. Don’t wait for an evacuation order if you feel threatened.

### Animals

- Locate your pets and keep them nearby.



# **ACTION TO TAKE WHEN IT'S TIME TO EVACUATE**

When evacuation is necessary, follow these steps as soon as possible to get ready to GO!

## **Evacuation: What to Take and Do:**

- 1) Review your "Evacuation Plan Checklist".
- 2) Ensure your "Emergency Supply Kit" is in your vehicle.
- 3) Cover-up to protect against heat and flying embers. Wear long pants, long sleeve shirt, heavy shoes/boots, cap, dry bandanna for face cover, goggles or glasses. 100% cotton is preferable.
- 4) Locate your pets and take them with you.

## **When to Evacuate**

Leave as soon as evacuation is recommended by fire officials to avoid being caught in fire, smoke or road congestion. Don't wait to be ordered by authorities to leave. Evacuating the forest fire area early also helps firefighters keep roads clear of congestion, and lets them move more freely to do their job. In an intense wildfire, they will not have time to knock on every door. **If you are advised to leave, don't hesitate!**

- Officials will determine the areas to be evacuated and escape routes to use depending upon the fire's location, behavior, winds, terrain, etc.
- Law enforcement agencies are typically responsible for enforcing an evacuation order. **Follow their directions promptly.**
- You will be advised of potential evacuations as early as possible. You must take the initiative to stay informed and aware. Listen to your radio/TV for announcements from law enforcement and emergency personnel.
- You may be directed to temporary assembly areas to await transfer to a safe location.

The terms "Voluntary" and "Mandatory" are used to describe evacuation orders. All evacuation instructions provided by officials should be followed immediately for your safety.

Do not return to your home until fire officials determine it is safe. Notification that it is safe to return home will be given as soon as possible considering safety and accessibility.

### **• When You Return Home:**

- Be alert for downed power lines and other hazards.
- Check your residence carefully for hidden embers or smoldering fires.



## Emergency Supply Kit Checklist

- Face masks or coverings
- Three-day supply of non-perishable food and three gallons of water per person
- Map marked with at least two evacuation routes
- Prescriptions or special medications
- Change of clothing
- Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses
- An extra set of car keys, credit cards, cash or traveler's checks
- First aid kit
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- Sanitation supplies
- Copies of important documents (birth certificates, passports, etc.)
- Don't forget pet food and water!

### Items to take if time allows:

- Easily carried valuables
- Family photos and other irreplaceable items
- Personal computer information on hard drives and disks
- Chargers for cell phones, laptops, etc.

## Your Wildfire Action Plan Checklist

### Create an evacuation plan that includes:

- A designated emergency meeting location outside the fire or hazard area. This is critical to determine who has safely evacuated from the affected area.
- Several different escape routes from your home and community. Practice these often so everyone in your family is familiar in case of emergency.
- Have an evacuation plan for pets and large animals such as horses and other livestock.
- A Family Communication Plan that designates an out-of-area friend or relative as a point of contact to act as a single source of communication among family members in case of separation. (It is easier to call or message one person and let them contact others than to try and call everyone when phone, cell, and internet systems can be overloaded or limited during a disaster.)

### Be Prepared:

- Have fire extinguishers on hand and train your family how to use them (check expiration dates regularly).
- Ensure that your family knows where your gas, electric, and water main shut-off controls are located and how to safely shut them down in an emergency.
- Assemble an Emergency Supply Kit for each person.
- Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers posted near your phone and in your emergency supply kit.
- Keep an extra Emergency Supply Kit in your car in case you cannot get to your home because of fire or another emergency.
- Have a portable radio or scanner so you can stay updated on the fire.



# WHAT TO DO IF YOU BECOME TRAPPED NEAR A WILDFIRE

## While in your vehicle:

- Stay calm.
- Park your vehicle in an area clear of vegetation.
- Close all vehicle windows and vents.
- Cover yourself with wool blanket or jacket.
- Lie on vehicle floor.
- Use your cell phone to advise officials—call 911.

## While on foot:

- Stay calm.
- Go to an area clear of vegetation, a ditch or depression on level ground if possible.
- Lie face down, cover up your body.
- Use your cell phone to advise officials—call 911.

## While in your home:

- Stay calm, keep your family together.
- Call 911 and inform authorities of your location.
- Fill sinks and tubs with cold water.
- Keep doors and windows closed, but unlocked.
- Stay inside your house.
- Stay away from outside walls and windows.



## **Why Firewise Is Important to Us**

When we moved to Douglass Ranch in 1992, we so disliked watching Christmas trees cut from local forests speed down Highway 285 attached to car roofs. It was as if people were stealing our forests!

Several years and a wildfire evacuation later, our mindset shifted drastically. Hearing fire personnel knock on our door to tell us we needed to be out of our home in half an hour, watching and hearing huge ponderosa and Douglas fir trees explode in balls of fire one hill away, watching and smelling smoke and ash form towering black clouds that extinguished the horizon, convinced us that we had to do something to help protect our home and property. After almost 19 years of DIY forestry and numerous trips to slash collection sites, we realized we couldn't do it all ourselves, even with the help of a professional tree cutter.

Elk Creek Fire to the rescue through their home and property wildfire assessments and finally through their help in thinning trees on the rest of our property - and with DRPOA agreement, creating a shaded fuel break on a portion of the Open Space. Sure, almost nothing in life is guaranteed and there is no guarantee our property would survive a monster wildfire. But the money and hard work spent are worth some peace of mind knowing that we are doing as much as we can to protect our piece of paradise.

What do we think about Christmas trees sweeping down 285 now? We thank those people and wonder - would they take a few more?

### **Mike and Cathy Rheinberger**

Barb and I moved to Douglass Ranch a bit over a year ago from another mountain community near Bailey, there the past 40 years.

We love this new area, but realized after being evacuated from our prior home a few years ago that wildfires are a part of life in the mountains and something we could not ignore even in this new location. As a result, we began some home-spun work on our own with some help from tree-cutting/trimming/thinning professionals and helpful neighbors to mitigate wildfire hazards on our 3.5-acre lot.

To date we have felled or trimmed 25 Ponderosa trees and have cleared our ground-hugging Mountain Mahogany bushes. With more clearing of trees and some ground Juniper to remove, we are nearing completion and will soon have the peace of mind that accompanies knowing we have done our part in the FireWise efforts for our property.

We will be walking our property with an Elk Creek Fire Department representative soon to ensure we are in total compliance.

As a member of the FireWise committee, I plan to help advise anyone interested in help related to wildfire mitigation on their individual property.

### **Doug Benning**

Four years ago, I volunteered to lead a Firewise Committee (FWC) for Douglass Ranch. Our FWC was the follow-on effort of a Community Firewise Assessment by the Elk Creek Fire District. The Assessment stated that the neighborhood's overall risk was influenced by a majority of properties with High & Very High risk of wildfire destruction. The FWC members recognized the need to mitigate the wildfire threat and put together a set of specific tasks and an overall multi-year plan. Property owners were encouraged to thin forested areas and gather slash for a neighborhood chipping day. The amount of work we did enabled our Firewise Community recognition by a national Firewise USA organization – and the work continues to this day. The current Firewise Committee continues to make steady progress with no-cost thinning and slash collection. I hope to see the day when we can unanimously say that we've done all we can to protect our community from wildfire.

### **Tom Washburn**

When we moved to Douglass Ranch, we knew our lives had changed for the better. After talking to several neighbors about the dangers of fire and the need for mitigation it became my platform when I became President of the Board. I can't take credit for it really, I had great welcoming neighbors that taught us the importance of getting the neighborhood motivated to start mitigation along the roads. What a great thing to see over half of our community out working together. I am so happy to see how it has advanced and we have become a Firewise Community. We are getting our property assessed April 22 and will perform the work necessary on our lot to bring it up to standard. Now being a member of the Firewise Committee I look forward to working on and implementing projects that will benefit the entire neighborhood.

### **Tricia Jensen**

When Cairon and I moved here 5 years ago we were impressed with and touched by the community spirit of this neighborhood. We joined in with our neighbors to help mitigate along Douglass Ranch Drive and learned just how much more needs to be done to protect our community. I learned so much from Tom Washburn whose hard work and dedication was instrumental in getting the neighborhood's initial designation as a FireWise Community. Hearing the recount of the Hayman Fire, the largest wildfire in the state's history, for 18 years, and its impact on our neighborhood from Bonnie & Dick McAtee further reinforced the need to continue what Tom had started. Mike and Cathy Rheinberger's energy and commitment inspires me daily. There is so much left to be done and I am grateful that the board recognized the need to form a proper committee to help carry on the education and work this community needs to help protect us all from wildfires.

### **Veris Simms**

# Douglass Ranch Mitigation - circa 2015

The DRPOA Board of Directors, with Tricia Jensen as President, started an effort to mitigate the subdivision. This first effort concentrated on the neighbors all getting together and clearing trees out of the right-of-way on all roads within Douglass Ranch. The group was aptly named “The Happy Hackers”. Mike Rheinberger enlisted the help of the local IREA who provided the chipper and operator. Canyon Courier gave DRPOA a thumbs up!



# The “Happy Hackers” at work



## Douglass Ranch Drive at Meadowridge





**May Long Court at Douglass Ranch Drive**



**Baldwin Court**



## Constructing a “Shaded Fuel Break”

A shaded fuel break (SFB) is an easily accessible strip of land of varying width (depending on fuel and terrain), in which fuel density is reduced, thus improving fire control opportunities. The stand is thinned, and remaining trees are pruned to remove ladder fuels. Brush, heavy ground fuels, snags, and dead trees are disposed of and an open, park-like appearance is established. A *shaded fuel break* is a forest management strategy used for mitigating the threat of wildfire in areas where natural fire management has been neglected, leading to a dangerous buildup of combustible vegetation.

Mike and Cathy Rheinberger, with the assistance of Elk Creek Fire, have started constructing an SFB in the open space of DRPOA behind their lot. The plan of the Firewise committee is to continue that project until the north, east and south sides of DRPOA have been protected. Below are pictures of the first project.



**Open Space  
conditions before  
construction of  
the shaded fuel  
break**



**Piles waiting to be burned**



**Burning piles**

## Open Space conditions after construction of a shaded fuel break



**Very little is left after burning. Vegetation is quick to recover.**

