

PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY



Wildfire And Your Home Ignition Zone

(NAPSA)—Here's hot news: You can reduce your chances of losing your home to a wildfire. If you live near woodlands or have recently experienced extremely dry conditions, your home may be particularly at risk. Unfortunately, once a wildland fire starts, fire protection agencies may not have the time or resources to protect every home in its path. Fortunately, there is something you can do.

Many homes destroyed by wildfire do not ignite by being overrun by huge walls of flames. More typically, fire burns along ground fuels—grass, leaves, debris—to ignite homes with combustible construction, such as wooden roofing and siding.

The National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Program's Firewise Communities team recommends you improve your "home ignition zone"—the house and surrounding area up to 200 feet. These landscape and construction tips may help:

- Prune all trees so the lowest limbs are six to 10 feet from the ground.

- Remove leaf clutter and pine needles from gutters, under your deck and around your home. Be sure to remove dead or overhanging branches.

- Cut back brush and shrubs a minimum of 30 feet from your home to create a "survivable space"—an area free from fuels that may ignite your home.

- Put in drought-resistant plantings and thin existing trees, especially those that are dead or decayed.



Removing pine needles and leaf clutter helps prevent fire from spreading to your home.

- Use construction materials that are fire-resistant or non-combustible, such as stucco and brick.

- Consider using Class-A asphalt roof shingles, clay tile, or slate roofing materials.

- Provide wide and easy access to your home for emergency response vehicles and ensure the address is clearly marked.

- Periodically inspect your property and keep firewood away from your house or attachments.

Detailed landscape techniques, homeowner checklists, and building construction choices are online at www.firewise.org.

The Firewise Communities/USA recognition program encourages communities to achieve both a protection against fire and a sustainable ecosystem balance. The program, coordinated through State Foresters, tries to minimize home loss by teaching communities to prepare for a wildland fire before it occurs. Additional information is at www.firewise.org/usa.