



A Wildfire Home Assessment is a meeting at your home with a Fire Department representative, who will give you tips on how to better protect your home from a wildfire.



Don't wait. Set up a **FREE Home Assessment** to protect your home today.

Experts can't tell you when the next wildfire will happen, but they do know that wildfires can happen at any time in California. Many residents have not taken the most basic steps to protect their families, homes and neighborhoods from Woodside and Portola Valleys #1 fire risk.

During your **FREE Wildfire Home Assessment**, the outside of your home and property, along with other risk factors, will be evaluated. Then, you'll be given specific steps you can take to reduce your home's vulnerability to wildfire.

Many proven tips to help your home survive a wildfire are available 24/7 at woodsidefire.org, including:

Landscaping	Construction	Safety
Plant Selection	Balconies & Decks	Ember Awareness
Spacing	Chimneys	As Wildfire Approaches
Separation	Fences	Wildfire Evacuation
Dead & Dying Plants	Garages	If You Get Trapped
Fuel Modification	Patio Covers	Disaster Kits & Go!
Creating Defensible Space	Rain Gutters	Bags Red Flag Warnings
Vegetation Management	Roofs, Eaves, & Vents	
	Walls and Siding	
	Windows	

Homes survive wildfires because of what you do to prepare for them ahead of time, not by fate or luck. No matter where you live, or how much money you can spend, there are things that you can do right now to help protect your home.



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For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **(650) 851-1594** to schedule a wildfire home assessment.





Are You doing the right thing, the wrong way...for example, trying to eliminate the fire hazards around your home, and in the process, starting a wildland fire?



Lawn mowers, weed eaters, chainsaws, grinders, welders, tractors, and trimmers can all spark a wildland fire.

Do your part, the Right Way, to keep your community fire safe.



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Each year, Californians start over 1600 fires by using equipment the wrong way.

Whether working to create defensible space around your home, just mowing the lawn, or pulling your dirt bike over to the side of the road, if you live in a wildland area, you need to use all equipment responsibly.

Here's how to use Equipment the Right Way:

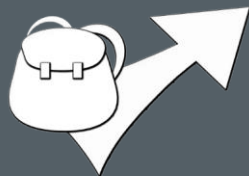
- Do all yard maintenance that requires a gas or electrical motor before 10 A.M. (Not in the heat of the day, or when the wind is blowing!)
- Lawn mowers are designed to mow lawns. (Never use lawn mowers in dry vegetation.)
- Use a weed trimmer to cut down dry weeds and grass.
- Remove rocks in the area before you begin operating any equipment. (A rock hidden in grass or weeds is enough to start a fire when struck by a metal blade.)
- In wildland areas, spark arresters are required on all portable gasoline powered equipment, including tractors, harvesters, chainsaws, weed eaters, mowers, motorcycles, and All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).
- Keep the exhaust system, spark arresters and mower in proper working order and free of carbon buildup. (Use the recommended grade of fuel and don't top off.)
- Keep the engine free of oil and dust, and keep the mower free of flammable materials.
- In wildland areas, a permit may be required for grinding and welding operations, and spark shields may be required on equipment.
- Hot exhaust pipes and mufflers can start fires you won't even see, until it's too late! (Don't pull off into dry grass or brush.)
- Keep a cell phone nearby and call 911 immediately in case of a fire.
- Have a water-type fire extinguisher ready to use.
- Keep a shovel close at hand.



For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call (650) 851-1594 to schedule a wildfire home



A Disaster Supply Kit and a GO! Bag contain a collection of basic items your family may need during or after a wildfire.



Creating a Disaster Supply Kit in advance will prepare your family, not only for an evacuation, but for a long stay at home if escape routes are blocked during or after a wildfire.

The American Red Cross, FEMA, and the California Emergency Management Agency recommend putting together a Disaster Supply kit with supplies for at least 72 hours, including food, water, and supplies for pets.

After a disaster, basic services, such as electricity, gas, water, and phone may be out of service for days or even weeks. This may affect some people more than others, especially if they have special needs. It's important to consider the needs of every member of your household when creating your kit so your family is prepared to survive until additional resources are available.

A GO! Bag should contain some of the 6 P's like prescription medication, copies of important documents (papers), and personal supplies (credit cards, toothbrush/toothpaste, phone list, maps, etc.). If you're forced to evacuate and can grab only your GO! Bag, the items inside will make it easier for you to during and after a wildfire, earthquake, or other disaster.

Keeping extra supply kits in your car and at work is also a great idea in case a wildfire or other disaster stops you from going home.



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When individuals and families aren't prepared for an oncoming wildfire, the panic they experience can slow reaction times, delay evacuation, compromise safety, and even threaten lives.



It's the duty of every resident living in or around open spaces and canyon areas to prepare now for Orange County's next wildfire.



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Step 1: Create a Wildfire Action Plan with detailed information your family will need if a wildfire approaches. Key components include:

- Family Evacuation Plan
- Family Communication Plan
- Pet Disaster Plan
- Your Children's School Disaster and Evacuation Plans
- Your Workplace Disaster and Evacuation Plans

Step 2: Create a Disaster Supply Kit with food, water, and other supplies for at least 72 hours, and smaller kits for your car and workplace in case a wildfire or other disaster stops you from going home.

Step 3: Create a separate Go! Bag for prescription medications, copies of important documents, and items of personal importance.

Step 4: Don't forget to make a Pet Disaster Kit!

If you're forced to evacuate, having these items ready-to-go will make it easier for everyone during and after the wildfire. Other important wildfire readiness steps include:

- Have fire extinguishers on-hand that your family is trained to use
- Have a portable radio or scanner available so you have access to updated emergency information
- Make sure family members know where and how to shut off gas, electricity and water
- Register with SMCAAlert, a mass notification system designed to keep you informed if a wildfire or other emergency occurs, or is expected in your area

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READY, SET, GO!

AS WILDFIRE APPROACHES



Early evacuation is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones during a wildfire. As a wildfire approaches, follow these steps to help prepare your family and home, and make your evacuation safer.



Review your
Wildfire Action
Plan so all
family
members have
the same
information
and
Know what to do.



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Have The 6 P's ready in case you have to evacuate:

1. People and pets
2. Papers, phone numbers, and important documents
3. Prescriptions and eyeglasses
4. Pictures, family keepsakes, and other meaningful items
5. Personal computers, hard drives, tablets, or other data storage devices, including cell phones and chargers
6. Plastic credit cards, ATM cards, and cash

Load everything in your car, including your Disaster Supply Kit and Go! Bag. Then, back the car into the driveway and close the windows and doors. Keep the keys with you in case you need to leave quickly.

At Home:

- Close all windows and doors
- Close the fireplace flue, shut off air conditioning and fans
- Move flammable furniture to the center of the room
- Remove curtains, lightweight window coverings and close shutters and blinds
- Leave lights on, including porch lights, to help firefighters see at night
- Outside, move patio furniture or other flammable items away from the house
- Close the garage door and disconnect the automatic opener
- Connect garden hoses to spigots and place them so they can reach any area of the house

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READY, SET, GO! WILDFIRE EVACUATION



Wildfires are unpredictable. Strong winds can change a fire's direction and strength in an instant, making it impossible for law enforcement to carry out evacuation orders or make door-to-door announcements.



GO EARLY! If your family is in danger from a wildfire, leave immediately.

Early evacuation is the safest choice and gives your family the best chance of survival.



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Whether you go early or leave during a mandatory evacuation, it's important to follow your Wildfire Action Plan.

- Make sure all family members are dressed in cotton or natural- fiber clothing
- Load your family, pets, Disaster Kit and Go! Bag into one car if possible
- Follow one of your pre-determined escape routes or evacuate as directed by law enforcement. The escape route should take you away from the fire, which is the same direction it's traveling in
- Tune into a local radio station and listen for instructions
- Drive with your headlights on for better visibility. Be aware of potential road hazards, including fire vehicles
- Don't attempt to pick up children from school or daycare. Teachers and staff members will respond according to the school's disaster plan
- Drive immediately to your family's meeting location. If you're separated from one or more family members, make contact according to your communication plan

Early evacuation is the safest choice during a wildfire, but it's only possible if you're prepared.

- If you don't have a Wildfire Action Plan, start one today. Make sure it includes at least two possible escape routes, a Family Communication Plan, and a Pet Disaster Plan
- Put together a Disaster Kit and Go! Bag
- Find out about the disaster plans at your workplace and your children's schools
- Keep the car fuel tank at least half full at all times

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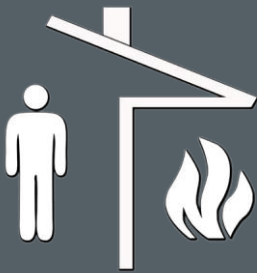




READY, SET, GO!

IF TRAPPED BY A WILDFIRE

If your family is in danger from a wildfire, don't wait for an evacuation order. **GO EARLY!** Most wildfire-related deaths occur during evacuation efforts. Residents wait too long, leave too late, and end up trapped in the path of the fire.



Leaving early is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones.



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Wildfires move at incredible speeds and can change direction in an instant. If you're trapped before you can safely evacuate, there are steps you can take to help your family survive.

Prepare to shelter-in-place. Most homes are exposed to a wildfire's flame front for a short time, but those 10 or 15 minutes can be terrifying. Loud noise, blinding smoke, and unbearable heat will trigger a natural urge to escape, but you must stay inside until the flame front passes. No matter how hot it gets inside, the air outside will be 4 to 5 times hotter.

- **Keep everyone together, away from windows and outside walls**
- **Dress in thick, natural-fiber clothing. Wear long sleeves, long pants, goggles, a bandana or dust mask, and heavy boots to protect skin from radiant heat burns**
- **Stay hydrated. Heat exhaustion and dehydration are serious threats during a wildfire**
- **Make sure exit routes are clear. Leave outside doors and windows closed and close bedroom and hallway doors inside the house**
- **Keep flashlights and fire extinguishers within reach**
- **Fill sinks, bathtubs, and buckets with water. Soak towels and use them to cover gaps or cracks under doors or around windows to keep smoke and embers out**
- **Patrol inside your home, especially the attic, for spot fires and extinguish them before they spread**
- **Stay out of hot tubs and pools. They will not protect you from fire**

Never underestimate the force and intensity of a wildfire. Staying calm and keeping a clear head will help you survive if you're forced to shelter-in-place, but early evacuation is the safest choice.

For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **(650) 851-1594** to schedule a wildfire home assessment.



A Red Flag Warning is issued to signal the need for heightened awareness and increased fire safety.



Knowing how to respond when Red Flag Warnings are issued is your responsibility if you live, work, or even spend time in or near areas prone to wildfires.



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Conditions needed to issue a Red Flag Warning, include:

- Sustained winds 15 MPH or greater
- Relative humidity of 25% or less
- Temperatures greater than 75° F

If these conditions are present or likely to happen within 24 hours, red flags are displayed at fire stations and participating county facilities, public libraries, and city halls. Red flags are also put up at chosen locations along highways, streets, and toll roads.

Safety guidelines recommended during Red Flag Warnings include the following:

- Do all yard work that requires a gas or electric motor before 10 a.m. and never when the wind is blowing
- Remove rocks from the area before you begin using any equipment
- Keep flammable materials away from gas-powered equipment
- Never drive or park vehicles on dry grass or brush
- Use lawnmowers on lawns only
- Grease trailer wheels, check tires, and make sure safety chains are not touching the ground
- Use caution with gas lanterns, barbeques, gas stoves, and anything else that can cause a wildfire
- Follow park, trail, camping, campfire restrictions and closure signs
- Throw away cigarettes or other smoking supplies properly in non-combustible containers



For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call (650) 851-1594 to schedule a wildfire home assessment.



Embers are burning pieces of vegetation or other flammable material and are the leading cause of structural damage and home loss from a wildfire.



In order to successfully protect your home, you need to understand the real threat during a wildfire.

Once they're picked up by strong winds, embers can travel as much as five miles in front of the active front of a wildfire. Before flames get anywhere near your home, embers can land in dry or flammable vegetation or small open spaces on your roof or walls, and ignite, threatening your home.

If embers fall on and ignite nearby plants, the radiant heat created by the fire can burn combustible siding, doors, or window frames. Radiant heat can also cause windows to break, creating openings that allow flames and embers to enter your home. Once the home is on fire, it will create more embers that can be picked up by winds, travel to other homes and neighborhoods, and increase fire damage for the entire community.

Embers create a huge threat during a wildfire. It's the steps you take now to make your home and landscaping more ember-resistant that will protect your family, your home, and your community during the next wildfire. Take responsibility!



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For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call (650) 851-1594 to schedule a Wildfire Home Assessment.



Defensible Space is an area between your house and an oncoming wildfire, where the vegetation has been controlled, trimmed, or removed to reduce wildfire threat from embers, flames, and intense heat.



Creating Defensible Space is the duty of every resident living in an area at risk for wildfires.



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In order to offer wildfire protection, Defensible Space should reach at least 100 feet from the house, garage, and other buildings on the property, or to the property line. In many cases, Defensible Space is simply the front, side, and back yards of your home.

Guidelines for Vegetation Management within 100 feet of your home include:

- Remove all dead and dying plants
- Remove vegetation found on the Undesirable Plant List and replant using drought-tolerant, fire-resistive plants
- Trim or remove plants to create the recommended vertical and horizontal separation between them
- Remove dry leaves, twigs, pine needles, etc. from the yard, roof, and rain gutters

It's not necessary to remove all vegetation around your home, but creating Defensible Space will give firefighters a better chance of keeping wildfire from spreading to your home. Mowing, weeding, pruning, thinning, spacing, and careful plant selection can make the difference between survival and losing your home during a wildfire. Consult a geologist prior to beginning maintenance if you have slope stability issues.



For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **(650) 851-1594** to schedule a Wildfire Home Assessment.



READY, SET, GO! VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Vegetation Management is controlling plant material to prevent wildfire spread. It requires a constant commitment to follow the 4 R's of Vegetation Management to reduce the threat of a wildfire.



Vegetation Management isn't a one-time fix. It's an ongoing commitment.



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Removal:

- Remove all dead and dying plants within 100 feet of your home
- Identify and remove plants found on WFPD'S Undesirable Plant List

Reduction:

- Prune and thin plants within 100 feet of your home, including your plants within 100 feet of your neighbor's home
- Provide 4 feet vertical separation between shrub tops and lower tree branches to reduce "ladder fuels"
- Use Horizontal Separation Guidelines for plants over 2 feet in height (15 feet minimum or 3 times the tallest plant)
- Keep all shrubs within 10 feet of your home trimmed to 2 feet or lower
- Prune or remove plants near windows
- Remove all tree branches or plants within 10 feet of chimney outlets
- Move wood piles at least 30 feet from your home, or to the property line
- Keep annual grasses and weeds cut to 4 inches or less

Replacement:

- Replace fire-prone plants with fire-resistant and drought tolerant plants. See the WFPD Planting Guide for recommendations
- When putting in new plants, leave enough space for them to grow to mature size

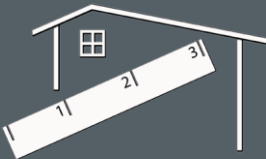
Resistant:

- Use fire-resistant plants whenever possible
- Keep in mind that even plants listed on the Planting Guide must be maintained using Spacing Guidelines for both vertical and horizontal separation. Plant separation is an important part reducing wildfire threat

For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **(650) 851-1594** to schedule a wildfire home assessment.



Fuel Modification is a planned landscape design that reduces the threat of wildfire, by creating a fire-resistant divider between homes that are adjacent to areas of natural plant life.



For thousands of years, wildfires have played an important role in keeping nature in balance. However, now they increasingly threaten lives, homes, and property.



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Many Woodside and Portola Valley residents bought homes in canyons and on brush covered hills, and landscaped their property without fully understanding the wildfire threat or potential consequences.

Fuel modification plans consist of specific zones where plants are controlled to create spaces where fire crews can work while defending homes from an oncoming wildfire. When properly set up and taken care of, fuel modification zones also slow the wildfire spread, reduce its strength, deflect radiant heat, and help protect homes from direct flames

Most fuel modification plans are created for subdivisions and commercial property during the construction phase. Plans are based on several factors:

- Plant life
- Slope
- Climate
- Wildfire history

If you belong to a homeowner’s association, upkeep of the fuel modification zone is usually the duty of the association. If you don’t belong to a homeowner’s association and a fuel modification plan was required when your home was built, it is your responsibility to maintain the plants around your home, based on the original plan and design.



For more information, or if you want to change plans already approved, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call (650) 851-1594 to schedule a wildfire home assessment.

READY, SET, GO!
PLANT SEPARATION



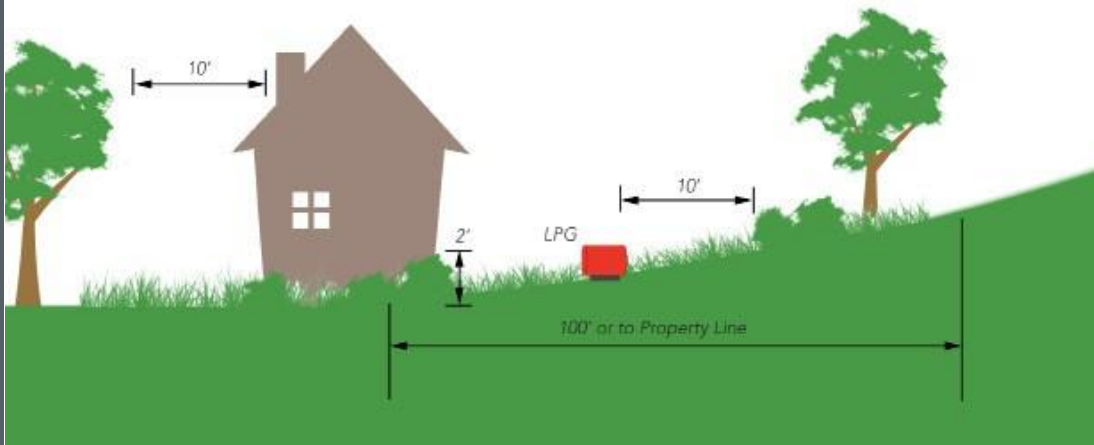
Consult a geologist prior to beginning maintenance if you have slope stability questions.



For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **650-851-1594** to schedule a Wildfire Home Assessment.

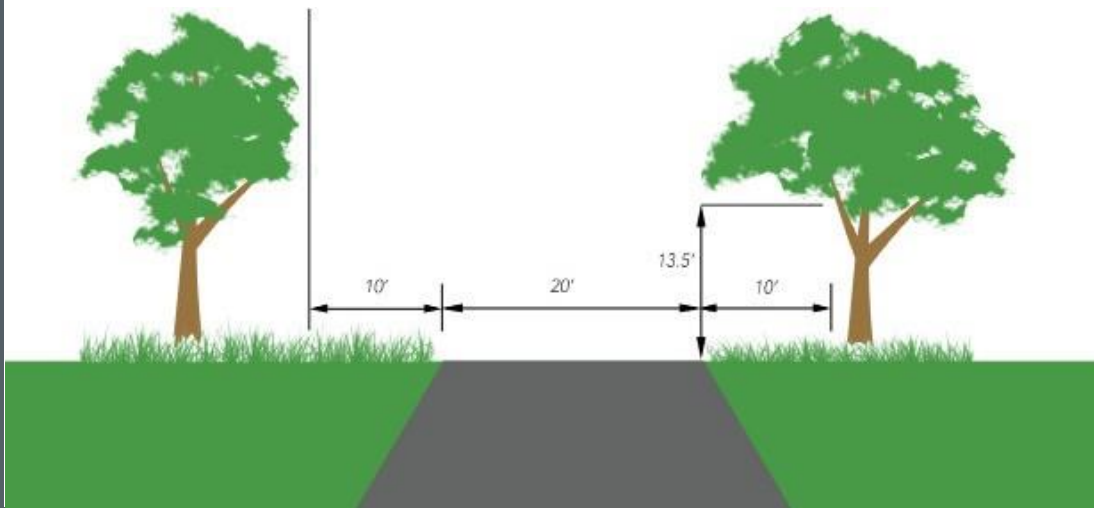
SEPARATION FOR CHIMNEYS AND LPG TANKS

- Trees need to be at least 10 feet away from chimneys
- LPG tanks need to be at least 10 feet away from surrounding vegetation
- Shrubs next to homes should not exceed 2 feet in height



ROADSIDE CLEARANCE

- 10 feet of Horizontal Clearance is needed from the road to the tree canopy
- 13.5 feet of Vertical Clearance is needed from the road to the tree canopy



READY, SET, GO!
PLANT SEPARATION



Plant Separation, both horizontally and vertically, within 100 feet or to the property line, can help protect your home by reducing the fire's ability to spread.



Trees and shrubs that give us privacy, safety from wind, and lessen the noise level around your home also can lead wildfire to your doorstep.



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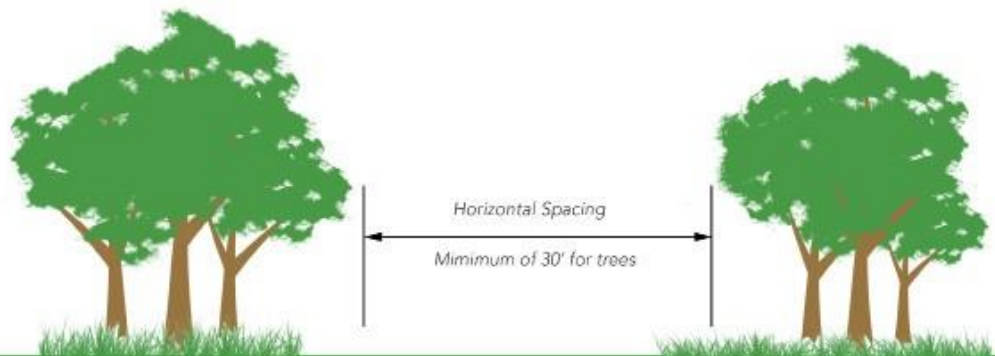
SHRUB SEPARATION

Plants that are more than 2 feet in height should be in groups of no more than 3, and need to be separated by 3 times the height of the tallest plant, or 15 feet, which ever is greater.



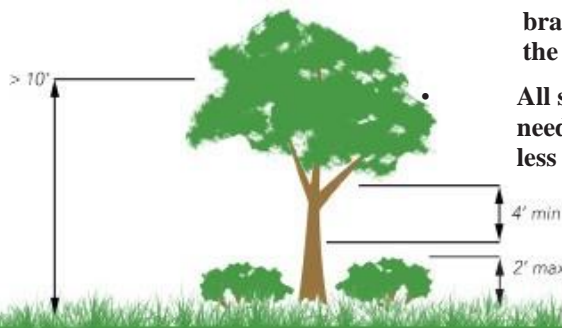
TREE SEPARATION

Trees should be in groups of no more than 3 and at least 30 feet apart.



VERTICAL SEPARATION

- Trees and shrubs more than 10 feet in height need to be set apart by at least 4 feet between the lowest hanging branch and plant tops on the ground



- All shrubs below trees need to be 2 feet high or less



Dead and dying plants are a serious, but preventable wildfire risk.



Removal of dead and dying plant leaves and branches, and upkeep of grasses and weeds, will help protect your home and your family during a wildfire.



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All plants can burn, but the low moisture content in vegetation that's dead or dying makes it extremely dangerous during a wildfire, increasing the risk for your family and your home.

As some trees grow taller, lower branches that don't get enough sunlight die off, but remain attached to the tree until they decay enough to fall off. Other trees called self-pruners, lose dead branches on their own as they grow. These trees are still a danger during a wildfire because of the dead plant leaves or branches that collect on the ground or get caught on other branches in the tree. Due to the drought and invasive pests, trees are becoming stressed and dying. Consult an arborist if you notice an unusual change in leaf color, or cracking limbs or tree trunks.

Grasses that are dead or drought-stressed make great fuel during a wildfire because their dry, thin blades catch fire easily and burn quickly. Even living grass dries out quicker than shrubs and trees during long periods of dry weather, which is when most wildfires happen.

Guidelines for protecting your home:

- Remove all dead and dying plants, plant leaves, and branches within 100 feet of your home or from your neighbors' homes, including dead leaves and branches within vines. Pay close attention to dead plants on and underneath living plants that can be easily overlooked
- Trim palm trees regularly to remove dead or dying leaves and branches
- Remove dry leaves, bark, and pine needles from the yard, roof, and rain gutters

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READY, SET, GO!
GARAGES



Garages are often ignored when residents take steps to protect their homes from wildfire.

Many homeowners don't understand the wildfire threat that garages create until it's too late.



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Burning embers don't discriminate. Gaps and cracks at the top, bottom, and edges of garage doors are weak spots, where burning embers can lodge or enter, putting your home at risk, even if wildfire flames never reach your property.

Garage vents and glass panels in garage doors also put your home in danger during a wildfire. Both are potential entry points if the vents aren't screened, or if single-pane, non-tempered glass is used on the doors.

If you live in an area prone to wildfires, the following guidelines will help you identify garage issues that should be addressed:

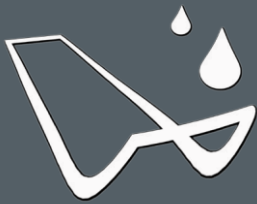
- If your current garage doors are made of combustible materials, such as wood, choose non-combustible materials when it's time to replace them
- Install weather-stripping around and under the garage doors to cut gap space and keep embers from blowing in
- Adjust garage doors to make a tight fit with the door frames
- Replace glass panels in garage doors, and side-entry doors, with tempered glass. Installing dual panes will provide an extra layer of protection
- Cover garage vents with 1/8-inch metal mesh screens or replace them with ember-resistant baffle vents
- Store flammable liquids away from heat or ignition sources



For more information, please visit the OCFA website or call **(650) 851-1594** to schedule a wildfire home assessment.



Rain gutters are attached to your home and run along the roof line. They collect the rainwater that falls on the roof, and lead it into downspouts, which carry it away from the house or to rainwater collection barrels.



Rain gutters are traps for burning embers, which can ignite your home long before the actual wildfire arrives.



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Rain gutters help protect the foundation from wearing down and the roof and siding from water leaks that can cause the buildup of mold and mildew. They also help keep moisture out of the crawl space under the house.

However, rain gutters also collect plant debris, such as pine needles and leaves, putting your home at risk from burning embers. If debris in the gutters catches fire, the house and everything inside is in danger.

Cleaning rain gutters often removes debris buildup, keeps rainwater flowing into the downspout and away from the house, improving the safety of your home. Plastic gutters are easy to install, but can melt and ignite your home. Metal gutters however, won't burn or crack, making them the best choice in fire hazard areas.

You can also increase your home's safety by putting in gutter flashing, which will protect the roof's edge and help stop fire from spreading to the attic. Gutter flashing is a thin layer of waterproof material that's bent at a right angle and attached under the roof covering, inside the gutter.

Rain gutter covers or guards can be added to block debris and reduce the number of times you need to clean them, but they must be kept up regularly to lower the wildfire risk.

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READY, SET, GO!

PATIO COVERS



Patio covers offer many benefits, such as adding useful space for outdoor cooking and entertaining, providing extra insulation, lowering monthly cooling and heating costs, and increasing the value of your home. However, they can also add risk.



If you live in an area prone to wildfires, it's important to determine if your patio cover increases your home's risk when the next one occurs.



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Patio covers can be made from different materials, but only non-combustible or ignition-resistant materials will help protect your home during the next wildfire. Burning embers can travel up to 5 miles in front of and behind the flames. If they fall on a combustible patio cover, your home's roof, eaves, and siding will be at risk to both radiant heat and direct flame. Heat and flames from a burning patio cover can also cause windows or sliding glass doors to crack and break, allowing fire to enter the home.

Types of Materials:

- **Aluminum** is non-combustible, lightweight, strong, and flexible. Aluminum patio covers are also energy efficient, durable, and able to handle even the worst weather conditions
- **Other Metal** are also non-combustible and don't crack, rot, or peel, but they're not as durable as aluminum, and will rust unless they are specially treated with a rust-free finish
- **Vinyl** is combustible and will burn or melt if exposed to embers, heat, or flames. Although vinyl patio covers are very popular, they put homes more at risk during a wildfire
- **Wood** is combustible, less expensive than aluminum or other metals, and has a natural look many homeowners prefer, but a wood patio cover increases wildfire risk. It also needs regular upkeep and must be treated to resist weather, termites, and other insects

Installing metal flashing between a wood patio cover and the outside wall it's next to is another way to reduce wildfire risk, since it's designed to protect roofs, eaves, and walls from water and fire damage.

As with all accessory structures, check with your city or county Building Department for specific requirements.

For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **(650) 851-1594** to schedule a wildfire home assessment.



Eaves are the underneath part of the roof that extends beyond the home's outer wall to the roof's edge.



Although eaves were designed to protect your home, open eaves may actually put it at risk. Most homes are damaged or lost in a wildfire because of contact with embers, not flames.

Eaves stop the rain that falls on the roof from pouring down the sides of the house, protects structural footings from wearing away and reduces rain splatter. However, open eaves can also trap embers that can lodge in gaps, cracks, and crevices and ignite your home. You can tell if you have open eaves by checking the underside of the roof from its outer edge to where it meets the home's exterior. If you can see the rafter tails (2 x 4's or 2 x 6's), you have open eaves. Although open eaves are less expensive to build, they're dangerous during a wildfire.

However, closing or boxing open eaves offers protection by directing hot air and embers away from your home. This is done by filling the open eaves with non-combustible material to create a soffit. Soffits also stop birds from building nests under eaves, protect roof rafters from termites or other insects, and reduce painting and other maintenance costs. Always be careful not to block roof vents, which are used to remove moisture and heat from the attic.

If you have open eaves and are not able to box them at this time, you should seal all gaps, cracks, and crevices in the eave area with caulking material. Taking care of the paint on roof eaves and fascia (the trim at the roof's edge) is also important, noting bare wood catches fire much faster than wood with a good coat of paint.

For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **(650)851-1594** to schedule a wildfire home assessment.



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READY, SET, GO!
FENCES

The type of fence you have may depend on what you're using it for, but one factor many residents don't consider is whether a fence offers wildfire protection or increases the risk.



If you live in an area prone to wildfires, finding solutions for dangerous fence issues should be part of protecting your home.



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A wood fence, or landscape wall, attached to the house can lead a wildfire right to your home, especially if plant debris, dead vegetation, or other flammable material has gathered at the bottom.

Vinyl fences are durable and more fire-resistant than wood fences. They also resist termites and other insects. However, the extreme heat created by a wildfire can cause them to melt, potentially spreading the fire.

Metal is also durable and fire resistant, but a chain-link, wrought-iron, or barbed-wire fence can't block heat, embers, or flames. Also, fire can travel along the fence toward the home if dead plants or other combustible materials have built up in or around it.

No fence material can offer complete wildfire protection, but there are steps you can take to increase the level of protection your fence provides:

- Consult with your city or county Building Department prior to construction
- Consider non-combustible materials, ignition-resistant wood, or heavy timber construction if you're adding or replacing a fence. Combining wood framing and wire mesh can also reduce the amount of combustible fence material
- If you have a fence made from combustible material, add a non-combustible gate, or structure, between the fence and your home to keep them at least 10-feet apart
- Create a 1-inch gap at the bottom of the fence to keep fence boards from touching the soil, since direct contact can cause rot and decay, making the wood more flammable
- Keep the fence line clear of dead plants
- Never store combustible materials, such as firewood, against a combustible fence
- Avoid wood slat fences with gaps. Burning embers that get trapped in gaps will cause the fence to catch fire, increasing your home's chances of igniting

For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **(650) 851-1594** to schedule a wildfire home assessment.



Embers that escape through uncovered chimney outlets and stovepipes can lodge in roofing and start a fire. They can also land in vegetation in your yard and beyond your property, and ignite a wildfire.



A chimney with an unprotected opening can threaten your family, your home, and your community.



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An exposed chimney opening also puts your home at risk from an oncoming wildfire. Even if the flames never reach your home, burning embers can travel up to 5-miles ahead of a wildfire and enter through the chimney, causing furniture and other flammable objects to catch fire.

The California Building Code requires any fireplace that burns solid fuel to have a spark arrestor with openings no larger than 1/2-inch, and no smaller than 3/8-inch. A spark arrestor is a non-combustible metal mesh screen that blocks the chimney opening to stop embers from entering or exiting.

Chimney upkeep is also important. The National Fire Protection Association recommends that all chimneys be checked once a year, and cleaned or repaired as needed. An inspection is also recommended before buying a home with a standing chimney, after a chimney fire, or to check for structural damage after an earthquake.

Whether you do it yourself or pay a professional, a full, quality cleaning will improve fireplace efficiency and reduce the risk of a chimney fire.



For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **(650) 851-1594** to schedule a Wildfire Home Assessment.



READY, SET, GO!

BALCONIES AND DECKS

Embers can lodge and ignite in, on, or under balconies and decks built with combustible materials, allowing fire to spread inside your home through nearby walls or windows.



What the balcony and deck are made from, what's stored on or below them, and how well the plants around your home have been kept up are important factors that may determine whether a wildfire destroys your home or passes it by.



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If you plan to add a balcony or deck, check with your city or county Building Department and use non-combustible materials to help protect your home during a wildfire. Non-combustible decks and balconies are strong, have a low upkeep, and also resist termites, rotting, and mold.

Non-combustible materials include:

- Metal
- Masonry
- Lightweight concrete

If you have an existing balcony or deck made from flammable material, regular upkeep is needed to lessen the wildfire risk.

- Keep surface areas clear of plant debris, especially leaves
- Seal gaps between the deck and outside wall with quality caulk or metal flashing
- Do not store combustible items under the deck
- Move firewood at least 30 feet from any structures, including the home
- Choose furniture that is a fire resistant or non-combustible
- Enclose or screen the underside of the balcony with non-combustible material

A balcony or deck made from combustible material has a much better chance of surviving if you create 100 feet of Defensible Space around your home, follow rules for plant separation, and replace highly combustible plants with those that are drought tolerant and fire-resistant.

For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **(650) 851-1594** to schedule a Wildfire Home Assessment.



Windows make a big difference in home safety. In fact, the safety of you, your family and your home may depend on your windows' ability to fight radiant heat and direct flame contact.



Extreme heat during a wildfire can cause window glass to crack and fall, giving embers and flames easy entry into your home.



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If your home has single pane windows, replacing them with dual pane windows will help guard against an oncoming wildfire. The outer pane protects the inner pane by working as a thermal shield, which may keep it from breaking, even if the outer pane breaks. Dual pane windows are also up to 10 times more insulated than windows with single panes, can lower energy costs, and reduce outside noise.

Also, using tempered glass for window panes adds another level of wildfire protection. Tempered glass is more expensive, but it's up to 4 times stronger than traditional glass and resists breaking when in contact with intense heat. It's also more energy efficient because it provides better insulation than non-tempered glass.

Window frame material should also be considered when taking steps to protect your home from wildfire. Metal frames are low-cost, strong, lightweight, and almost care free. They're also fire resistant, making them a good choice for wildfire protection.

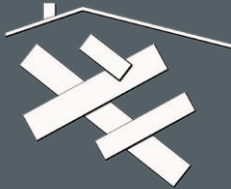
Keep a 5-foot safe-zone between your home and vegetation to reduce contact from direct flames or radiant heat. This is very important if you have single pane windows with non-tempered glass or flammable window frames.

For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **(650) 851-1594** to schedule a wildfire home assessment.



READY, SET, GO!
**WALLS AND
SIDING**

Walls and siding on the outside of your home are at risk from radiant heat, burning embers, and direct flames.



No construction material can promise a fireproof building, but spending money on non-combustible siding will help protect your home from the next wildfire.



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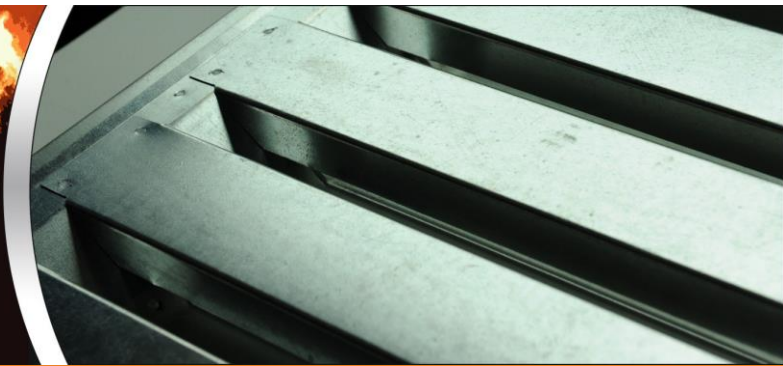
Combustible siding, such as wood or vinyl that catches fire and burns near windows will threaten the inside of your home. Additionally, burning siding can spread to the roof, rain gutters, eaves, vents, decks, balconies, patio covers, windows and doors, creating even more danger.

If your home has combustible siding and you're not ready to replace it, replace any materials in poor condition. Seal gaps and cracks in siding and trim materials with a good quality caulk to keep burning embers out during a wildfire. Keep a 5-foot safe zone between your home and vegetation to reduce contact from direct flames or radiant heat.

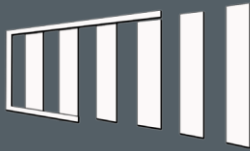
Wall materials that resist heat and flames include:

- **Stucco** - extremely durable, withstands extreme temperatures and weather conditions, and needs very little care. It also provides good protection, and is unaffected by rot, mold, and insects
- **Masonry** - acts as an excellent sound barrier and reduces heating and cooling costs. It doesn't rot and will last the lifetime of the home under normal conditions. Washing it down occasionally with a hose should be the only care required
- **Cement Board** - low maintenance and extremely strong. It does need painting, but absorbs paint so well that it hardly ever chips or peels. It also has a natural, realistic look

For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call **(650) 851-1594** to schedule a wildfire home assessment.



Attic, roof, foundation, and soffit vents are designed to remove moisture and condensation during cooler months and excess heat in warmer months.



For extra safety, consider making vent covers that can be easily installed when a wildfire approaches your home.



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Vents can be entrances for burning embers. Once inside, embers can ignite construction materials and other flammable items, allowing a wildfire to enter the attic or crawl spaces long before the flames ever reach your home. Covering vents with 1/8-inch metal mesh screens or replacing them with ember-resistant baffle vents is an important part of protecting your home.

Note that most homes are built using 1/4-inch screens, which prevent birds and rodents from entering through vent openings. Unfortunately, that size screen allows burning embers to pass through and spread fire to the inside of the home. Smaller 1/16-inch mesh screens can easily become plugged with dust, paint, or dead plants, reducing their ability to control moisture and room temperature. Consequently, covering vents with 1/8-inch non-combustible, corrosion-resistant metal mesh screens offers the best wildfire protection, while still removing moisture and reducing heat in the attic or crawl spaces.

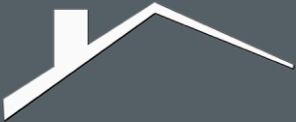
Regularly inspect vents for debris or damage while you are cleaning your gutters, and check your roof for places that embers can get into.



For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call (650) 851-1594 to schedule a wildfire home assessment.



The roof is the most at-risk part of a home during a wildfire. Even if the flames never reach your property, windblown embers can threaten your home and bring fire to your front door.



Keep your roof clear of debris year round.

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If burning embers cause your roof to catch fire, it is likely that the fire will spread to the rest of your home. Homes with flammable roofs are much more likely to be destroyed than those with fire-resistant roofs. Roofing shingles are categorized based on their resistance to fire and embers. Class A is the highest rating and offers the most resistance.

Class A Roof Coverings:

- Concrete tiles
- Clay tiles
- Asphalt composition shingles
- Metal shingles



Concrete



Clay



Asphalt



Metal

Plug gaps between the roof covering, roof deck or sheathing with non-combustible materials regardless of your roof’s rating. This is often called “bird stopping,” as it stops birds from building nests in gaps on the roof’s edge. Also, install 1/8-inch mesh over vents to keep embers out of the attic and from underneath raised foundations.

Replacing plastic skylights with dual pane glass is another way to better protect your home. Dual panes and tempered glass are much more likely to resist damage if exposed to burning embers.

Pine needles, leaves, and debris build up puts your roof at risk from burning embers and can even cause a fire-resistant roof to catch fire. Covering the eave area and fascia with fire retardant paint will also help protect the roof from embers and prevent wood decay.

For more information, please visit the Woodside Fire website or call (650) 851-1594 to schedule a Wildfire Home Assessment.