

10 Ways to Prepare for Wildfires

1. Turn your home into a fire shield

Composite shingles, metal, concrete and clay tile roofs are considered “Class A” and offer the best protection. Fire-resistant siding such as brick, fiber-cement, plaster or stucco and dual-pane tempered glass windows create a fire shield. Box in eaves, but provide ventilation to prevent condensation and mildew. Roof and attic vents should have 1/8-inch screens to prevent ember entry.

3. Maintenance makes the difference

Tree limbs shouldn't come within 10 feet of any dwelling or structure. Trees should be spaced at least 18 feet apart in your home's intermediate zone, and 12 feet apart in the extended zone. Clear fallen leaves or other debris throughout the property. Remember to check gutters and under decks or porches for dead and dry debris, and get rid of it. These are areas where wildfire embers will land and the dry materials are perfect fire starters.

2. Control the Home Ignition Zone

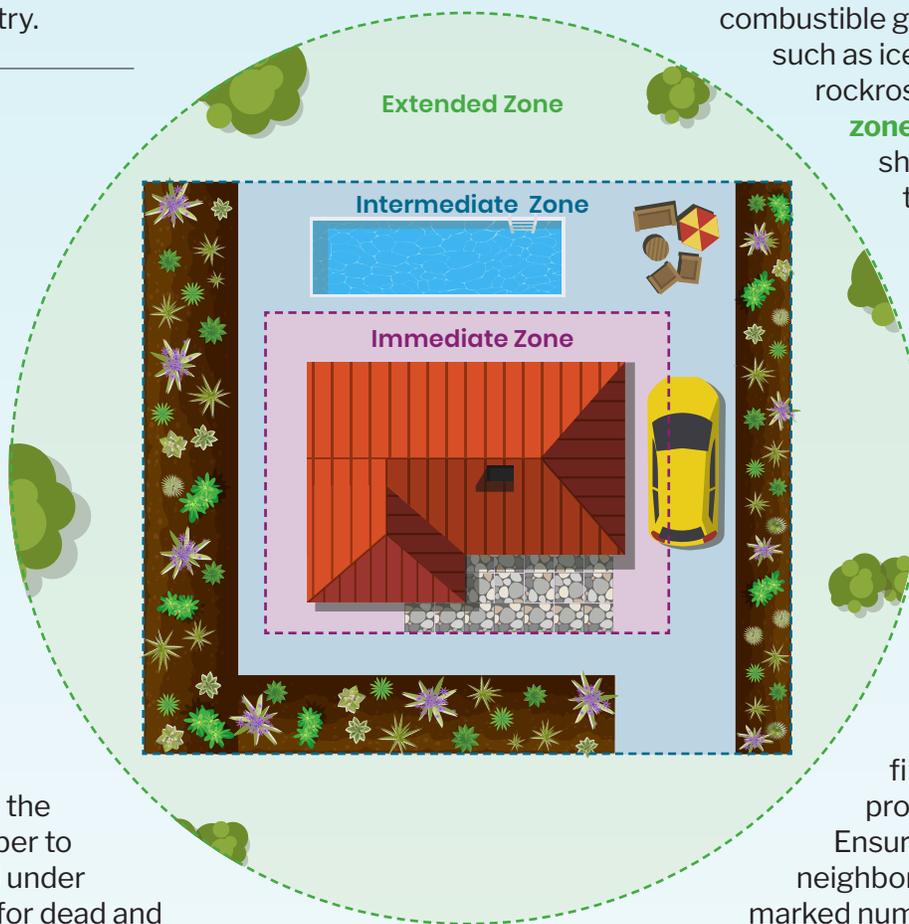
Clear the three zones surrounding your home to be lean, clean and green. The “**immediate zone**” (0 to 5 feet from your house) should be constructed of hard surfaces like concrete, stone or asphalt to prevent embers from catching fire. Replace flammable vegetation in the “**intermediate zone**” (5 to 30 feet) that contains

resins, oils and waxes with non-combustible ground cover plants such as ice plants, aloe and rockrose. The “**extended zone**” (30 to 100 feet)

should be designed to interrupt the fire's path and keep flames smaller and on the ground by removing dead vegetation, and thinning heavy clumps of plants.

4. Emergency responders to the rescue

Clear a path for firefighters to protect your home. Ensure your home and neighborhood has visibly marked numbers and street names. Driveways should be at least 12 feet wide with a vertical clearance of at least 15 feet high.



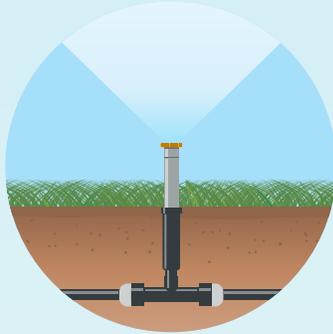
See additional tips →

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5. Water shield

Install an irrigation system like outdoor sprinklers throughout the Home Ignition Zone to help create a fire break and influence the wildfire's behavior and direction around your home.



6. Storage of combustible materials

If your home has a pool, it can be used as a water supply for firefighters and also a place to put outdoor furniture should a fire be near your property.



7. Create a plan

Knowing two ways out of your neighborhood, where to go, who to call and what to grab before evacuating your home is a must. Practice your evacuation plan at least two times each year.



8. Take inventory

Well in advance of an emergency, grab your smartphone and record what's currently in your home with video and pictures. Try to capture information like make, model and serial numbers or take photos of receipts like credit card statements.



9. Become a Firewise USA certified community

Go to nfpa.org to begin your journey toward a fire safe community. Whether you live in a community with eight homes or 2,500 dwellings, you can collaborate with local fire departments and forestry agencies to organize, plan and create a Firewise USA certified community.



10. Protecting your home

Talk to your Mercury agent to ensure you have the right amount of coverage in place. They can advise what to do should your property sustain any damage.

