



WILDFIRE PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

How to better protect your home and property

Home and building loss during wildfires occur from one or more of the three basic wildfire exposures: 1) Embers, 2) Radiant heat, and 3) Direct flame contact. Burning embers can travel up to a mile from the fire front and cause the majority of wildfire home ignition.

Property owners and residents can reduce the risk of damage and loss by taking the additional steps listed in this brochure. Fire season length can vary. Maintenance of your home and property should be a year-round process. We encourage a **"Home Out"** approach. Start with your home and then work your way outwards through the defensible space zone.

HARDENING AND MAINTAINING YOUR HOME

Many older homes were built before increased building standards in hazardous fire areas were adopted. While some items are very expensive to retro-fit, there are items that can be done very simply:

Roofs and Gutters:

Roofs, even cement and mission style, require maintenance. Roofs settle over a period of time as the lumber dries out. This can cause small gaps to form in the tile spacing and trap debris which can ignite under the tiles. Asphalt shingles can curl or be displaced.

- Inspect your roof to eliminate any areas that can trap debris.
- Block any spaces between roof decking and covering to prevent ember intrusion.
- Clean valleys and gutters regularly. Note: Vinyl gutters can ignite under excessive heat and can drip burning plastic on to lower roofs and vegetation.
- Keep a clear space of 3 feet below any tree overhanging the roof.
- Consider replacing a non-rated roof with a Class A rated non-combustible roof.



Walls, Siding and Trim Boards

- Inspect for worn, cracked and peeling paint.
- Eliminate exposed wood.
- Replace cracked or damaged boards.
- Check for excessive spacing in joints between boards and at junctions to walls and roofs. Caulk gaps as necessary.
- Wood and Vinyl siding exposed to excessive radiant heat from a fire can ignite. Consider replacing wood or vinyl siding with a non-combustible siding.

Vents and Eaves

- Regularly inspect vent openings for damage.
- Replace with 1/8" mesh.
- Replace vents located at eaves and cornices with approved baffle style vents to block embers.
- "Box-in" exposed wood underneath eaves using stucco.

Windows and Door Openings

- Consider replacing with multi-pane tempered glass. Steel frame is preferred over vinyl.
- Install & maintain weather stripping around and under any doors, including the garage door.



AREA OUTSIDE OF THE HOME

Belongings and Other Combustible Materials

Look for combustible belongings within the yard. Remove or relocate away from the home. Store inside when not in use or cover with a fire resistant cover. This includes yard furniture, trash cans, wood piles, etc. Remove any items next to structures that can trap leaves and debris which can readily ignite during a fire.

Landscaping

Remember, fire-resistant does not mean fireproof! Even fire-resistant plants will burn if not well maintained. Keep all of your plants healthy with appropriate water, proper pruning and removal of dead material.

- No mulch allowed within 5 feet of a building (VCFD Standard 14.9.2).
- Remove plants underneath windows.
- Provide a minimum 5–6 foot clearance from roof overhangs above any plants.
- Consider removing any plants and trees that are identified as “target hazard” or prohibited by VCFD. See our website for more information regarding plants, trees and spacing requirements.



Trees

- Provide a minimum 10-foot space between the tree and home.
- Remove any dead branches and areas that can cause dried leaves to accumulate within the tree. This includes removing dried palm fronds.

Fencing

Use non-combustible fencing within 5 feet of a home. Remove and space vegetation away that can ignite combustible fencing.



Access Roads and Driveways

Trim trees and landscaping overhanging the road or driveway.

- Maintain a minimum 13'-6" vertical clearance and up to a 10-foot horizontal clearance.

Address

Make sure your address is clearly visible from the street. Use minimum 4 inch high numbers contrasting with the background. Mount on non-combustible surface or post.

Water Supply and Hydrants

- Maintain a minimum 3-foot clearance around all hydrants. Make sure the hydrant is visible and there is direct access to it. This includes fire department outlets on private water supply tanks.
- If your property is on private water or well water, consider backup power supply for the water pump system.



For more information regarding protecting your home from wildfire and emergency preparedness, please see the following links:

Ventura County Fire Department – vcfd.org

Information regarding our Ready Set Go and Wildfire Action Plan – vcreadyssetgo.com

Fire Hazard Reduction Program – VCFHRP.org

Contains information regarding defensible space, plant spacing, plant reference guide, prohibited plant list, mulch use in the 100' zone.

Ventura County Office of Emergency Services (VCOES) – vcemergency.org

Emergency Information Hotline: 805-465-6650

Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IIBHS)

2019 Demo & info links – <https://ibhs.org/wildfire/wildfire-demo-2019>

2011 Ember Storm Video – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvbNOPSyys&feature=youtu.be>

University of California Cooperative Extension

Fire in California – <https://ucanr.edu/sites/fire/>

State Building Code (Chapter 7A): Please refer to your local building department for most current State and local codes regarding building construction in fire severity zones.



VENTURA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Hazard Reduction Program Unit

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For additional information, contact your neighborhood fire station or the FHRP Unit.

