

Protect Your Home from Wildfire – It's YOUR Responsibility

(Information Courtesy Colorado State Forest Service)

Create Defensible Space Around Your Home

1. Typically, a defensible space, on fl at ground, extends a minimum of 70 to 75 feet around a home. This distance is extended if the structure is located on a slope.
2. Thin out continuous tree and brush (shrub) cover around structures. Remove flammable vegetation from within the initial 15 feet around structures.
3. Beyond the initial 15 feet, thin trees to a 10- to 12-foot crown spacing. Occasional clumps of two or three trees are acceptable for a more natural appearance if additional space surrounds them.
4. Mow grasses and weeds to a height of 6 inches or less for a distance of 30 feet from all structures.
5. Prune tree branches within the defensible space up to a height of 10 feet above the ground.
6. Dispose of all slash and debris left from thinning by either chipping, hauling away, or piling and burning. Contact your local fire department or office of the Colorado State Forest Service for burning restrictions and/or assistance.
7. Remove shrubs and small trees or other potential "ladder" fuels from beneath large trees. Left in place, these fuels can carry a ground fire into tree crowns. o Trim any branches extending over roofs, and remove branches within 15 feet of chimneys.
8. Clean pine needles, leaves and other debris from roofs and gutters. This will eliminate an ignition source for firebrands, especially during hot, dry weather.
9. Stack firewood and wood piles at least 30 feet from any structure. Make sure these piles are uphill or on the same level as structures. Clear away flammable vegetation from within 10 feet of these woodpiles.
10. Place liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) containers at least 30 feet from structures. Clear flammable vegetation from within 10 feet of all such tanks. Remember, you must maintain your defensible space annually by removing debris, shrubs, and other vegetation that has accumulated through the year.

Construction Design and Materials

1. Your house may be vulnerable to a wildfire because of its design, construction, and/or location. When preparing to build, buy, or remodel, the following tips can reduce the chance of your home catching fire or resist further damage if it does catch fire.
2. **Location:**
 - a. Choose a site away from heavily vegetated areas.
 - b. Build on the most level portion of the property.
 - c. Avoid ridge tops, canyons, and areas between high points on a ridge.
 - d. Set your structure a minimum of 30 feet back from ridges or cliffs; increase the distance if your home will be more than one story.
3. **Building Materials:**
 - a. Use Class A or B roofing materials such as asphalt shingles, slate or clay tile, or metal. Avoid wooden shake-shingle roofing.
 - b. Fire-resistant or noncombustible construction materials are essential for siding and walls. Use a minimum of Class III flame/spread-rated siding material - stone, brick, and stucco are best.
 - c. Limit the length of roof eaves so that they do not extend beyond exterior walls. If the eaves are longer, enclose them with fire-resistant materials.

- d.** Foundations may come in contact with a spreading wildfire before other areas of the structure. Enclose foundations with concrete block, cement walls, or other fire-resistive materials.
- e.** Minimize the size and number of windows on the downhill side of the house or the side most likely to be exposed to wildfire. Both size and materials used are crucial in windows and sliding-glass doors. Multi-paned glass or tempered glass is recommended.
- f.** Cover exterior attic, soffit, and underfloor vents with metal wire mesh (openings no larger than one-eighth of an inch) to prevent sparks from entering structures through vents. Install eave and soffit vents closer to the roof line than to the walls.
- g.** Do not locate decks at the top of a hill; a fire's spread is generally uphill. Enclose the undersides of balconies and decks with fire-resistive materials so that burning embers cannot accumulate.
- h.** Cover chimneys and stove pipes with a nonflammable screen (mesh openings no larger than one-half inch).