



Cal Fire Guide to Hardening Your Home



Your Firewise committee was fortunate to be offered a professional fire-fighting crew from Cal Fire to help our LACC Maintenance with streets easement clean-up. The work was performed in May and started at the Peninsula gate and continued to the 1200 block of Peninsula as 5/16/16. The opportunity provided good benefits: the service supported LACC's maintenance crew's Spring Clean-up work; it cleaned up a visible part of the community; an example of trimming-up, cleaning-up and isolating was provided; and members received some valuable return for the annual fees we pay for living in a wild-fire area. We hope that you noticed the results and found them valuable too.

The following article supplements last month's article on defensible space and provides house related features that can be considered. Some apply to any home and some are important if you are remodeling or building new.

Barbara MacArthur, Firewise Chairperson (v. FireNews16_6 newsltr)

Flying embers can destroy homes up to a mile ahead of a wildfire. Prepare (harden) your home now before fire starts.

Some things you can do to harden your home:

Roof: Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home. Homes with wood or shingle roofs are at high risk of being destroyed during a wildfire. Build your roof or re-roof with materials such as composition, metal or tile. Block any spaces to prevent embers from entering and starting a fire.

- Remove dead leaves and needles from your roof and gutters
- Remove dead branches overhanging your roof and keep branches 10 feet from your chimney
- Cover your chimney outlet and stovepipe with a nonflammable screen of 1/2 inch or smaller mesh

Vents: Vents on homes create openings for flying embers.

- Cover all vent openings with 1/8-inch to 1/4-inch metal mesh. Do not use fiberglass or plastic mesh because they can melt and burn.
- Protect vents in eaves or cornices with baffles to block embers. (Mesh is not enough.)



Eaves and Soffits: Eaves and soffits should be protected with ignition-resistant or non-combustible materials.

Windows: Heat from a wildfire can cause windows to break even before the home ignites. This allows burning embers to enter and start fires inside. Single-paned and large windows are particularly at risk.

- Install dual-paned windows with one pane of tempered glass.
- Consider limiting the size and number of windows that face large areas of vegetation.

Decks: Surfaces within 10 feet of the building should be built with ignition-resistant, non-combustible, or other approved materials.

- Remove all combustible items from underneath your deck.

Exterior Walls: Wood products such as boards, panels or shingles are common siding materials. However, they are combustible and not good choices for fire-prone areas.

- Build or remodel your walls with ignition-resistant building materials, such as stucco, fiber or cement siding, fire-retardant-treated wood or other approved materials.
- Be sure to extend materials from the foundation to the roof.

Rain Gutters: Screen or enclose rain gutters to prevent accumulation of plant debris. **Patio Cover:** Use the same ignition-resistant materials for patio covers as a roof.

Fences: Consider using ignition-resistant or noncombustible fence materials to protect your home during

Yard: In addition to providing defensible space, review the following.

- Stack woodpiles at least 30 feet from all structures and remove vegetation within 10 feet of woodpiles
- Above ground Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LP-gas) containers (500 or less water gallons) shall be located a minimum of 10 feet with respect to buildings, public ways, and lot lines of adjoining property that can be built upon. - CFC 3804.3
- Remove all stacks of construction materials, pine needles, leaves and other debris from your yard.

Garage: Have a fire extinguisher and tools such as a shovel, rake, bucket, and hoe available for fire emergencies. Also,

- Install weather stripping around and under the garage door to prevent embers from blowing in.
- Store all combustible and flammable liquids away from ignition sources.

Water Supply: Consider having multiple garden hoses that are long enough to reach all areas of your home and other structures on your property.

Source: <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/Hardening-Your-Home/>

NEXT MONTH: Evacuation Planning