www.firewise.org

NWCG Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team

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USDA Forest Service

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
US Fish & Wildlife Service
National Park Service

Federal Emergency Management Agency

International Association of Fire Chiefs

National Emergency Management Association

National Fire Protection Association

U.S. Fire Administration

State Forestry Organizations

FIREWISE CONSTRUCTION

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HOMEOWNERS CAN HELP PREVENT FIRE LOSS

During a wildfire, firefighters may not have the resources to defend every home. Fortunately, homeowners can take action to protect their homes *before* a fire starts.

Landscaping with fire in mind is a major step toward safety. Firewise home design and improvement also plays an important role in preventing ignitions that could lead to total home loss. For example, strong winds during an extreme wildfire can carry burning embers more than a mile to land on a roof, enter unscreened openings, and collect in the nooks and crannies of a home.

“When considering improvements to reduce wildfire vulnerability, consider the home ignition zone,” said Jack Cohen, a research physical scientist from the USDA Forest Service Fire Sciences Laboratory in Missoula, Montana. “The greater the exposure potential to wildfire, the more you need nonflammable construction materials and a resistant building design. But this can be done using standard building materials.”

The home ignition zone consists of the home and its immediate surroundings within 100 to 200 feet. Research shows that the home ignition zone principally determines a home’s vulnerability to destruction during an extreme wildfire.

Creating a fire-resistant building design can mean the difference between a home that withstands a wildfire and one that does not. Here’s how:

Roof: The roof can be the most vulnerable to burning embers during extreme wildfires. Installing fire-resistant roofing material with a Class A, B, or C rating, such as composition shingle, metal, and clay or cement tile will help keep flames from spreading.

Walls: Materials that resist heat and flames include cement, plaster, stucco, and masonry, such as concrete, stone, brick, or block. If your home has vinyl siding, use metal screening over openings that may become exposed if the siding were to melt due to heating during the wildfire.

Windows: The heat of a wildfire can cause glass on exterior windows to fracture and collapse. Without a metal screen, a collapsed window will allow firebrands to enter and ignite the house. Double-paned glass can help reduce this risk. Tempered glass is the least likely to break due to the heat of a wildfire. For skylights, go with glass; it withstands higher temperatures than plastic or fiberglass.

Firewise construction cont.

Openings/Attachments: Eaves, fascias, soffits, and vents should be "boxed" or enclosed with metal screens to prevent objects larger than 1⁄8" from entering the home. The undersides of overhangs, decks, and balconies should be screened or enclosed with fire-resistant materials. Make sure fences constructed of flammable materials, such as wood, don't attach directly to your home—if it's attached to the house consider it part of the house. There are no guarantees that a home will be fire***proof***. But if you take action to be **Firewise**, you can greatly increase the chances that your home will withstand a wildfire.

For more information about making your home Firewise, go to www.firewise.org

IMAGES AVAILABLE
http://www.firewise.org/newsroom/artwork