HAZARDS AND THREATS
WILDFIRES – HOMEOWNERS CHECKLIST
INSIDE THE HOME

KITCHEN

• Keep a working extinguisher in the kitchen.
• Maintain electric and gas stoves in good operating condition.
• Keep baking soda on hand to extinguish stove-top grease fires.
• Turn the handles of pots and pans containing hot liquids away from the front of the stove.
• Install curtains and towel holders away from burners on the stove.
• Store matches and lighters out of reach of children.
• Make sure that electrical outlets are designed to handle appliance loads.

LIVING ROOM

• Install a screen in front of fireplace or wood stove.
• Store the ashes from your fireplace (and barbecue) in a metal container and dispose of only when cold.
• Clean fireplace chimneys and flues at least once a year.

HALLWAY

• Install smoke detectors between living and sleeping areas.
• Test smoke detectors monthly and replace batteries twice a year, when clocks are changed in the Spring and Fall.
• Install child safe plugs (caps) on all electrical outlets.
• Replace electrical cords that do not work properly, have loose connections, or are frayed.

BEDROOM

• If you sleep with the door closed, it is recommended by fire experts to install a smoke detector in the bedroom.
• Turn off electric blankets and other electrical appliances when not in use.
• Do not smoke in bed.
• If you have security bars on your windows or doors, be sure to have an approved quick-release mechanism so you and your family can get out in the event of a fire.

**BATHROOM**

• Disconnect appliances such as curling irons and hair dryers when done, store in a safe location until cool.
• Keep items such as towels away from wall and floor heaters.

**GARAGE**

• Mount a working fire extinguisher in the garage.
• Have tools such as shovel, hoe, rake, and bucket available for use in a wildfire emergency.
• Install a solid door with self-closing hinges between living areas and the garage.
• Dispose of oily rags in Underwriters Laboratories approved metal containers.
• Store all combustibles away from ignition sources such as water heaters.
• Disconnect electrical tools and appliances when not in use.
• Allow hot tools such as glue guns and soldering irons to cool before storing.
• Properly store flammable liquids in approved containers and away from ignition sources such as pilot lights.

**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

• Maintain supply of drinking water and food that does not require refrigeration and generally does not need cooking.
• Maintain portable radio, flashlight, emergency cooking equipment, portable lanterns and batteries.
• Maintain First Aid supplies to treat the injured until help arrives.
• Keep a list of valuables to take with you in an emergency; if possible, store these valuable items together.
• Make sure that all your family members are ready to protect themselves if they catch on fire by doing the STOP, DROP and ROLL technique.
• For safety, securely attach all water heaters and furniture such as cabinets and bookshelves to walls.
• Have a contingency plan to enable family members to contact each other. Establish a family/friend phone tree.
• Designate an emergency meeting place outside your home.
• Practice emergency exit drills in the house regularly.
• Outdoor cooking appliances such as barbecues should never be taken outdoors for use as a heater.

OUTSIDE THE HOME

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

• Consider installing residential sprinklers.
• Build your home away from ridge tops, canyons and areas between high points on a ridge.
• Build your home at least 30-100 feet from your property line.
• Use fire resistant materials.
• Enclose the underside of eaves, balconies, and above ground decks with fire resistant materials.
• Try to limit the size and number of windows in your home that face large areas of vegetation.
• Install only dual-paned or triple-paned windows.
• Make sure that electric service lines, fuse boxes and circuit breaker panels are installed and maintained as prescribed by code.
• Contact qualified individuals to perform electrical maintenance and repairs.

ACCESS

• Identify at least two exit routes from your neighborhood.
• Construct roads that allow two-way traffic.
• Design road width, grades and curves to allow access for large emergency vehicles.
• Construct driveways to allow large emergency equipment to reach your house.
• Design bridges to carry heavy emergency vehicles, including bulldozers carried on large trucks.
• Post clear road signs to show traffic restrictions such as dead-end roads, and weight and height limitations.
• Make sure dead-end roads and long driveways have turn around areas wide enough for emergency vehicles.
• Construct turnouts along one-way roads.
• Clear flammable vegetation at least 10 feet from roads and five feet from driveways.
• Cut back overhanging tree branches above roads.
• Construct fire barriers such as greenbelts.
• Make sure that your street is named or numbered, and a sign is visibly posted at each street intersection.
• Make sure that your street name and house number are not duplicated elsewhere in the country.
• Post your house address at the beginning of your driveway, or on your house if it is easily visible from the road.

ROOF

• Remove branches within 10 feet of your chimney and dead branches overhanging your roof.
• Remove dead leaves and needles from your roof and gutters.
• Install a fire resistant roof. Contact your local fire department for current roofing requirements.
• Cover your chimney outlet and stovepipe with a nonflammable screen of ½ inch or smaller mesh.

LANDSCAPE

• Create a defensible space by removing all flammable vegetation at least 30 feet from all structures.
• Never prune near power lines. Call your local utility company first.
• Landscape with fire resistant plants.
• On slopes or in high fire hazard areas remove flammable vegetation out to 100 feet or more.
• Space native trees and shrubs at least 10 feet apart.
• For trees taller than 18 feet, remove lower branches within six feet of the ground.
• Maintain all plants by regularly watering, and by removing dead branches, leaves and needles.
• Before planting trees close to any power lines contact your local utility company to confirm the maximum tree height allowable for that location.

YARD

• Stack woodpiles at least 30 feet from all structures and remove vegetation within 10 feet of woodpile.
• Locate LPG tank (butane and propane) at least 30 feet from any structure and maintain 10 feet of clearance.
• Remove all stacks of construction materials, pine needles, leaves and other debris from your yard.
• Contact your local fire department to see if open burning is allowed in your area; if so, obtain a burning permit.
• When burn barrels are allowed, clear flammable materials at least 10 feet around the barrel; cover the open top with a non-flammable screen with mesh no larger than ¼ inch.

EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY

• Maintain emergency water supply that meets fire department standards through one of the following:
  ➢ Community water/hydrant system
  ➢ Cooperative emergency storage tank with neighbors
  ➢ Minimum storage supply of 2,500 gallons on your property
  ➢ Clearly mark all emergency water sources
  ➢ Create easy firefighter access to your closest emergency water source
  ➢ If your water comes from a well, consider an emergency generator to operate the pump during a power failure or outage

Information in this section was provided from Fire Safe Council and for additional information, access http://www.firesafecouncil.org.

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