

Remove dead limbs overhanging your roof and any limb within 10 feet of your chimney.



Remove pine needles, leaves or other debris from the roof of any structure on your property.



### STEP: 1

## Develop And Maintain A Fire Safe Landscape Around Your Home



Your first defense against wildfire is to create a Fire Safe landscape around your home. This can be achieved by removing flammable vegetation and replacing it with fire-resistant plants; spacing the plants in your yard; and clearing away dead leaves on your roof and dry brush around your home.

### Defensible Space

If you are able to create a Fire Safe landscape for at least 30 feet around your house (and out to 100 feet or more in some areas), you will reduce the chance of a wildfire spreading onto your property and burning through to your home. This is the basis for creating a "**defensible space**" - an area that will help protect your home and provide a safety zone for firefighters who are battling the flames.

Clearing all flammable vegetation a **minimum of 30 feet** around your home and other structures will not only provide you with the greatest chance for survival, it is also **required by California law**.

But this does not mean you have to live with a ring of bare dirt around your home. You can create a defensible space and also beautify your property.

### Fire Safe Landscaping

You can start with the native vegetation around your home. Many of the plants that grow naturally in your area are highly flammable during the summer and can actually "fuel" a wildfire, causing it to spread rapidly through your neighborhood. Removing flammable native vegetation and replacing it with low-growing, fire-resistant plants is one of the easiest and most effective ways to create a defensible space.

You should select landscape vegetation based on fire resistance and ease of maintenance, as well as visual enhancement of your property. In general, fire-resistant plants:

- grow close to the ground;

- have a low sap or resin content;
- grow without accumulating dead branches, needles or leaves;
- are easily maintained and pruned;
- and are drought-tolerant in some cases.



If you have heavily wooded areas on your property, remove some of the trees to decrease the fire hazard and improve growing conditions.



Stack firewood and scrap wood piles at least 30 feet from any structure.



Clear flammable vegetation for at least 10 feet around LPG tanks.

Some of the more common species of fire resistive plants are rosemary, African daisy, ice plant and periwinkle.

Contact your fire department or local nursery to find out which fire resistive plants are adapted to the climate in your area. Stay away from unsafe ornamental landscaping plants, such as junipers, which may actually increase the fire risk your home faces.

### **Other Fire Safe Precautions**

After you have removed and/or replaced flammable native vegetation around your home for a minimum of 30 feet, there are other Fire Safe precautions that you should follow, some of which are also required by law:

- Vary the height of your landscape plants and give them adequate spacing. The taller your plants are, the wider apart they should be spaced.
- Remove dead limbs overhanging your roof and any limb within 10 feet of your chimney.
- Work with your neighbors to clear common areas between houses, and prune areas of heavy vegetation that are a threat to both.
- Avoid planting trees under or near electrical lines, where they may grow into or contact the lines under windy conditions, causing a fire.
- If you have a heavily wooded are on your property, remove some of

the trees to decrease the fire hazard and improve growing conditions. Also, remove dead, weak or diseased trees and trees with an obvious lean, leaving a healthy mixture of older and younger trees.

- Properly dispose of all cut vegetation by an approved method. Open burning may require a burning permit. Contact your fire department for local requirements.
- Stack firewood and scrap wood piles at least 30 feet from any structure. And clear away any flammable vegetation within 10 feet of these wood piles. Many homes have survived as a fire moved past, only to burn later from a wood pile that ignited after the firefighters moved on to protect other homes.
- It is recommended that you locate liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanks and any fuel storage containers at least 30 feet from any structure. Clear flammable vegetation at least 10 feet around all such tanks.
- Clear pine needles, leaves or other debris from the roof of your house and any other buildings on your property.
- Check and clean your roof and gutters several times during the spring, summer and fall to remove this debris that can easily ignite from a spark.

Remember that after you have established your Fire Safe landscape, you must maintain it regularly. If you have any questions about creating or maintaining a defensible space around your home, contact your local fire department.

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California -- with rugged mountains and rolling foothills, majestic forests and green valleys, dry summers and mild winters -- is the home and vacation destination of millions of people. But these qualities, which create wonderful views and a peaceful living environment, also create the **most severe wildfire conditions in the world!**

Each year, thousands of acres of California wildland and hundreds of homes are destroyed during a fire season that lasts from May to October -- and in some areas all year long.

Many people don't realize that they face such wildfire danger. But if you live in the foothills, grasslands, or mountains of California, **you are at risk!**

Making this problem even worse is the growing population in wildland areas surrounding California's major cities. As a result, more homes are destroyed and lives are threatened by wildfire every year.

When the strong winds and hot dry days of summer lead to wildfires, don't expect a fire engine to park in front of your home to protect your family and possessions. There just aren't enough firefighters to protect every home in the state. In a matter of minutes, a wildfire can jump from a burning hillside, race through your subdivision and destroy your home and your neighborhood.

To protect your home, your family and your possessions, you must follow the steps outlined in this booklet to make your property "**Fire Safe.**"

To be **Fire Safe** you must carry out certain fire protection measures before a fire even starts. By following the simple fire safety steps outlined in this booklet, you will give your home a chance to survive while firefighters race to bring the wildfire under control.

below, or telephone or visit the nearest CDF fire station or administrative office. Additional information can be obtained through your fire department, local nursery and local building department.

Further information concerning residential fire safety and state building codes and standards can be obtained through the Office of the State Fire Marshal, 7170 Bowling Drive, Suite 600, Sacramento, CA 95823, (916) 427-4161, or by contacting your local fire agency.

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