

## WILDFIRE SAFETY TIPS FOR HOME AND YARD

**Ember management** is the most important goal because embers are the biggest cause of house fires during a wildfire event. You can reduce the risk of embers contacting structures on your property by establishing and maintaining **defensible space**.

### Within 5 feet of your home:

- REMOVE flammable debris from spaces in and around the house.
  - Clear leaves and pine needles from roofs, gutters, window wells, etc .
  - Dry mulch can be highly flammable. Consider alternative materials such as stone within 5 feet of decks and foundation.
  - Keep trees and shrubs pruned of dead and damaged branches.
- SCREEN with 1/8 inch wire mesh
  - Areas below decks
  - Exterior attic and soffit vents
- INSPECT AND REPAIR building exterior
  - Shingles or roof tiles
  - Consider closing open eaves
  - Seal openings around your home wherever possible
- CHOOSE fire-resistant building materials
  - Asphalt shingles
  - Masonry

### Within 30 feet of your home:

- CLEAR away all dry brush and dead vegetation
- STORE anything that can burn at least 30 ft from any structure
  - Wood piles
  - Construction materials
  - Vehicles and boats
  - Trash and recycling
- KEEP your lawn mowed and water it if it starts to brown.
  - This can help reduce fire spread and intensity.
  - Fire safety and water conservation are not mutually exclusive!
  - Consider options for reducing irrigation and improving fire safety in your landscape design and maintenance plans such as drought and [fire resistant](#) plants.
    - Driveways, walkways, and patios made of stone or gravel can be low-maintenance and effective fuel breaks.
- PRUNE tree limbs so lowest branches are 6-10 feet above the ground
  - Low and overhanging branches can act as “ladders” spreading fire from the ground into tree canopies.
  - For smaller trees, avoid removing more than 1/3 of the tree’s branches.

- EVALUATE the trees surrounding your house
  - Consider removing and replacing hazardous trees.
  - Consult local conservation organizations and a qualified arborist for recommendations.
- PLANT trees cautiously, leaving at least 10' between building and mature canopy.
  - All trees have different fire resistance. Pines, and especially Pitch Pines, are very flammable.
- MAINTAIN Emergency Access to your home
  - Keep driveways clear from obstructions (10-15 feet wide, and minimum 10 feet in height)
  - Make sure fire trucks and ambulance can get into your driveway. Obstructions delay fire suppression.
- CLEARLY MARK your property for easy identification—house numbers

### **30-100 feet away from your home:**

- REMOVE dry brush and small conifers growing between mature trees.
  - Dispose of brush at transfer station or burn it cautiously with a permit from the West Tisbury fire department.
- CLEAR vegetation around outbuildings.

### PLAN for the worst:

- KNOW your escape route – two if possible.
- ASK your Road Association to assess the road for risks and escape routes
- CREATE a go-pack with essentials including N-95 masks to avoid smoke and chemical inhalation

### **During a wildfire event:**

- CLOSE all windows, doors, pet flaps, etc.
- GRAB your go-pack and LEAVE

### Helpful resources:

- MV Commission study on drought and wildfire hazards with recommendations for mitigation. <https://www.mvcommission.org/drought-and-wildfire>
- All Firewise USA resources
  - <https://nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>
  - <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Firewise/Fact-sheets/FirewiseFactSheetsImmediateNoncombustibleZone.pdf>
- FEMA site US government: <https://www.ready.gov/wildfires>
- <https://www.thespruce.com/firescaping-the-most-flammable-plants-4107522>
- Local emergency management organizations

[please keep adding to this list!]