



How To Prepare Your Home for your Annual Assessment

The Home Self-Assessment program enables homeowners to take preventative measures for their home and yard to protect against wildfire. This checklist will guide you through required actions to help protect your home and be compliant with Fuel Mitigation Ordinance No. 24-01.

NOTE: THIS IS WHAT INSURANCES ARE LOOKING FOR. WFPD STRONGLY ENCOURAGES AND RECOMMENDS:

- One of the most stringent required actions is creating a 5-foot noncombustible buffer around your home and decks. ALL vegetation, trees including overhanging branches, grass/turf, wood/rubber mulch, wood/vinyl fencing, and any stored combustible items within 5 feet of your home must have been removed.
- If you want your home to receive a designation certificate through IBHS' Wildfire Prepared Program, this is the most stringent requirement.

Examples of eligible homes with a 5-foot noncombustible buffer



Definitions

- **Hazardous Vegetation** – Shall mean any vegetation that is combustible and endangers public safety by creating a Fire Hazard. Hazardous vegetation is those vegetative materials that will readily ignite, burn, and transmit fire to any Structure or other surrounding and/or adjacent vegetation. Hazardous vegetation includes, but is not limited to, dry grass greater than four inches (4 in.) in height, accumulations of leaves, brush, weeds, green waste, dead or dying shrubs or trees, low-hanging branches, litter, or other flammable vegetation. Hazardous vegetation shall not include commercial agricultural crop that is being actively grown and managed by the property owner or his or her legal tenant. Hazardous Vegetation shall not include healthy, mature, trees.
- **Combustible Material** – Rubbish, litter, or material of any kind other than Hazardous Vegetation, that is combustible, creates a fire hazard and/or endangers public safety.

Original Checklist provided by Wildfire Prepared, A Program by IBHS, customized for WFPD
To apply for a designation certificate or learn more visit wildfireprepared.org.

Defensible Space

To be compliant with Fuel Mitigation Ordinance No. 24-01, your home must meet all requirements listed. This group of required actions includes creating a 5-foot home buffer, preparing the home's exterior, and maintaining the deck/covered porch and yard, **typically achieved through retrofits to existing homes**. See ordinance and Guidelines for any exceptions and details.

CREATE A 5-FOOT HOME BUFFER

1. **Create a 5-foot noncombustible buffer around your home and decks.**

Remove ALL dry/dead vegetation, trees including overhanging branches, wood/rubber mulch, and any stored items within 5 feet.

- Remove all hazardous vegetation, combustible material and combustible ground covers (dry/woody) such as mulch within 5 feet of your home.
- Trim back branches that overhang the 5-foot area; the home buffer extends to the sky.
- Do not allow vines to grow on buildings, fences, or within 5 feet of the building. See exceptions in WFPD guidelines.
- ***Strong Recommendation:*** Installation of 5 feet of hard groundcover material such as bare dirt, gravel, pavers, river rocks, DG base, steppingstones, or concrete including the 5 feet surrounding decks/covered porches, under and around the stairs.

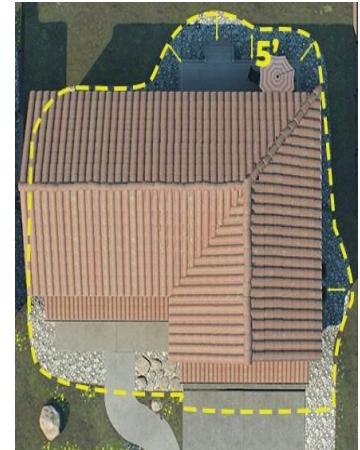
Tips: Use a measuring tape from the base of the walls and deck to measure out to 5 feet. If you have a covered porch, it should be measured out to 5 feet from the cover, including vertical supports that hold up the structure. Some homeowners may have to work with neighbor(s) to meet the requirements of this 5-foot buffer zone.

Recommendation: Replacing of combustible fencing within 6 feet of any structure. (existing construction only) No wooden fences allowed in new construction.

- Replace any wood/vinyl fencing, posts, and gates located within 6 feet of the home with a noncombustible fence, such as metal (aluminum or chain link).

Maintain the 5-foot noncombustible buffer area regularly.

- Routinely clear tree debris, weeds, grass, and dead plant material.
- Do not store anything combustible such as firewood, potted plants, outdoor



During a wildfire, embers can travel miles ahead of a fire front and accumulate at the base of your home's exterior walls and within the first 5 feet. By implementing a buffer zone, you significantly reduce the chances of your home being ignited by wildfire.



Combustible fences when ignited can provide a pathway for fire to reach your home.

- furniture, trash cans, pet houses, lawn tools, sheds, hot tubs, or children’s playsets, in this zone.
 - Outdoor furniture – remove any cushions during red flag warning days. If you will be away, store all outdoor furniture inside.
- **Recommendation:** *Do not park or store any vehicles, boats, RVs, trailers, or ATVs within 5 feet of the home. Ideally, store these items in a closed garage or park them at least 30 feet away from the home.*

PREPARE YOUR HOME

2. Check and maintain your roof and gutters.

- Regularly clear all tree debris from your roof and gutters.
- Replace plastic or vinyl gutters with metal gutters such as aluminum or steel.
 - *Note: incentive programs may be available in your area.
- Recommendation:** *Replace a wood shake/shingle roof with a Class A fire-rated roof cover such as asphalt shingles, tile, slate, or metal roofs. Tile and some metal must also include bird stops at the edges, to prevent intrusion under the tile by birds or other wildlife.*

3. Install ember-resistant vents.

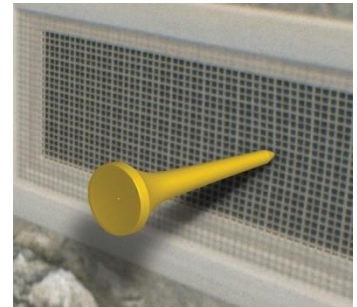
- Install ember-resistant vents or cover all existing vents with 1/8- inch metal wire mesh.
- Ensure your dryer vent has a louver or flap to reduce ember entry. Due to its design and function, wire mesh should not be used on dryer vents.

Vent Tips

- Check your current vent mesh size using a golf tee or the tip of a pen. If the tee does not fit through the mesh openings, it is the correct size.
- You can cover your current vents by installing the 1/8-inch metal mesh from the inside or outside.

4. Ensure a 6-inch vertical clearance on exterior walls.

- Ensure there is a minimum of 6 vertical inches (measured from the ground up and from any attached horizontal surface like a deck) of noncombustible siding material around your home, such as fiber-cement, brick, stone, stucco, or exposed concrete foundation.



Wind-blown embers can enter your home through vents in your attic, roof, gables, and crawlspace and ignite materials inside.



Embers accumulate against homes at the base of exterior walls and on other horizontal surfaces like decks that can ignite the home.

MAINTAIN DECKS & YARD 5 TO 30 FEET

5. Clear and maintain decks and covered porches.

On top of the deck or on the porch:

- Regularly clear all tree debris.
- Remove large rugs and combustible wood, wicker, or plastic furniture.
- Recommendation:** Only include noncombustible cast aluminum or metal furniture
- Up to 10 noncombustible terra cotta or ceramic planters (with small flowers or plants, no woody vegetation, or trees).
- Ensure items like cushions or door mats are small enough to easily be moved inside on Red Flag days.
- Recommendation:** Hot tubs on a noncombustible patio must be 10 feet from the home. Remove hot tubs from underneath a covered porch and combustible decks.

Underneath the deck:

- Remove anything stored under the deck or stairs.
- Remove all vegetation—including grass or weeds—from under the deck and stairs.
 - Include a 5-foot noncombustible buffer around deck and stairs.
 - Additionally, for decks with a walking surface at a height of 4 feet or less from the ground, enclose the area underneath with one of the following:
 - Install 1/8-inch or finer metal wire mesh around the outer edge of the walking surface extending to the ground, **or**
 - Install a noncombustible wall covering.



Decks attached to or built near your home provide a path for fire to reach your home. Reducing or eliminating the vulnerabilities of a deck or porch—including items on top of or underneath—reduces the chance your home ignites.



For low decks, enclose the area underneath to keep debris and embers out which can easily ignite a deck from underneath.

For decks with an additional structure (like a pergola, gazebo, or hot tub), the following must be met:

- Remove combustible structures such as a pergola or gazebo from decks or replace with noncombustible material such as metal.
- Recommendation:** Remove hot tubs from combustible decks.
- Remove all vegetation such as vines and any curtains/drapes/screens.

Note: Detached decks within 30 feet of the home must meet the same requirements as attached decks.

6. Maintain the yard, trees, and structures from 5 to 30 feet.

Maintain the yard

- Cut grass to no more than 4 inches and keep watered.
- Routinely clear tree debris such as leaves and pine needles.
- Remove dead vegetation, including piles from pruning. Exposed firewood should be stored 30 feet from any structures.

Trim trees

- Remove tree branches less than 6 feet above the ground.
- Trim upper branches of trees to ensure at least 10 feet of space between the canopies of neighboring trees.

Shrubs

- Choose low-growing, fire-resistant plants.
- Relocate any shrubs located under or near trees.
- Keep low-growing bushes and shrubs spaced apart or in small groupings (**Recommendation:** *no more than 3 shrubs or a maximum of 10 feet wide and 10 feet apart from other plantings*) that will result in a discontinuous path of vegetation.
- Remove any hedges or rows of bushes that will create more fuel and a pathway for fire to reach your home.

Maintain structures within 30 feet of your home (i.e., sheds, hot tubs, Pergolas, and playsets)

- Place structures **at least 10 feet away** from the home or any attached decks.
- Create a 5-foot noncombustible buffer around and under each structure.
- Clear all vegetation such as vines growing on and tree branches overhanging these structures.
- Ensure there is a minimum of 6 vertical inches (measured from the ground) of noncombustible siding material at the base of each structure or any horizontal surfaces, such as a hot tub, just as you would for your home. For an elevated structure like a shed, enclose the base with no larger than 1/8-inch or finer metal wire mesh.
- **Recommendation:** *If you have multiple structures, such as a shed, hot tub, and playset, ensure these structures are spaced at least 10 feet apart. Have at most 3 of these structures within 30 feet of your home.*
- Move large stationary propane tanks to 30 feet away from the home. If there is not an option to move the tank 30 feet from your home, it should be placed a minimum of 10 feet from the home and one of the following:
 - Buried underground.
 - Enclosed on all 4 sides with concrete block, 1/8-inch mesh over the top for ventilation, and 5-feet of noncombustible groundcover surrounding the structure.*

*This is a suggestion, retrofit in coordination with your propane provider.

How-to Prepare Your Home Checklist

Home Hardening

This group of actions builds upon *Defensible Space* to add an extra layer of home protection, commonly achieved with newer home construction or after exterior home renovations. All items below are *Strong Recommendations*. *Note: Insurance companies are looking to write policies for homes that meet all these requirements.*

Definitions

Within this standard, acceptable products and materials are those listed by the California State Fire Marshal or in a current report issued by an approved agency (accredited to ISO 17065) to meet one of the following test standards:

- **Noncombustible** – Made from material of which no part will ignite and burn when subjected to fire. Any material passing ASTM E136 is considered noncombustible.
- **Ignition-resistant** – A type of building material that resists ignition or sustained flaming combustion sufficiently to reduce losses from wildland-urban interface conflagrations under worst-case weather and fuel conditions with wildfire exposure of embers and small flames. Ignition-resistant building materials must comply with one of the following:
 - Extended ASTM E84 (UL 723) test or ASTM E2768
 - Noncombustible material

NOTE: An ignition-resistant material should not be confused with ignition-resistant construction as ignition-resistant construction can include combustible materials in the assembly.

UPGRADE YOUR HOME'S EXTERIOR

1. Enclose underside of eaves.

- Install noncombustible or ignition-resistant soffit material, such as fiber-cement board or 2-inch nominal or thicker lumber.
- NOTE: If venting the enclosed eaves, soffit vents should be ember-resistant or include 1/8-inch or finer metal wire mesh.

2. Cover gutters.

- Install noncombustible gutter guards to keep tree debris out.

3. Install a noncombustible dryer vent.

- Install a metal dryer vent, which includes louvers or a flap.

4. Move structures 30 feet from your home (*i.e., sheds, hot tubs pergolas, and playsets*).

- Move structures at least 30 feet away from your home or remove them completely.



Because of their geometry, radiant heat can build up in an open eave and ignite exposed materials. Flames from nearby fuels such as a shed or vegetation can also ignite eaves.

5. Upgrade windows and doors.

Windows:

- Replace all exterior windows with tempered, multipaned glass (at least 2 panes tempered) or fire-resistant glass blocks.
- Replace domed, plastic skylights with flat, multipaned, tempered glass skylights.

Doors:

- Upgrade to solid exterior doors that have a metal threshold and are constructed with a noncombustible or ignition-resistant material such as metal, fiberglass, or solid hardwood.
- If you choose a door that includes glass, make sure it is made with tempered, multipaned glass.
- Alternatively, install a noncombustible storm door to cover the existing door. These are fire-resistant.



During a wildfire, windows and doors are susceptible to heat and flames. Upgrading windows and doors can help keep flames from entering and igniting materials inside the home.

6. Install noncombustible siding and shutters.

- Replace combustible or ignition-resistant constructed siding that includes wood, engineered wood-fiber, or vinyl siding with a noncombustible or ignition-resistant material such as fiber-cement board, stucco, brick, metal, or stone veneer.
- Replace combustible decorative shutters, with noncombustible shutters.

7. Enclose under bay windows.

- Enclose any open area underneath a ground floor bay window with an exterior wall and noncombustible siding.

8. Build or retrofit to a noncombustible deck.

*Note: Composite decking, plastic, fire retardant treated (FRT) wood, and dense hardwoods do not comply with the Wildfire Prepared Home **Plus** designation requirements.*

When building a new deck:

- Construct all deck components with noncombustible materials and a solid walking surface. Example materials:**
 - Steel joists.
 - Solid walking surface using lightweight concrete, autoclaved aerated concrete (AAC), tile, stone, or aluminum (made to look like wood).
 - Railings using steel cable, steel rod, aluminum (made to look like wood), wrought iron, or glass.

- Stairs using steel risers with a solid walking surface using lightweight concrete, autoclaved aerated concrete (AAC), tile, stone, brick, or aluminum (made to look like wood).

When retrofitting an existing deck:

(See noncombustible material examples above)

- Ensure the bottom 6 inches of deck posts and stairs are noncombustible.
- Replace the walking surface with a solid (no gap), noncombustible walking surface.
 - Decks with a walking surface at a height of 4 feet or less from the ground must be enclosed underneath with a noncombustible material such as 1/8-inch or finer metal mesh.
- Install noncombustible railings within the first 5 feet attached to the home.
- Replace the stair treads with a solid (no gaps), noncombustible walking surface.
 - Use the same noncombustible material as the walking surface with closed risers (back of walking surface).
 - Clear underneath stairs wider than 4 feet and enclose with noncombustible material such as 1/8-inch or finer metal mesh.

9. Remove back-to-back fencing.

- If you and your neighbor(s) have separate, parallel fences that are less than 5 feet apart, work with your neighbor to remove any sections of back-to-back fencing within 30 feet of the home.