

Wildland Fire Safety

Every year wildfires burn across the U.S., and more and more people are living where wildfires are a real risk. Nearly 45 million homes abut or intermingled with wildlands and more than 72000 U.S. communities are now at risk. By working together residents can make their own property much safer from wildland fires.

Homeowners

There are a number of steps you can take to protect your home from wildland fire no matter where you live.

- Create and maintain clearance around your home. Proper clearance to 100 feet dramatically increases the chance of your house surviving a wildfire. This 100 foot defensible space also provides for firefighter safety when protecting homes during a wildland fire.
- Burn debris only on permissive burn days.
- Cut weeds and dry grass before 10 a.m. when the humidity is higher and temperatures are cooler to reduce the chance of igniting a fire.
- Follow proper guidelines for burning debris on your property this includes letting 911 know of your burn.

Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, ect.) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.

TWO ZONES MAKE UP THE REQUIRED SAFE AREA FOR A HOMEOWNER

ZONE 1: 30 feet of Lean, Clean & Green. Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds. Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters. Keep tree branches 10 feet away from your chimney, other trees and your home.

ZONE 2: 30–100 feet of Reduced Fuel. Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches. Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees. Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs and trees.

VERTICAL SPACING

Large trees do not have to be cut and removed as long as all of the plants beneath them are removed. This eliminates a vertical "fire ladder."

HORIZONTAL SPACING

Create horizontal and vertical spacing between plants, the amount of spacing will depend on how steep the slope is and the size of the plants

Defensible Space is your or green zone is your property's front line defense against wildfire. Creating and maintaining defensible space around your home can dramatically increase your home's chance of surviving a wildfire.

Green Zone:

Shorter plants (less than 2 feet) are safer than taller ones. If kept green, herbaceous plants (grass and non-woody flowers) are better choices than shrubs and trees. If planting shrubs and trees, choose deciduous (trees that shed their leaves) over evergreens. Avoid planting juniper, pine and palms.

- Remove tree limbs that are touching the house or deck, or are within 10 feet of the chimney. If limbs are encroaching on overhead lines, contact your telephone or power company for removal.
- Use hard surfaces (concrete, stone, asphalt, brick, etc.) in your landscaping.
- Clear ALL flammable vegetation from within 10 feet of propane tanks.

Ensure plants are properly irrigated. Both under- AND over-watering can lead to unhealthy plants, and dead, flammable material. Dead leaves, branches and other flammable debris should be regularly removed.

Local regulations for the city of Wellington

It is unlawful for any person to conduct open burning of any type of materials, including, but not limited to, grass brush, and leaves without a burn permit issued by the Fire Chief or his/her designee. Restricted items that cannot be burned include plastics, construction material, building, furniture, shingles, vehicles, tires, trash and clothing. All rules of the burn permit shall be followed in strict adherence. Violation of the burn permit can result in revocation of the burn permit and/or be found in violation of this code. Exception-portable or stationary outdoor fireplaces can be used without a burn permit and shall not be operated within 15 feet of any structure or combustible materials. Restricted items listed above cannot be burned in a portable or stationary outdoor fireplace.

Fire pits within the city

Fire pits must be 3 feet or less in diameter (including the height of the fire). Fire pits must be used for recreation-cooking food, socializing, etc. They cannot be used for burning trash, yard waste etc. There must be a ten foot clearing from the fire pit in all directions. This includes overhanging trees, bushes, weeds, furniture and /or any structure. Fires must be attended at all times. You must also have a way to extinguish the fire with you at all times hose/ extinguisher.

By taking these steps it will help keep your property and family more safe from fires that could become more devastating. Remember to always check with your local dispatch when doing a controlled burn in the county.