

FIREWISE CONSTRUCTION CHECKLIST

To create your FIREWISE structure, remember that the primary goals are fuel and exposure reduction.

- ✓ Use construction materials that are fire-resistant or non-combustible whenever possible.
- ✓ Consider using materials such as Class-A asphalt shingles, slate or clay tile, metal, or cement and concrete products for roof construction.
- ✓ Construct a fire-resistant sub-roof for added protection.
- ✓ Use fire resistant materials such as stucco or masonry for exterior walls. These products are much better than vinyl which can soften and melt.
- ✓ Consider both size and materials for windows; smaller panes hold up better in their frames than larger ones; double pane glass and tempered glass are more effective than single pane glass; plastic skylights can melt.
- ✓ Prevent sparks from entering your home through vents, by covering exterior attic and underfloor vents with wire mesh no larger than 1/8 of an inch.
- ✓ Keep your gutters, eaves and roof clear of leaves and other debris.
- ✓ Clear dead wood and dense vegetation within at least 30 feet from your house, and move firewood away from your house or attachments like fences or decks.

Any structure attached to the house, such as decks, porches, fences and sheds should be considered part of the house. These structures can act as fuses or fuel bridges, particularly if constructed from flammable materials. Therefore, consider the following:

- ✓ If you wish to attach an all-wood fence to your home, use masonry or metal as a protective barrier between the fence and house.
- ✓ Use non-flammable metal when constructing a trellis and cover with high-moisture, fire-resistant vegetation.
- ✓ Prevent combustible materials and debris from accumulating beneath patio deck or elevated porches; screen underneath or box in areas below the deck or porch with wire mesh no larger than 1/8 of an inch.

For additional information visit
www.firewise.org

IS YOUR HOME FIREWISE?

By following the Firewise tips listed in this pamphlet, you can make your home safer from the effects of a destructive wildfire.



Did
You
Know?

THE TOP 3 CAUSES OF WILDFIRES IN FLORIDA:

- ✓ Arson/Incendiary
- ✓ Escaped Debris Burning
- ✓ Lightning

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THESE HELPFUL WEBSITES:

FLORIDA DIVISION OF FORESTRY
www.fl-dof.com

FLORIDA DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
www.floridadisaster.org

MYFLORIDA
www.myflorida.com

FIREWISE
www.firewise.org

FLORIDA ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOMES
www.flash.org

U.S. FOREST SERVICE
www.fs.fed.us

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
www.fema.gov

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
Division of Forestry

3125 Conner Boulevard • Tallahassee, FL 32399-1650

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
Division of Emergency Management
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard • Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100
1.877.352.3222 (Toll Free)

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ARE YOU FIREWISE FLORIDA?



Florida Firewise Communities

FIREWISE LANDSCAPING CHECKLIST

To create a landscape that will make your home less vulnerable to wildfire, the primary goal is fuel reduction. Think of the area around your home in zones. Zone 1 is closest to the structure, Zone 4 is the farthest away.

- Zone 1** This well-irrigated area encircles the structure for at least 30 feet on all sides, providing space for fire suppression equipment in the event of an emergency. Plants should be limited to carefully spaced fire resistant tree and shrub species.
- Zone 2** Fire resistant plant materials should be used here. Plants should be low-growing, and the irrigation system should extend into this section.
- Zone 3** Place low-growing plants and well-spaced trees in this area, remembering to keep the volume of vegetation (fuel) low.
- Zone 4** This furthest zone from the structure is a natural area. Thin selectively here and remove highly flammable vegetation.

Also remember to:

- ✓ Carefully space the trees you plant.
- ✓ Take out the "ladder fuels" – vegetation that serves as a link between grass and tree tops. These fuels can carry fire from vegetation to a structure or from a structure to vegetation.

When maintaining a landscape:

- ✓ Keep trees and shrubs pruned. Prune all trees six to 10 feet from the ground.
- ✓ Mow your lawn regularly.
- ✓ Dispose of cuttings and debris promptly according to local regulations.
- ✓ Landscape with less-flammable plants: Dogwood, Viburnum, Redbud, Sycamore, Magnolia, Beautyberry, Oaks, Red Maple, Wild Azalea, Sweetgum, Coontie, Winged Elm, Black Cherry, Persimmon, Wild Plum, Sugarberry, Florida Soapberry, Fringetree, Ferns, Wild Olive, Blue Beech, Hophornbeam, and Sparkleberry.

—Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida,
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

For additional information visit
www.firewise.org

DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Do you have at least 30 ft of space surrounding your home that is **Lean, Clean and Green**?

The objective of Defensible Space is to reduce the wildfire threat to your home by changing the characteristics of the surrounding vegetation.

Lean — Prune shrubs and cut back tree branches, especially within 15 feet of your chimney.

Clean — Remove all dead plant material from around your home; this includes dead leaves, dry grass and even stacked firewood.

Green — Plant fire-resistant vegetation that is healthy and green throughout the year.



Defensible space allows firefighters room to put out fires.

FIRE-RESISTANT ATTACHMENTS

Attachments include any structure connected to your home, such as decks, porches or fences. If an attachment to a home is *not* fire-resistant, then the home as a whole is *not* firewise.

A DISASTER PLAN

The time to plan for a fire emergency is now. Take a few minutes to discuss with your family what actions you will need to take.

- Post your local firefighting agency's telephone number in a visible place.
- Decide where you will go and how you will get there. Unlike evacuating for a hurricane, with fire you may only have a moments notice. Two escape routes out of your home and out of your neighborhood are preferable.
- Have tools available: shovel, rake, axe, handsaw or chainsaw, and a 2 gallon bucket
- Maintain an adequate water source
- Have a plan for your pets
- Practice family fire drills



Evacuations for a wildfire can occur without notice; When wildfire conditions exist, **BE ALERT**.

A FIREWISE HOME HAS...



LEAN, CLEAN AND GREEN LANDSCAPING

With firewise landscaping, you can create defensible space around your home that reduces your wildfire threat. Large, leafy, hardwood trees should be pruned so that the lowest branches are at least 6 to 10 ft high to prevent a fire on the ground from spreading up to the tree tops. Within the defensible space, remove flammable plants that contain resins, oils and waxes that burn readily: Palmetto, wax myrtle, yaupon holly, red cedar, and young pine. A list of *less-flammable* plants can be found within this brochure.



Although mulch helps retain soil moisture, when dry, it can become flammable. Mulch as well as all landscaping should be kept well watered to prevent them from becoming fire fuel.

FIRE-RESISTANT ROOF CONSTRUCTION

Firewise construction materials include Class-A asphalt shingles, metal, cement and concrete products. Additionally, the inclusion of a fire-resistant sub-roof adds protection.



Something as simple as making sure that your gutters, eaves and roof are clear of debris can reduce your fire threat.

FIRE-RESISTANT EXTERIOR CONSTRUCTION

Wall materials which resist heat and flames include cement, plaster, stucco and concrete masonry. Double pane glass windows can make a home more resistant to wildfire heat and flames.



Although some vinyl will not burn, during the Florida wildfires of 1998, firefighters found that some vinyl soffits melted allowing embers into the attic space.

EMERGENCY ACCESS

Identify your home and neighborhood with legible and clearly marked street names and numbers so emergency vehicles can rapidly find the location of the emergency. Include a driveway that is at least 12 feet wide with a vertical clearance of 15 feet — to provide access to emergency apparatus.