

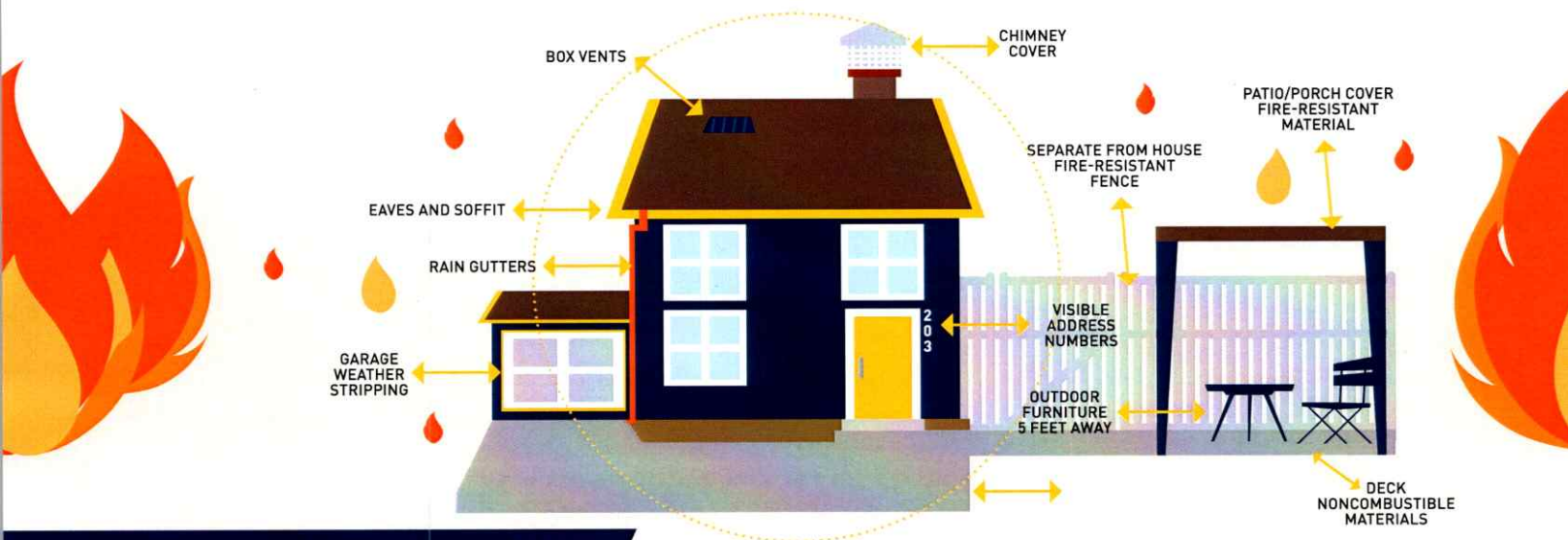
GETTING STARTED WITH HOME HARDENING AGAINST WILDFIRE PROTECT YOUR HOME!



WHAT IS HOME HARDENING?

There are various areas in most homes that are vulnerable to the small flying embers that occur during a wildfire - often referred to as an "ember cast." Your home may also be vulnerable to the main fire front, as it passes through during a wildfire.

Hardening your home refers to strengthening those vulnerable areas of your home. There are a number of different issues to address, and we've categorized them into sections so you can make a determination about what items are most critical to creating a home that is hardened against the threat of wildfire.



INITIAL STEPS (For Every Home):

ROOF - OR BOX VENTS

Box Vents also often called *Low Profile Vents*, *Louvers*, *Flat Vents*, or *Turtle Vents*. These are all static vents. This means they have no moving parts. Utilizing natural convection, they create an opening for the rising hot air and moisture to escape through. Box Vents are most effective when installed as close to the roof ridge as possible. This allows the maximum amount of heat and moisture to escape.

If these vents don't have protective screens on them, they are an inviting entry point into your home's structure for embers. To protect your home, all of these vents must be covered, using a metal mesh that is 1/16 to 1/8 inch. **NOTE:** There are plenty of mesh screens out there, but only the ones noted will have the best chance of stopping embers.

EAVES AND SOFFIT

Protect your eaves by boxing them in, such as with the soffit-eave design. Only use materials that are fire-resistant.

RAIN GUTTERS

With rain gutters, the best thing you can do is periodically clear them of debris that could catch fire. You can also purchase a non-combustible gutter cover to help prevent the buildup of debris and makes it easier to maintain. Using a calendar (book or digital), create a reminder at least twice a year, and preferably quarterly, to clean out your rain gutters.

OUTDOOR FURNITURE

Don't attach plastic or flammable furniture to the structure that makes up your home, garage, or any outbuilding. Keep furniture at least five (5) feet away from the structure, wherever possible. Purchase furniture that is resistant to fire.

ADDRESS NUMBERS

Always make sure that your address number is clearly visible from the street. This way, firefighters will be able to find your house easily, not only when you call for assistance, but when communicating about structure defense during a wildfire.

DRIVEWAY

Your driveway should be wide enough to allow emergency vehicles, such as fire apparatus, to enter unobstructed. If you have trees or bushes that block parts of your driveway, please clear them, to allow for easier access. If you have a gate, make certain that it opens into the driveway, and not out towards the street or road. If you evacuate during a wildfire, make certain you keep the gate open, or unlocked.

GARAGE

Purchase weather stripping and install it all around your garage doors to harden them against flames and embers. Store all your flammable liquids and objects away from the door to reduce the chance they will catch fire, should an ember slip through. If you have windows or vents leading out, cover them with metal mesh, as defined in this document.

STRUCTURAL STEPS (For Applicable Homes):

WALLS AND SIDING

If the walls and siding of your home are made of untreated wood, then they are not fire-resistant. Replace them with siding materials made of fiber cement, stucco, or wood that is pre-treated to be fire resistant. Make certain siding doesn't have any gaps either at the foundation or at the roof, or embers may get through.

WINDOWS

The windows in your home are extremely vulnerable to cracking from the heat of a wildfire. To minimize the chance of breakage, install dual-paned windows and make sure one of them is made of tempered glass, which will resist heat more effectively. If you add metal screens (on the inside) of these windows, especially windows that open, the screens will help prevent embers from entering the home in the event the windows are open, or if the heat from a wildfire causes them to crack or break.

ROOF

Your roof should be made of materials that are fire-resistant. These include composition, metal, clay, or tile. Wood or shingle roofs are far more likely to catch fire, so if you have one of these, please consider replacing it with a fire resistant material. Don't forget to clean your roof every year. If you have trees or other vegetation, don't allow branches, leaves, or other vegetation come into contact with your roof. **NOTE: Putting sprinklers on your roof is not a good solution, and doing so may impact water resources needed by firefighters.**

WHAT'S NEXT?

Check with your local fire department for any additional rules that may affect how you protect your home against the threat of wildfire. Many cities and/or fire agencies have listings of approved contractors that may be of assistance when you seek to improve your home's defense against wildfire - but remember: most of these home hardening suggestions are low-cost and easy to accomplish.



To learn more, visit www.mysafela.org/wildfire

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