The Fire Safe Council
Homeowner’s Checklist
How to make your home Fire Safe
OUTSIDE

1 Design/Construction

- Consider installing residential sprinklers
- Build your home away from ridge tops, canyons and areas between high points on a ridge
- Build your home at least 30-100 feet from your property line
- Use fire resistant materials
- Enclose the underside of eaves, balconies and above ground decks with fire resistant materials
- Try to limit the size and number of windows in your home that face large areas of vegetation
- Install only dual-paned or triple-paned windows
- Make sure that electric service lines, fuse boxes and circuit breaker panels are installed and maintained as prescribed by code
- Contact qualified individuals to perform electrical maintenance and repairs

2 Access
Identify at least two exit routes from your neighborhood
Construct roads that allow two-way traffic
Design road width, grade and curves to allow access for large emergency vehicles
Construct driveways to allow large emergency equipment to reach your house
Design bridges to carry heavy emergency vehicles, including bulldozers carried on large trucks
Post clear road signs to show traffic restrictions such as dead-end roads, and weight and height limitations
Make sure dead-end roads, and long driveways have turn-around areas wide enough for emergency vehicles
Construct turnouts along one-way roads
Clear flammable vegetation at least 10 feet from roads and five feet from driveways
Cut back overhanging tree branches above roads
Construct fire barriers such as greenbelts
Make sure that your street is named or numbered, and a sign is visibly posted at each street intersection
Make sure that your street name and house number are not duplicated elsewhere in the county
Post your house address at the beginning of your driveway, or on your house if it is easily visible from the road

3 Roof
Remove branches within 10 feet of your chimney and dead branches overhanging your roof
Remove dead leaves and needles from your roof and gutters

Install a fire resistant roof. Contact your local fire department for current roofing requirements
Cover your chimney outlet and stovepipe with a nonflammable screen of 1/2 inch or smaller mesh

4 Landscape
Create a "defensible space" by removing all flammable vegetation at least 30 feet from all structures
Never prune near power lines. Call your local utility company first
Landscape with fire resistant plants
On slopes or in high fire hazard areas remove flammable vegetation out to 100 feet or more
Space native trees and shrubs at least 10 feet apart
For trees taller than 18 feet, remove lower branches within six feet of the ground
Maintain all plants by regularly watering, and by removing dead branches, leaves and needles
Before planting trees close to any power line contact your local utility company to confirm the maximum tree height allowable for that location

5 Yard
Stack woodpiles at least 30 feet from all structures and remove vegetation within 10 feet of woodpiles
Locate LPG tanks (butane and propane) at least 30 feet from any structure and maintain 10 feet of clearance
Remove all stacks of construction materials, pine needles, leaves and other debris from your yard
Contact your local fire department to see if open burning is allowed in your area; if so, obtain a burning permit
Where burn barrels are allowed, clear flammable materials at least 10 feet around the barrel; cover the open top with a non-flammable screen with mesh no larger than 1/4 inch

6 Emergency Water Supply
Maintain an emergency water supply that meets fire department standards through one of the following:
• a community water/hydrant system
• a cooperative emergency storage tank with neighbors
• a minimum storage supply of 2,500 gallons on your property
Clearly mark all emergency water sources
Create easy firefighter access to your closest emergency water source
If your water comes from a well, consider an emergency generator to operate the pump during a power failure
INSIDE

1 Kitchen
- Keep a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen
- Maintain electric and gas stoves in good operating condition
- Keep baking soda on hand to extinguish stove-top grease fires
- Turn the handles of pots and pans containing hot liquids away from the front of the stove
- Install curtains and towel holders away from burners on the stove
- Store matches and lighters out of the reach of children
- Make sure that electrical outlets are designed to handle appliance loads

2 Living Room
- Install a screen in front of fireplace or wood stove
- Store the ashes from your fireplace (and barbecue) in a metal container and dispose of only when cold
- Clean fireplace chimneys and flues at least once a year

3 Hallway
- Install smoke detectors between living and sleeping areas
- Test smoke detectors monthly and replace batteries twice a year, when clocks are changed in the spring and fall
- Install child safety plugs (caps) on all electrical outlets
- Replace electrical cords that do not work properly, have loose connections, or are frayed

4 Bedroom
- If you sleep with the door closed, install a smoke detector in the bedroom
- Turn off electric blankets and other electrical appliances when not in use
- Do not smoke in bed
- If you have security bars on your windows or doors, be sure they have an approved quick-release mechanism so you and your family can get out in the event of a fire

5 Bathroom
- Disconnect appliances such as curling irons and hair dryers when done; store in a safe location until cool
- Keep items such as towels away from wall and floor heaters

6 Garage
- Mount a working fire extinguisher in the garage
- Have tools such as a shovel, hoe, rake and bucket available for use in a wildfire emergency
- Install a solid door with self-closing hinges between living areas and the garage
- Dispose of oily rags in (Underwriters Laboratories) approved metal containers
- Store all combustibles away from ignition sources such as water heaters
- Disconnect electrical tools and appliances when not in use
- Allow hot tools such as glue guns and soldering irons to cool before storing
- Properly store flammable liquids in approved containers and away from ignition sources such as pilot lights

Disaster Preparedness
- Maintain at least a three-day supply of drinking water, and food that does not require refrigeration and generally does not need cooking
- Maintain a portable radio, flashlight, emergency cooking equipment, portable lanterns and batteries
- Maintain first aid supplies to treat the injured until help arrives
- Keep a list of valuables to take with you in an emergency; if possible, store these valuables together
- Make sure that all family members are ready to protect themselves with STOP, DROP AND ROLL
- For safety, securely attach all water heaters and furniture such as cabinets and bookshelves to walls
- Have a contingency plan to enable family members to contact each other. Establish a family/friend phone tree
- Designate an emergency meeting place outside your home
- Practice emergency exit drills in the house (EDITH) regularly
- Outdoor cooking appliances such as barbecues should never be taken indoors for use as heaters