Homeowner's

"Watch Outs!"

Will Your Home Survive? The Homeowner's "Watch Outs!" will allow you to evaluate your situation and set a plan to correct any concerns.

Each year, hundreds of homes are destroyed or damaged by wildland fires. If you live, or plan on living in an area subject to wildland fires, it is your responsibility to protect your family and home from danger.

You live in rural areas because you like the life-style and beauty. You do not have to live in a steel building or bunker to be safe. The two most important things you can do to protect your family and home is to have at least 30-feet between your home and the surrounding wildland fuels AND have a roof that will not burn.

The key is in reducing the ignition potential of your home. That means, to make it compatible with its surroundings by considering these factors:

- ***Fuels*** (natural and ornamental)
- ***Topography*** (slope, canyons and draws)
- ***Your Home*** (construction, design and materials)
- ***Access*** (roads and bridges)
- ***Family Protection*** (evacuation plans)

You can live safely in the woods, if you take some simple steps to protect your family and home. ***It is YOUR responsibility to protect yourself and your family.***

FROM THE ACCESS ROAD

(1) The access road is not named or marked!

Concern: If the road leading to your home is not identified, emergency services personnel will not be able to easily find it when you call for help.

Your Situation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Solution: Post a sign with the name of the road in reflective letters at a place where people can easily see it on a dark or rainy night.

(2) The house number is not posted!

Concern: If your street address is not clearly posted, the emergency services personnel may have to go house to house to find you.

Your Situation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Solution: Post the house number in reflective numerals where it can be easily seen from the road.

(3) The driveway has a bridge across the creek!

Concern: Large, heavy emergency vehicles may not be able to safely cross the bridge to get to the house.

Your Situation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Solution: Build bridges of sufficient capacity to support fire trucks, or provide a creek crossing beside the bridge.

(4) The driveway is steep and narrow!

Concern: If the driveway is steep and narrow, emergency vehicles may not be able to gain quick access to the house.

Your Situation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Solution: Keep driveway grades reasonable; provide a hard surface that will support a fire engine; make it wide enough for a big vehicle (fire truck).

(5) The brush or vegetation grows up to the edge of the road!

Concern: Flammable vegetation too close to the road will make it unsafe to travel (going in or coming out) during a wildfire.

Your Situation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Solution: Reduce flammable vegetation at least 15 feet on each side of the driveway.

(6) The driveway is over ¼-mile in length and there is little or no area for a fire engine to turn around!

Concern: The first fire engine will block the driveway so you can't leave; it is too far to lay hose from the road to the house.

Your Situation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Solution: Keep driveways as short as possible, and provide a turn around/parking area near the house to accommodate a fire truck.

OUTSIDE THE HOME

(1) The native vegetation grows up to the side of your home!

Concern: Direct flame contact and radiant heat from burning brush/trees will set your house on fire.

Your Situation?
☐ ***Yes*** ☐ ***No***

Solution: Maintain at least a 30-foot clearance (more on steep slopes) of flammable vegetation around the house. Use fire resistant plants for landscaping.

(2) Tree limbs are within 10-feet of your chimney or stovepipe!

Concern: Sparks from the chimney can set the tree on fire, which in turn can set the house on fire.

Your Situation?
☐ ***Yes*** ☐ ***No***

Solution: Remove all tree limbs from within 10 feet of the chimney; remove all dead limbs overhanging or near the house.

(3) The trees around the house have dead limbs near the ground!

Concern: A grass fire can climb up the tree and spread to other trees and then to the house.

Your Situation?
☐ ***Yes*** ☐ ***No***

Solution: Remove all dead limbs within 15 feet of the ground.

(4) Dry grass grows right up next to the house!

Concern: A grass fire can spread directly to the house.

Your Situation?
☐Yes ☐No

Solution: Remove all dry grass within 3 feet of the building; keep all other dry grass within 30 feet mowed short.

(5) Wood is stacked next to your home!

Concern: Sparks from a wildfire can land in the woodpile and a fire there will spread quickly to the house.

Your Situation?
☐Yes ☐No

Solution: Stack firewood at least 30 feet away from the house, and cover it with a non-flammable cover.

(6) Grass/brush grows right up to and under the LPG tank!

Concern: If the wildfire spreads to the tank, it may explode; the area is too dangerous for firefighters to stay.

Your Situation?
☐Yes ☐No

Solution: Remove all flammable material from within 15 feet of the LPG tank.

THE STRUCTURE ITSELF

(1) The roof is constructed of a flammable material!

Concern: Sparks from a wildfire can land on the roof, starting the house on fire.

Your Situation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Solution: Use ignition-resistant roofing materials such as steel, tile, or composition roofing. Steep steel roofs don't collect leaves/needles.

(2) The exterior siding is constructed of a flammable material!

Concern: Sparks and radiant heat from a wildfire can set the siding on fire.

Your Situation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Solution: Use ignition-resistant siding such as aluminum or steel siding. Vinyl siding melts easily. Log walls are thick enough to be fire resistant.

(3) The windows are large and single pane!

Concern: Radiant heat from a wildfire can ignite materials inside the house, especially flimsy curtains.

Your Situation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Solution: Use double or triple glazed energy efficient glass to provide insulation and reflect radiant heat. Use non-flammable blinds.

(4) The eaves are open!

Concern: Embers can collect in wind eddies under the eaves, setting the house on fire.

Your Situation?
☐Yes ☐No

Solution: Box in the eaves, and use small gauge screen to cover vent openings to keep sparks (and insects) out of the attic.

(5) Attic vents are open!

Concern: Sparks and embers from a wildfire can enter the attic and set the house on fire.

Your Situation?
☐Yes ☐No

Solution: Cover attic vent openings with small gauge wire screen to keep sparks out

(6) The undersides of wood decks attached to the house are not enclosed!

Concern: Dry grass or sparks and embers under the deck can set the house on fire.

Your Situation?
☐Yes ☐No

Solution: Skirt wood decks with non-flammable siding backed by wire screen to keep out critters and fire.

KEEP IT CLEAN

Yard litter has accumulated!

Concern: Dry vegetation, leaves and needles touching house can catch fire from flying embers and set the house on fire.

Your Situation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Solution: Clean leaves and needles out of landscaping shrubs and gutters, and off your deck and roof.

FIRE WISE MINNESOTA

The recommendations contained in this brochure have generally been proven to enhance the survivability of your home in a wildfire situation. However, there may be unique situations that these recommendations do not specifically address. In addition, the actions you take alone may not provide the safety levels you feel are necessary. Most often, cooperation among adjacent landowners and neighbors is necessary to fully provide for fire safe and defensible space conditions. Providing adequate access and reducing fuel buildup in the surrounding forest are examples where cooperation might have benefits over "going it alone".

For more information contact your local fire department or forestry office:

www.dnr.state.mn.us/firewise
www.firewise.org