

The **Firesmart** program utilizes citizen involvement as a cornerstone of its community recognition program. It is an educational program that assists home owners with helpful fire prevention tips and recommendations for your home or cabin in relation to wild fires. The helpful tips are an investment in the protection of yours and your neighbour's property in the event of a wildfire.

As a Hamlet board we applied for a \$500 grant for the community to bring the safety recommendations to the community. We were successful in our application. We have pamphlets at the back for your review and use and I have prepared a summary to present to you.

The roof is identified as the most vulnerable component of your structure. In today's construction most material is fairly fire resistant. Roof systems are rated into 3 classes specific to the material used. A lack of maintenance or leaving debris is identified as key element that can change that status. It is imperative to remove leaves, twigs from the gutters and roof system as it can be an ignition point for embers. Screening your vents to prevent embers being drawn in is recommended.

Shingles that are old curling and obsolete put your home at higher risk as gaps and missing shingles expose the roof structure.

Your roof is a large surface where combustible debris can accumulate. If a wildfire happens windblown embers can land on your structure and ignite the debris. Plan and schedule regular maintenance to help reduce risk.

Second on the construction list of most flammable material to your dwelling is siding. A smooth profile or simple design leave less places for debris to accumulate and embers to ignite in a wild fire. Screen any exterior vents to prevent access of embers to the interior of the property.

In the event there is a wildfire – close all windows to reduce access of embers. When replacing doors and windows in regular maintenance give consideration to the fire rating of your replacement choices. Non-combustible material is a smart choice. Don't forget to give consideration to the seal on your garage doors, weather stripping is an easy install.

Maintenance of your properties exterior:

It is recommended to review your properties exterior annually

- look at your siding for gaps in the material
- remove stored combustible material (lumber, stored vehicles, branches, grass, leaves and wood piles from exterior walls that may ignite during a wild fire
- inspect your vents for damage and openings
- clean your gutters or eaves troughs – remove debris. Gutter guards installation helps to prevent debris from settling.
- Drip edge on shingles helps protect your roof structures sheathing and fascia
- When replacing gutters and downspouts look for non combustible materials
- Metal drip edge installation

Open eaves create an entry point for embers. Select non combustible

materials like fibre cement board (hardy plank) aluminum soffit and screened fire rate vents when thing about property upgrades.

Decks and Porches

Removal of combustible debris and vegetation on, around and under decks is a key factor in reducing vulnerability to ignition during a wildfire.

Think about the combustible material you store under your deck or porches – this contributes to your properties vulnerability. Slotted deck boards allow debris to accumulate between and below the deck boards. Review and remove unwanted material to protect your property. Think about the shrubs and plantings adjacent to your property for regular maintenance and care. If you can close in the outer openings to prevent an accumulation of debris seasonally and in the event of a wild fire prevent ignition of the same by embers.

Planning a renovation. Give consideration to non-combustible deck material if you are planning a renovation.

Most lawn furniture is combustible. Store these items inside or away from the house if possible

Fences

Wooden fences and board walks create a direct line to your property and may contribute to the spread of wildfire. Wood fences offer zero resistance to fire and may act as a wick directly to your home. A break of 1.5 metres of non-combustible material to your home is a recommendation.

Monitor your fence for damage. Do not stack combustible material near your fence. Review the vegetation planted adjacent to your fence for debris and over growth.

Landscaping

Plant low density shrubs. Avoid having any woody debris, including mulch, and seasonal leaf debris as it is an opportunity for ignition.

A mowed lawn is a fire resistant lawn.

Mulch – it is not recommended to use a bark or pine needle mulch within 10 m of your home. Gravel or crushed rock is an alternative.

Burning barrels or fire pits

Place as far as possible from structures and trees. Keep 3 meters of non-combustible material adjacent to barrels or fire pits. Ensure your pit and barrel have a mesh screen to prevent embers being released.

Check with your municipality for regulations and fire bans before use. some areas require permits.

On site tools

Every home should have accessible shovels, rakes, garden hoses, sprinklers and ladders to assist in suppressing fires.

Power lines should be clear of branches and vegetation. Report excessive growth to the power company for removal.