

Why Fire-Hardening Your Home Matters

Living beside a forest is a gift—shade, wildlife, quiet—but it also places your home at the edge of one of nature’s most powerful forces. Wildfires don’t need to make direct contact with a structure to destroy it; most homes ignite from wind-blown embers, sometimes miles ahead of the main fire. Fire-hardening is about breaking that chain.

A fire-hardened home is designed so that:

- Embers have nowhere easy to land and ignite.
- Heat and flames have fewer pathways to reach the structure.
- Firefighters have a safer, more defensible environment to work in.
- Your home can survive even if crews can’t reach it immediately.

It’s not just about protecting a building—it’s about protecting your family, your investment, and the surrounding forest. A home that doesn’t ignite becomes one less source of secondary fire, helping the entire area stay safer.

Home & Property Fire-Hardening Checklist

1. The Home Itself (Structural Hardening)

Roof

- Roof is made of Class A fire-rated material (metal, tile, composite shingles)
- No needles, leaves, or moss on roof
- Gutters are clean and made of metal
- Roof-to-wall intersections are free of debris traps

Vents

- All attic, crawlspace, and gable vents have **1/8-inch metal mesh**
- No plastic or large-mesh vents
- Dryer vent has a metal flap that closes properly

Siding & Exterior Walls

- Siding is non-combustible or ignition-resistant (fiber-cement, stucco, metal)
- No gaps or cracks where embers could lodge
- Wood siding is well-maintained and not touching soil

Windows & Doors

- Dual-pane tempered glass windows
- Metal screens installed
- Weatherstripping intact on all exterior doors
- Garage door seals properly with no gaps

Decks, Porches & Understructures

- No debris under decks or stairs
- Undersides enclosed with metal mesh or solid material
- Deck boards are ignition-resistant
- No firewood, lumber, or combustibles stored beneath

2. Immediate Zone (0–5 Feet): The “Zero-Ignition Zone”

This is the most important zone for home survival.

- No wood mulch — replaced with gravel, stone, or bare soil
- No shrubs, plants, or decorative grasses touching the house
- No firewood stacks, lumber, or outdoor cushions stored here
- Propane tanks and gas cans stored well away from the house
- Fencing attached to the home is metal for the first 5 feet

3. Intermediate Zone (5–30 Feet): Lean, Clean & Green

- Grass kept short and green
- Trees pruned so branches don’t overhang the roof

- Shrubs spaced apart — not touching each other or the house
 - Ladder fuels removed (low branches, dense brush)
 - Fire-resistant plants used near the home
 - Irrigation working properly
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4. Extended Zone (30–100+ Feet): Reduce Fuel Continuity

- Trees thinned so crowns are separated
 - Dead trees, snags, and downed logs removed where practical
 - Brush and undergrowth cleared
 - Fire breaks or paths maintained
 - Wood piles stored at least 30 feet away, ideally 50+
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5. Driveway & Access

- Driveway is clear and wide enough for emergency vehicles
 - Address numbers visible from the road
 - Overhanging branches trimmed to allow truck clearance
 - Turnaround space available for fire engines (if possible)
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6. Equipment & Preparedness

- Hoses long enough to reach all sides of the home
 - Metal nozzles (not plastic)
 - Tools accessible: shovel, rake, chainsaw, ladder
 - Emergency water source available (tank, pool, pond, cistern)
 - Go-bags prepared for each household member
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