

Fire hardening standards

Senate Bill 762 (2021) created a statewide approach to a wide range of wildfire mitigation measures. One element of the bill included the creation of a statewide wildfire risk map that can be used by multiple agencies to assist in these efforts. The legislature directed the Building Codes Division to adopt fire hardening building code standards, based on existing wildfire mitigation provisions, that could be applied to areas of the state mapped as extreme or high risk and that are in the wildland urban interface. Fire hardening refers to building materials and practices that can reduce the risk of ignition of a home by embers from wildfires.

The bill also asks BCD to develop a tool from the map that customers can use to determine building code requirements based on their location on the map. The division is partnering with Oregon State University to develop the tool. Oregon State University is also working with the Oregon Department of Forestry to develop the map that the tool will be based on. The map is scheduled to be released on June 30, 2022. The tool must be available to the public within 60 days after the development of the map.

The bill asks the division to modify the existing optional code standards of the 2021 Oregon Residential Specialty Code Chapter 3 Section R327. Code development work this summer will modify the standard to address alterations to exterior elements of items covered under the section. These fire hardening requirements include:

- Class A or B roofs and noncombustible gutters
- Attic and underfloor ventilation designed to resist the intrusion of burning embers and flames
- Exterior walls constructed of noncombustible, ignition resistant, or other fire-resistant materials
- Protection of overhangs, eaves, soffits, and cornices
- Noncombustible or ignition-resistant materials for exterior patios, floor projections, and outdoor decking
- Exterior windows and skylights



The code provisions will apply to newly constructed homes, their accessory structures, and significant alterations to exterior elements.

The division will engage in rulemaking to amend the code for these standards, and the standards will also need to be approved by the Residential and Manufactured Structures Board. The code changes will be adopted on Oct. 1, 2022, and are mandatory starting April 1, 2023. More information about the division's SB 762 implementation and rulemaking process can be found at

<https://www.oregon.gov/bcd/codes-stand/Pages/wildfire-hazard-mitigation.aspx>.