

# OREGON GARDEN FIRE SAFETY HOUSE



Welcome to the Oregon Garden Fire Safety House. Fire educators view the house as a life-sized teaching tool. Conventional educational outreach on home and wildland-urban interface fire safety have achieved a measure of success. But hands-on experience is by far the most effective way to convey important messages. Take a brief pictorial tour of the house here and be sure to experience the full interpretive display on your next visit to the [Oregon Garden](#).

**A life-sized teaching tool.**



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The Fire Safety House features 8 interpretive learning stations that will provide you with the tools and landscaping ideas that will help you protect your home in the event of a wildfire. The [Oregon Garden](#) provides the perfect backdrop, highlighting fire resistant plants on a landscape that appeals to the senses while, at the same time, creating that crucial [defensible space](#) barrier. We call it the circle of safety and it includes three zones of the [Home Ignition Zone](#).



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## Home Ignition Zone

The circle of safety around your home starts from the foundation and works its way out into three distinct zones, known as the Home Ignition Zone.

**Zone 1: Keep it Lean, Clean and Green** - extends from the home out 30 feet. Keep this area Lean, Clean and Green. Water plants, trees, shrubs and mulch regularly. Only use [fire resistant plants](#) and provide proper spacing to reduce plant to plant ignition.



**Zone 2: The Fire Break** - extends an additional 70 feet out from Zone 1, or 100 feet from the house perimeter. Use low growing fire resistant plants and break up continuous vegetation that could lead a fire to your house. Highly flammable trees should be limbed up well above the ground...preventing any ground fire from climbing into the crowns and spreading overhead directly to the roof.



**Zone 3: The First Line of Defense** - extends beyond the 100 foot circle of Zone 2. This area may have small and large trees with a significant amount of brush and other fuels. Trees in this area may need thinning.

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## Zone 1: Keep it Lean, Clean and Green

### Fire-Safe Landscapes

Maintain the 3-5 space around the foundation with reduced fuels or fire resistant plants.

Remove plants, branches, needles, leaves or other flammables that can easily ignite and burn.

Keep all plants watered, mowed and thinned.

Use driveways, gravel paths and green lawns as fuel breaks to stop the fire's path.

Keep burnable materials such as wooden outdoor furniture or play sets away from the house. Or consider fire resistant replacements.



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## Zone 2: The Fire Break

### Lean, Clean & Green

Create a [Defensible Space](#) around your home.

Choose plants with high moisture content and keep them well watered.

Prune large trees so that the lowest branches are at least 6-12 feet off the ground. This keeps fire from spreading to the treetops. Remove any branches that overhang the house.

Remove flammable plants such as ornamental junipers, holly, red cedar, arborvitae, and small pine trees from Zone 2.

Leave 30 feet between clusters of two to three trees and 20 feet between lone trees.

Have a mixture of [deciduous and conifer trees](#).



Ornamental Juniper is considered to be a highly flammable plant. Its exterior green appearance is misleading as the inside reveals brittle, dead, branches and debris susceptible to fire embers.



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## Zone 3: The First Line of Defense

### Better Together

A community approach to fire safety is the best approach. You and your neighbors are the **First Line of Defense** in preparing to protect your community from fire.

Communicate, coordinate and cooperate with your community to reduce your fire risk.

Remove smaller conifers that are growing between taller trees.

Remove heavy accumulation of woody debris.



Fires burn hotter and move faster uphill. If you have steep terrain around your house, consider clearing, thinning and pruning vegetation to slow fire spread and keep fire on the ground. Consult your local fire agency for more information.



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## IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

### Fuel Free

Fire brands, or embers, can ignite natural and man-made debris during a wildfire. Maintain a fuel free space around the house, wood piles, propane tanks and outbuildings.

Keep decks clear of things that can burn. Screen the underside of decks and remove anything that can catch fire.



### Your Fuels

Locate wood piles 30 feet away from all structures and fuel sources during fire season.

Propane tanks should be located a safe distance from your house and have a fuel free area around them. Gas lines should be buried.

Wood fences and decks can create a path for fire. Consider fire-treated wood boards with heavy timber for decks and metal for fencing.

### Natural Fuels

Remove accumulated leaves, pine needles and branches from around your house and property. This especially includes any debris that collects near or on decks, stairs and fences.



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## THE MOST VULNERABLE PART OF THE HOUSE

### Up on the Roof

Your greatest exposure to wildfire is the roof.

Flying embers often ignite dry plant debris on the roof or enter unprotected vents or small gaps along the edges of your roof.

Make sure that your roof is made of fire resistant materials and all roof vents are properly protected.



### Keep it Clean

Keep the roof, gutters and vents clear of leaves, pine needles and other debris.

Install screen gutter guards to prevent build-up of needles and leaves.

Inspect your roof regularly and keep it clean and in good repair.

Trim all vegetation that overhangs the roof.



### The Fire Resistant Roof

Use roofing material with a class "A" fire rating to help keep fire from spreading or penetrating the home. Class "A" roofing material includes asphalt shingles, clay or cement tiles, metal panels or slate.

Increase your roof's effectiveness with fire resistant sub-roof sheathing or underlayment.

Protect your roof by closing eaves, fascias and soffits.

Enclose all vents with a fine 1/8 inch metal mesh or use vents with built in ember screens and baffles.

Keep fireplace brands from escaping and embers from entering your chimney. Install a metal mesh screen or a spark arresting cap to cover chimneys.



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## THE LAST STAND: IS YOUR HOUSE PROTECTED?



### Doors and Windows

Entry, utility and garage doors will withstand the effects of fire. Doors made of fiberglass, metal and wood with a 20-minute fire rating provide the best protection.

Make sure all doors are in good condition and seal tightly.

Pet doors are not recommended. They do not seal properly and allow embers to enter the house.

Double or triple pane windows with tempered glass provide the most protection during a wildfire.



**DURING A WILDFIRE, A SHOWER OF EMBERS CAN RAIN DOWN ON AND AROUND YOUR HOME. BE EMBER AWARE AND BUILD A DEFENSIVE FRONT ON AND AROUND YOUR HOME.**

### Vents

Air vents are the primary entry point for embers. Embers from a fire far away can drift in the home and ignite the home from the inside. Use fine metal mesh to cover dryer vents, exposed air spaces and fresh air intakes.



### Walls

Exterior walls may be made of materials that could ignite during a wildfire. Prevent fire brands from lodging in combustible siding by filling or eliminating gaps.

Consider fiber-cement siding, stucco, plaster and masonry products such as brick, stone or concrete block.

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## WHEN FIRE HAPPENS

### Getting Prepared

Have an [escape plan](#) with a family meeting place.

Prepare for an emergency. Plan long before a fire happens. Know what to take and the emergency items you'll need when you leave your home.

Know your escape route and have a specific destination.

Know local roads and plan to escape quickly and safely.

Keep shovels, axes, and hand or chainsaws available during fire season. Maintain an



### Can Firefighters Find You?

Every minute firefighters or emergency services are delayed could mean the difference between saving lives, home and property.

Identify your house and mark the end of your driveway with legible and clearly visible address numbers.

Provide easy access for large, heavy emergency vehicles, including their ability to turn around.

Maintain your driveway by keeping 15 feet overhead clearance and 12 feet width clearance.



### Ready, Set, Go

**Ready:** Take time now to prepare your home and what your family should do when wildfire strikes. Plans need to be ready long before a wildfire threatens.

**Set:** Pack your vehicle with emergency items. Monitor the news about the approaching wildfire through your local media, social media and fire department.

**Go:** Leave early. Once you are out, the firefighters can focus on protecting your house and extinguishing the fire.

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