



NEWS RELEASE

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TIPS FOR PROTECTING YOUR HOME FROM WILDFIRE

This article is the second of four FireSmart installments over the winter to remind and educate residents of the ever present danger of wildfire in our community. This article will focus on the first 10 meters around your home. (And to help you visualize, 10 metres is approximately the length of a yellow school bus) Within the first 10 meters of your home we have two zones called the Non-Combustible Zone and Zone 1.

Your home and the first 1.5 meters that extends around your home is called the non-combustible zone. Ideally there should be nothing combustible within 1.5 meters of your home and those items directly attached to your home, such as a deck should also be non-combustible. We appreciate this is likely not the case for every home in our region but your risk can be dramatically reduced with some knowledge.

"Most likely you have a wooden deck and unless it is on your replacement list, you will probably continue to have that wooden deck for a number of years. However, if you have gaps under your deck or debris traps in steps, you can screen those in. If you have gutters around your roof, a very simple step is to make sure those are clean during wildfire season," says Len Youden, CSR D FireSmart Coordinator.

Most homes in our region have a non-combustible roof such as metal or asphalt singles and this is a big factor in determining risk. Metal and asphalt shingle roofs should not catch fire if properly installed and maintained. If embers fall down your roof and collect in a gutter full of debris, that will probably lead to at least some damage to your home, if not a total loss.

If your siding is combustible, simply creating a 15 cm clearance to the ground will reduce your risk should embers accumulate on the ground up against your home. Cracks in siding, and open or non-metallic screened eaves are simple things you can remedy to reduce wildfire risk. Remember, 90 per cent of homes damaged or destroyed by wildfires are the result of embers thrown from a wildfire that accumulate on our near the home and develop into structure fires.

"We can dramatically reduce this damage if we all take responsibility for understanding and managing our own risk," adds Youden.

Typical Zone 1 combustible items in your yard would be landscaping materials (i.e. bark mulch), coniferous trees, dried leaves and home heating wood piles.



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Remove combustible materials, such as firewood directly stacked up against your home. This can collect the embers and lead to a fire directly against your home. Bark mulch is very flammable and should be replaced with gravel or rock. On the CSR D FireSmart website we have a FireSmart Landscaping guide that can help you make the right choices.

Feedback from people with regarding FireSmart activities is that they do not want to lose their trees. Ideally there are no coniferous trees within Zone 1 of your home, but if you are going to keep these trees, there are things you can do to reduce risk.

Trimming coniferous trees to two meters off the ground may prevent a surface fire from running up the tree. Removing branches that are close or directly contact the home, wooden fence will make it tougher for fire to reach your home. Removing dead branches, keeping trees watered and generally maintaining the health of your trees are also important.

"If you are looking to plant new trees within Zone 1 of your home, consider planting deciduous trees such as maple, birch or aspen to give you all the advantages of trees but with less risk," says Youden.

The science has come a long way in reducing property loss from wildfire and the CSR D loves sharing the latest information with interested residents. Schedule a free FireSmart home assessment by one of our local FireSmart professionals within the CSR D through our website: www.csr d.bc.ca/firesmart or call 250-833-5910.

For further information please contact Tracy Hughes, CSR D Communications Coordinator at 250.833.5963 or toll free at 1.888.248.2773 or email Thughes@csr d.bc.ca.