

MY FOREST HOME AM I PREPARED?



"Beware and prepare!"

WHAT IS WILDLAND/ URBAN INTERFACE?

- Many British Columbia residents live in forested areas.
- Wildland/Urban Interface is the area where flammable forest fuels such as trees, shrubs and branches and improvements, such as houses, sheds and fences come together.
- Each year in British Columbia there is an average of 2500 forest fires.
- Although most are far from populated areas, some threaten and occasionally burn homes, summer cottages and cabins.



Prune trees regularly

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY HOME OR COTTAGE FROM WILDFIRE?

The desire to get away from the pressures of heavily populated areas has resulted in an increase in subdivisions and developments in forested areas. As more and more people settle in British Columbia's forested and grassland areas, the risk of property losses to wildfire increases. Everyone shares the responsibility of preserving life and property by planning for fire protection. If you live in a forested area, you need to be prepared!

Know your home and property

- Before you buy, familiarize yourself with fire protection services available in the area.
- Contact the nearest Forest Service office for the forest fire history of the area.
- Forest Service personnel can assist you to develop your fire protection plan.



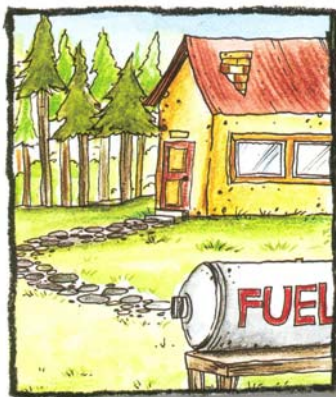
Clean up debris

Thin and prune trees and brush

- During a forest fire vegetation is fuel. Prevent structure loss by clearing and thinning trees and brush.
- Thin trees to leave three metres (10 feet) of separation.
- Remove dead or highly flammable trees.
- On level ground, thin strands of trees within two tree heights (minimum 30 metres - 100 feet) of the structure.
- On sloped ground, thin downslope stands of trees to a greater distance from the structure. On steeper slopes, thin trees further downslope from the structure.
- Prune trees - remove branches within 2.5 metres (8 feet) of the ground.

Perform a general clean-up

- Regularly remove and dispose of logs, needles, twigs and shrubs that encourage the spread of fire on the ground.
- Keep firewood and debris piles at least 10 metres (30 feet) away - never downslope - from a structure.
- Clear over-hanging branches, needles and other combustible debris from the roof.
- Remove accumulated debris from below slotted deck surfaces.



Locate fuel tanks away from structures

Establish "priority zones"

- Priority Zone 1: Remove most of the trees and brush within 10 metres (30 feet) of all structures.
- Priority Zone 2: Thin trees and brush up to 30 metres (100 feet) of all structures.

HOW CAN I BUILD OR REMODEL A HOUSE TO BE FOREST FIRE SAFE?

Roofing

- Untreated, wooden shake roofs are the number one cause of home losses in wildfires.
- Use fire resistant roofing material like metal roofing, clay or concrete tile, asphalt shingle or treated wooden shakes.

Balconies, decks and eaves

- Construct deck supports of non-combustible materials or encase them - heavy timbers are more fire resistant.
- Enclose the underside of overhangs with non-flammable material or plywood sheathing.
- Construct balcony and deck surfaces of non-combustible or fire retardant materials.

Exterior siding

- Use fire resistant building materials such as stucco, metal, brick, cement shingles, concrete block, poured concrete and rock.
- Ensure siding material is a minimum of 12 millimetres (1/2 inch) thick and extends from ground level to the roof line.

Windows and vents

- Ensure windows do not face trees or brush within 10 metres (30 feet).
- Use double paned windows with metal blinds.
- Ensure vent openings are screened with six millimetres (1/4 inch) mesh.
- Have fire shutters or screens that can be rapidly placed over windows or vent openings if fire approaches.
- Maintain access to attics, crawl spaces and underdeck areas so that spot fires can be detected and extinguished following the passage of fire.

Utilities

- Maintain a 3 metre (10 feet) clearance between branches, trees and powerlines. Contact the utility company to remove dead or diseased standing timber within a tree length of the power line.

- Clear combustible material within 3 metres (10 feet) of fuel tanks. Locate tanks at least 10 metres (30 feet) away from structures.

Chimney and stove pipes

- Cover chimney outlets with wire screen - mesh no larger than 12 millimetres (1/2 inch).
- Clear branches within 3 metres (10 feet).
- Ensure that chimney outlet clearances are maintained a minimum of .6 metres (24 inches) from roof peak and a minimum of .9 metres (35 inches) from the roof directly below.

Is there anything else I need to know?

For more information on the BC Forest Service Protection program, contact the office nearest you:

BC Forest Service - Protection Program
Victoria, BC, (250) 387-5965

Coastal Fire Centre
Parksville, BC, (250) 951-4222

Northwest Fire Centre
Smithers, BC, (250) 847-6600

Prince George Fire Centre
Prince George, BC, (250) 565-6126

Kamloops Fire Centre
Kamloops, BC, (250) 554-5500

Southeast Fire Centre
Castlegar, BC, (250) 365-4040

Cariboo Fire Centre
Williams Lake, BC, (250) 989-2600



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