

*Wildfire is on it's way...  
Is your home ready? Are you?*

# LIVING WITH FIRE

*A guide to preparing your home for  
survival and yourself for evacuation*



## If Wildfire Approaches . . .

# A Safety Checklist

### ✓ What should I wear and have with me?

- Wear only cotton or wool clothes
- Proper attire includes long pants, long-sleeved shirt or jacket, and boots
- Carry gloves, a dry handkerchief to cover your face, water to drink, and goggles
- Keep a flashlight and portable radio with you at all times
- Tune in to a local radio station and listen for instructions

### ✓ What about family members and pets?

- If possible, evacuate all family members not essential to preparing the house for wildfire
- Make sure to designate a safe meeting place and contact person
- Relay your plans to the contact person
- Evacuate pets early

### ✓ How should I prepare my car?

- Place vehicles in the garage, pointing out with keys in the ignition
- Roll up the windows
- Close the garage door, but leave it unlocked
- If applicable, disconnect the electric garage door opener so that the door can be opened manually

### ✓ What should I take?

- Important documents (bank, IRS, trust, investment, insurance policy, birth certificates, medical records)
- Credit and ATM cards
- Medications
- Prescription glasses
- Driver's license
- Passport
- Computer backup files
- Inventory of home contents (consider videotaping ahead of time)
- Photograph the exterior of the house and landscape

- Address book
- Cell phone and charger
- Personal toiletries
- Change of clothing
- Family photo albums and videos
- Family heirlooms
- Place essential items in the car

### ✓ How should I leave my home?

- Close all interior doors
- Leave a light on in each room
- Remove lightweight, nonfire-resistant curtains and other combustible materials from around windows
- Close fire-resistant drapes, shutters, and Venetian blinds
- Move overstuffed furniture, such as couches and easy chairs, to the center of the room

### ✓ What about the outside of my home?

- Place combustible patio furniture in the house or garage
- Shut off propane at the tank or natural gas at the meter
- Prop a ladder against the house to provide firefighters with access to the roof
- Make sure that all garden hoses are connected to faucets and attach nozzles set on "spray"
- Leave exterior doors unlocked
- Turn on outside lights
- If available and if there's time, cover windows, attic openings, and vents with plywood that is at least one-half inch thick. If time does not allow for this, close exterior vents, doors and windows.
- Fill trash cans and buckets with water and place where firefighters can find them
- If you have an emergency water source (pool, pond, etc.) and/or portable pump, clearly mark its availability so it can be seen from the street

### What should I do if I get trapped in my car?

- Park away from vegetation
- Roll up windows
- Cover mouth with dry cloth to protect airway
- Cover yourself with a blanket or jacket
- Stay in the vehicle until the fire passes
- If the vehicle catches on fire, exit only after the wildfire has passed.

# Free DVD Available

## A short course in creating defensible space for your home.

"Living in or near wildland in San Luis Obispo County is a beautiful experience...it can also be a dangerous one. Have you done everything you can to protect your family and home from wildfire?"

In less than 10 minutes *Creating Defensible Space* gives you concrete tips on preparing your home for wildfire. With demonstrations, clear language and a checklist insert, you can easily create defensible space to protect the home and people you love.

Available free at your local fire station and public library.

### Creating Defensible Space



# What can homeowners do to reduce the wildfire threat?

### Access Zone

Pages 4 and 5 show a diagram that outlines requirements and recommendations within the Access Zone. These allow firefighters to more easily locate and access your home and improves evacuation safety.

### Defensible Space Zone

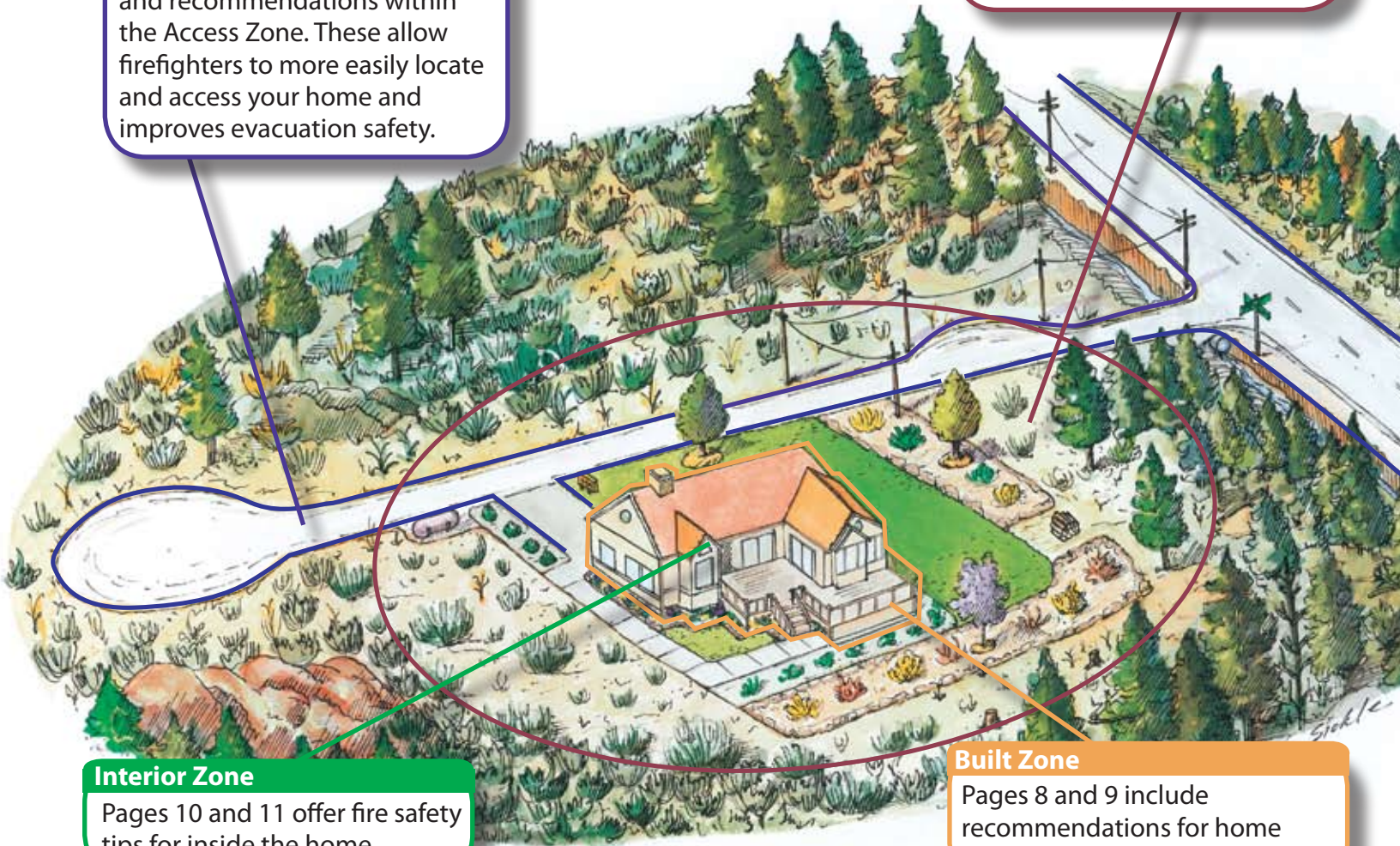
Pages 6 and 7 pertain to the vegetation and other fuels surrounding your home.

### Interior Zone

Pages 10 and 11 offer fire safety tips for inside the home.

### Built Zone

Pages 8 and 9 include recommendations for home construction and maintenance.



# Access Zone

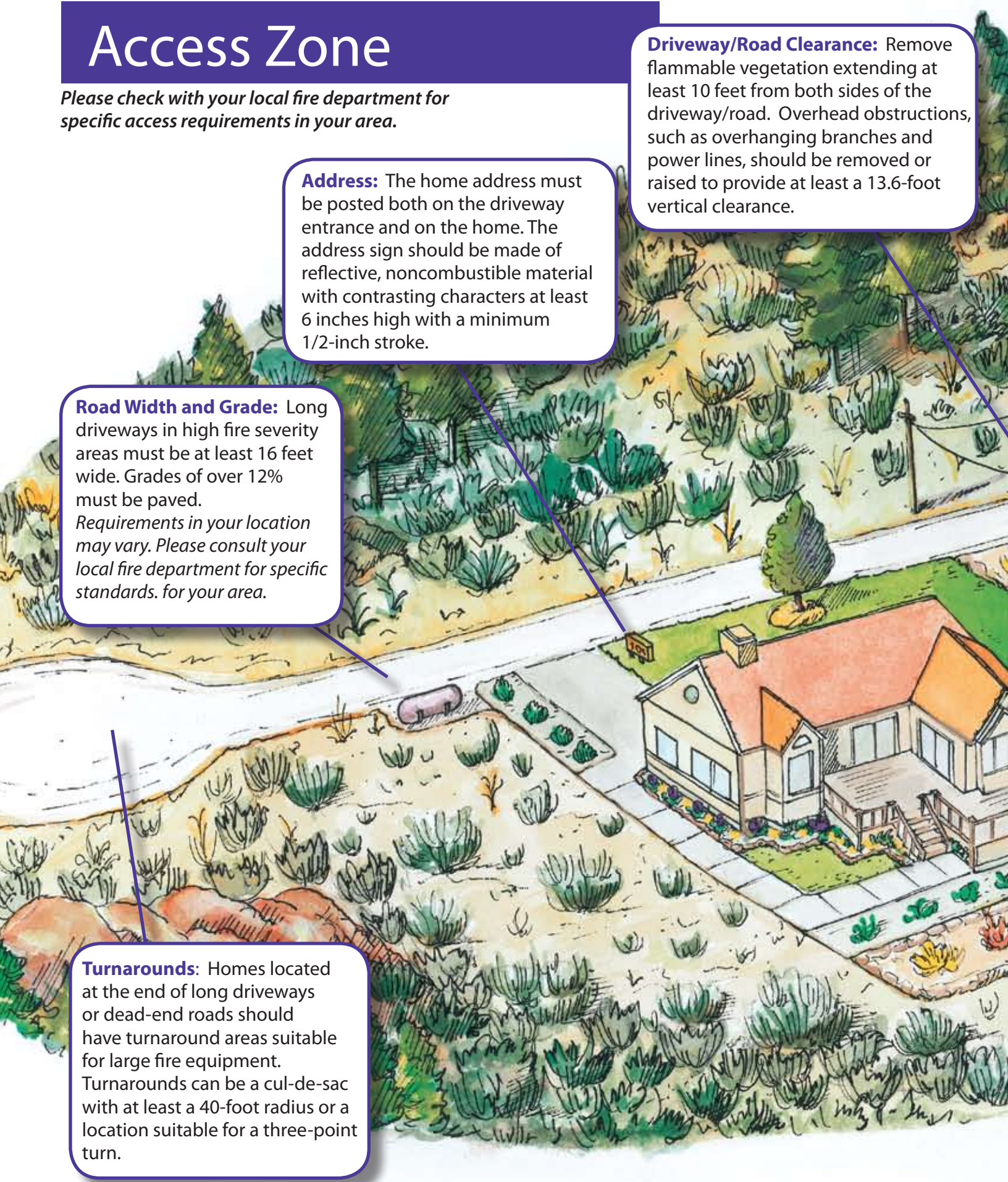
*Please check with your local fire department for specific access requirements in your area.*

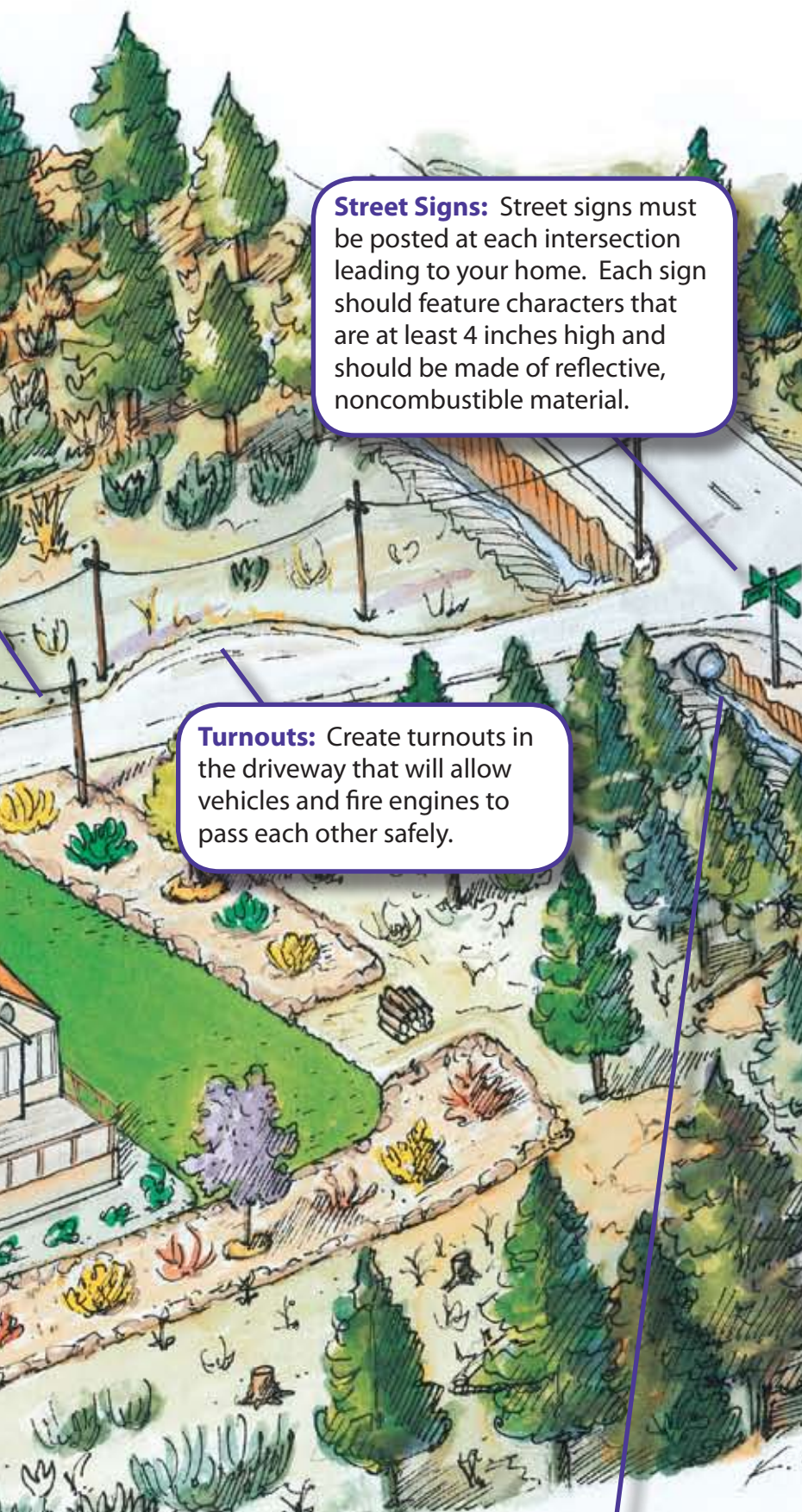
**Address:** The home address must be posted both on the driveway entrance and on the home. The address sign should be made of reflective, noncombustible material with contrasting characters at least 6 inches high with a minimum 1/2-inch stroke.

**Driveway/Road Clearance:** Remove flammable vegetation extending at least 10 feet from both sides of the driveway/road. Overhead obstructions, such as overhanging branches and power lines, should be removed or raised to provide at least a 13.6-foot vertical clearance.

**Road Width and Grade:** Long driveways in high fire severity areas must be at least 16 feet wide. Grades of over 12% must be paved. *Requirements in your location may vary. Please consult your local fire department for specific standards for your area.*

**Turnarounds:** Homes located at the end of long driveways or dead-end roads should have turnaround areas suitable for large fire equipment. Turnarounds can be a cul-de-sac with at least a 40-foot radius or a location suitable for a three-point turn.





**Street Signs:** Street signs must be posted at each intersection leading to your home. Each sign should feature characters that are at least 4 inches high and should be made of reflective, noncombustible material.

**Turnouts:** Create turnouts in the driveway that will allow vehicles and fire engines to pass each other safely.

**Bridges and Culverts:** Bridges and culverts must be able to hold a 20,000 pound fire engine.

## The Right Tree for the Right Place

### Tree Planting Precautions

When siting trees during landscaping be sure to consider overhead power lines and underground utilities in addition to fire hazard, sun exposure and soil conditions before deciding what plant goes where.

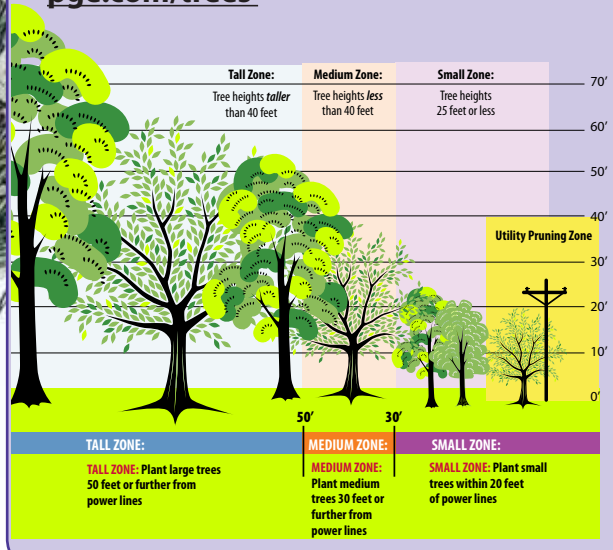
The best way to prevent conflicts between trees and power lines is to plant the right tree in the right place.

Though some large trees grow under power lines naturally, many are planted there because people don't realize how large they will get. Remember that a four foot tall, two foot wide tree might end up being 60 feet tall and 30 feet across. Avoid planting trees of any size directly under main power supply lines since utility crews may need access to these areas as part of routine maintenance. Small trees (up to 20 feet tall) can be planted adjacent to power lines but off to one side. Medium or large trees should be spaced 20 to 30 feet horizontally from power lines.

For assistance with tree selection, visit the websites below:

[selectree.calpoly.edu](http://selectree.calpoly.edu)

[pge.com/trees](http://pge.com/trees)



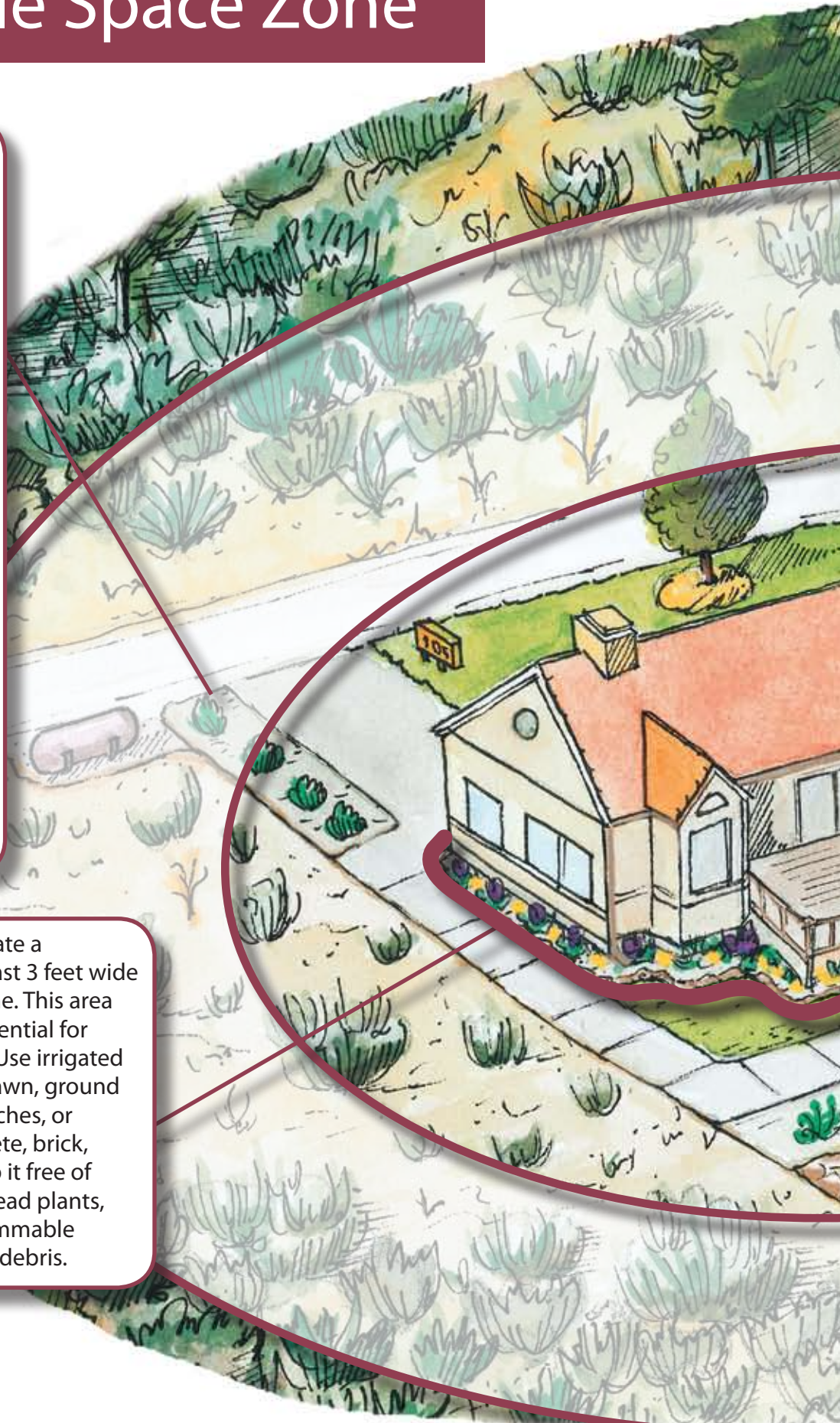
# Defensible Space Zone

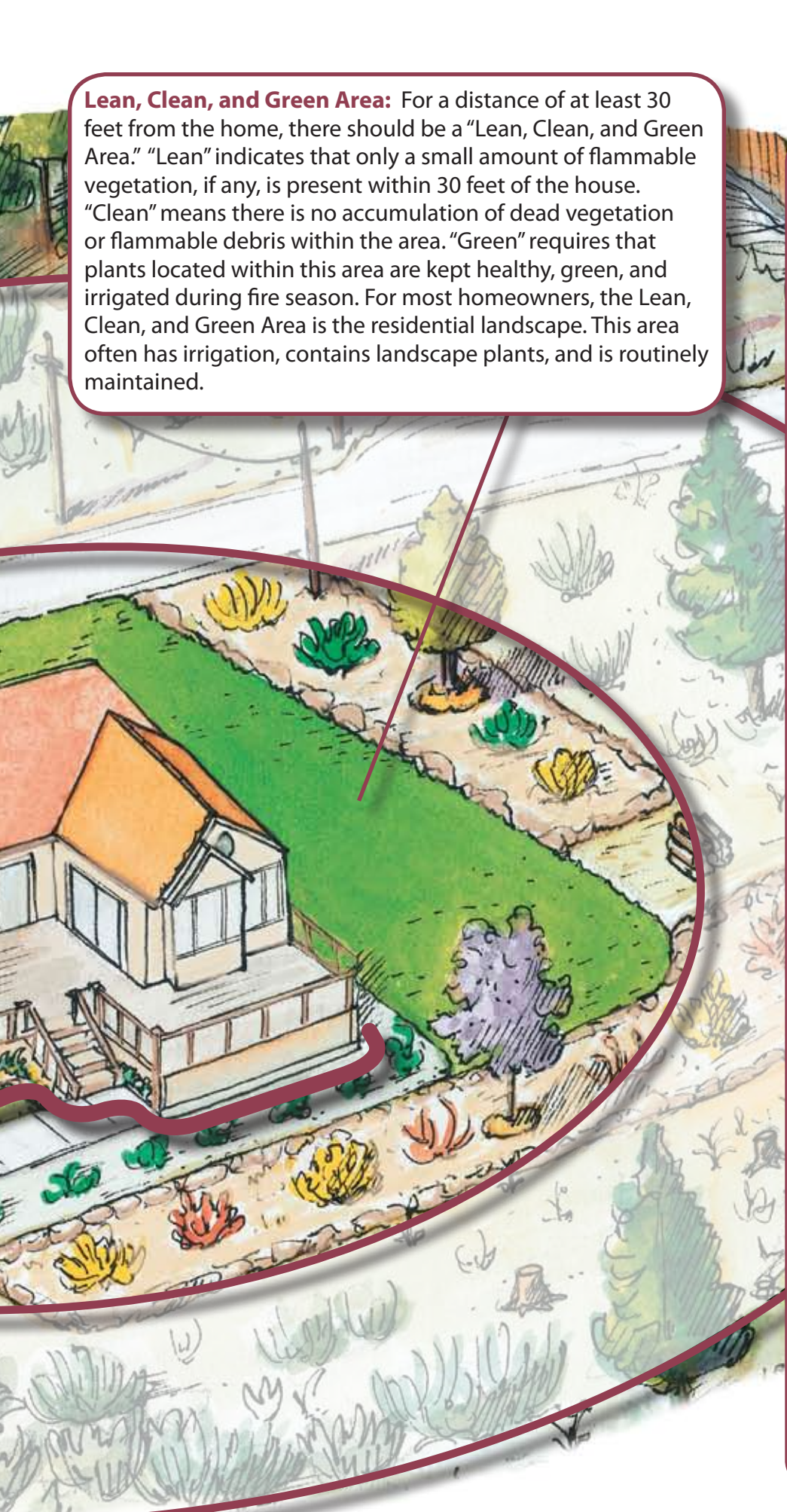
## Wildland Fuel Reduction

**Area:** The Wildland Fuel Reduction Area usually lies beyond the residential landscape area where wild plants grow. Within this area:

- Remove all dead vegetation (dead shrubs, dried grass, fallen branches, pine needles, etc.).
- Thin out thick shrubs and trees to create a separation between them.
- Remove “ladder fuels” by removing low tree branches. Remove or prune the shrubs under the tree.
- If using a mower during fire season, mow before 10:00 a.m. to prevent an ignition.

**Noncombustible Area:** Create a “Noncombustible Area” at least 3 feet wide around the base of your home. This area needs to have a very low potential for ignition from flying embers. Use irrigated herbaceous plants (such as lawn, ground cover, and flowers), rock mulches, or hard surfaces (such as concrete, brick, and pavers) in this area. Keep it free of woodpiles, wood mulches, dead plants, dried leaves and needles, flammable shrubs (such as juniper), and debris.





**Lean, Clean, and Green Area:** For a distance of at least 30 feet from the home, there should be a “Lean, Clean, and Green Area.” “Lean” indicates that only a small amount of flammable vegetation, if any, is present within 30 feet of the house. “Clean” means there is no accumulation of dead vegetation or flammable debris within the area. “Green” requires that plants located within this area are kept healthy, green, and irrigated during fire season. For most homeowners, the Lean, Clean, and Green Area is the residential landscape. This area often has irrigation, contains landscape plants, and is routinely maintained.

## Healthy Ecosystems and Defensible Space

*Information from Richard Hawley, Executive Director Greenspace-the Cambria Land Trust and Board Member of the San Luis Obispo County Community FireSafe Council.*

Protecting your home from wildfire and still protecting the environment is becoming more challenging as the population continues to grow and more of us move to the wildland urban interface. Finding ways to meet this challenge is part of the mission of the San Luis Obispo County Community FireSafe Council.

Learning how to protect your property from fire and nurturing San Luis Obispo County’s plant and wildlife communities can be simultaneously accomplished with a little common sense and creativity, and a basic knowledge about these biological communities.

Here are ways you can help:

- Learn to identify valuable native plants in your area.
- Remove fuel ladders without destroying the host plant.
- Leave islands of native vegetation in the defensible space zone to maintain habitat for wildlife.
- Prevent soil erosion by retaining sufficient plant cover within defensible space zone.
- Consider planting native landscape plants which will thrive in our climate and soils with less maintenance. Native plants also help provide wildlife habitat.
- Minimize the use of landscape plants that attract deer as doing so disrupts the natural feeding cycle of deer and their predators.

For more information on plants native to the Central Coast, go to:

[www.cnplx.info/nplx/cprofile?cc=SLO](http://www.cnplx.info/nplx/cprofile?cc=SLO)

Click on the Bioregion that fits your area.

For more information on Fire Ecology and healthy ecosystems enter keywords “fire ecology” in your favorite search engine.

# Built Zone

Information on approved Wildland Urban Interface building products can be found at:

<http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/strucfireengineer/pdf/bml/wuiproducts.pdf>

**Eaves:** The eaves of a home act as a heat trap for hot air and gases, greatly increasing the chance of ignition. Covering the underside of the eave with a soffit, or "boxing in" the eave, prevents heat from accumulating.

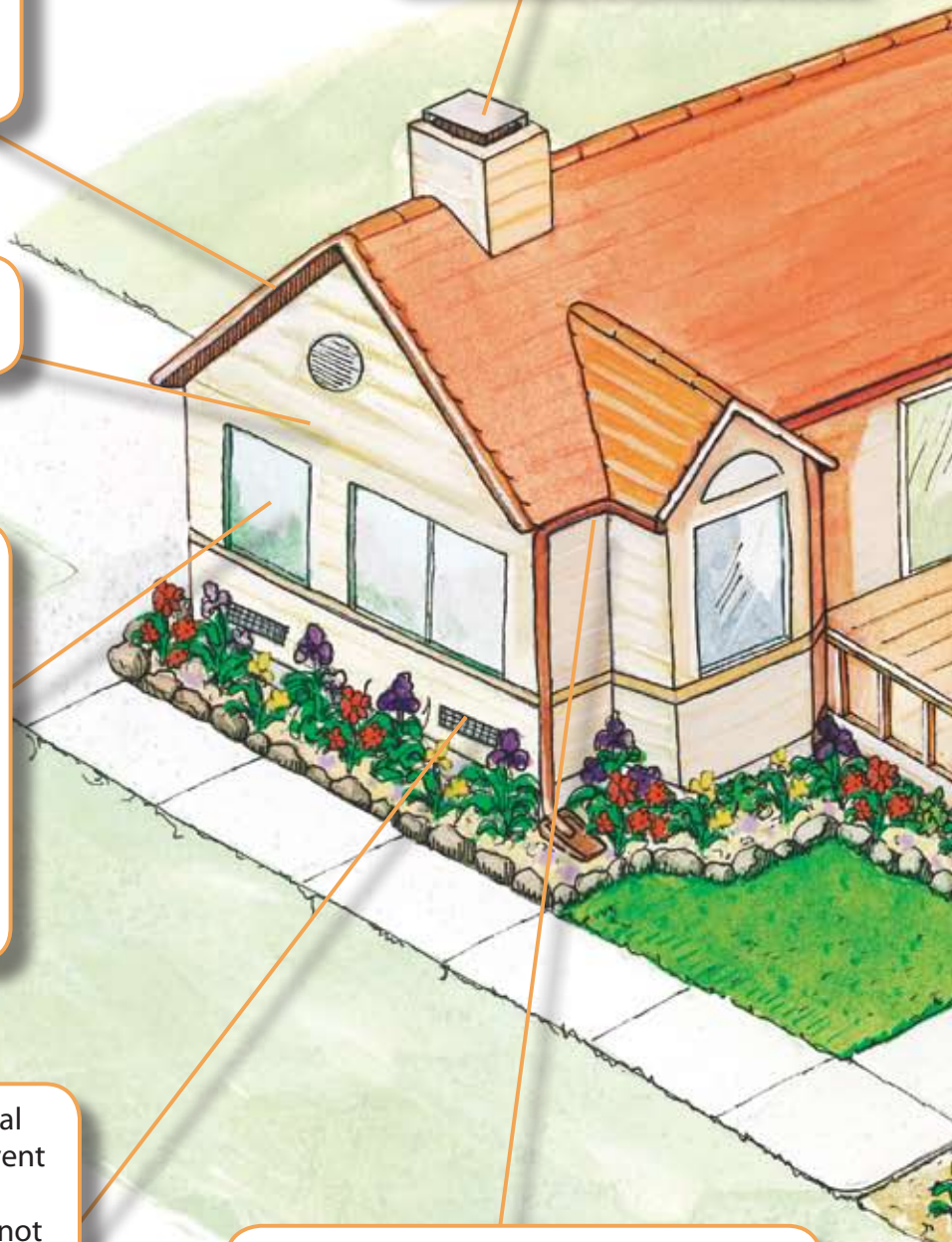
**Chimneys:** Chimney and stovepipe openings should be screened with 1/2-inch or smaller wire mesh or an approved spark arrestor cap.

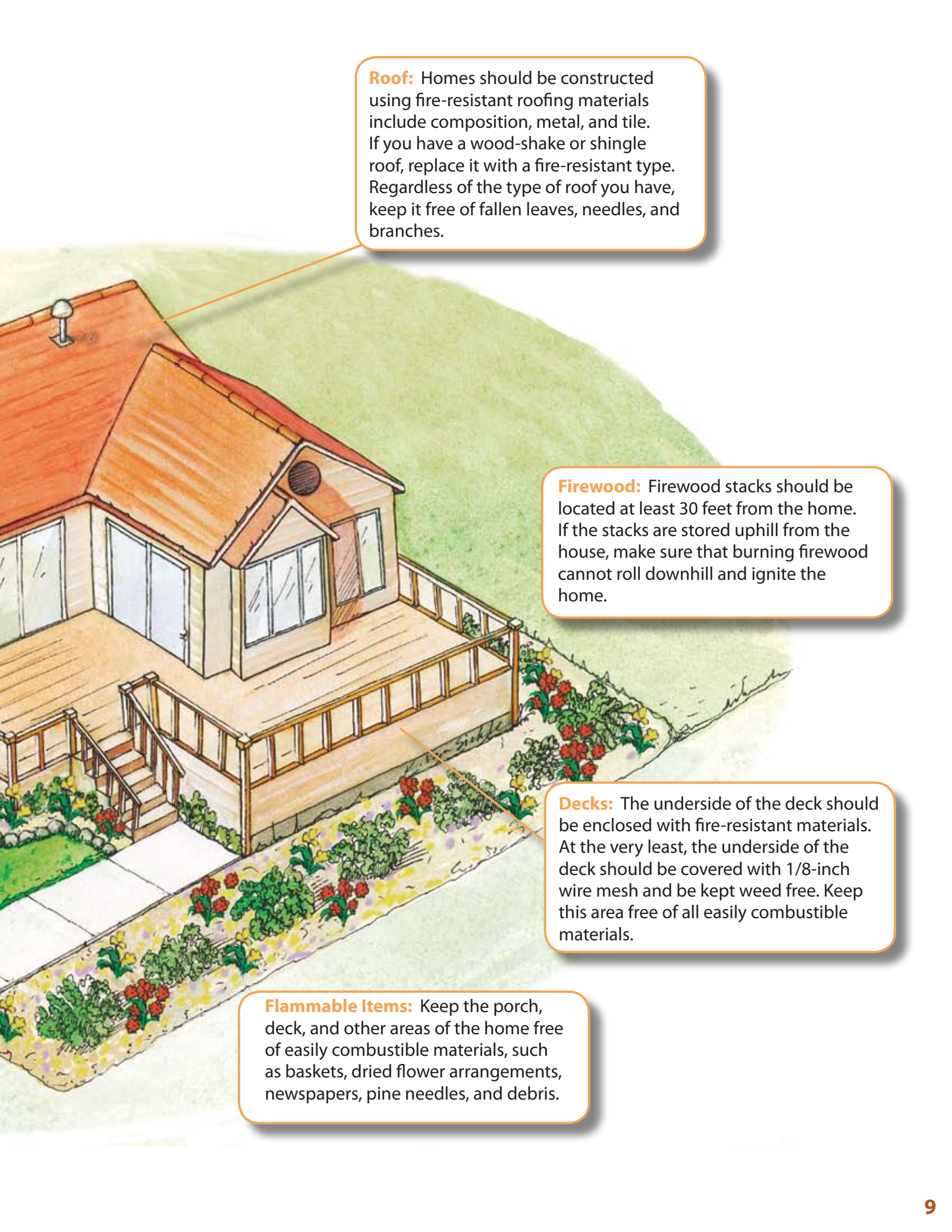
**Exterior Siding:** Noncombustible siding materials, such as stucco, brick, and cement board, are the best choices.

**Windows:** Windows are one of the weakest parts of a home and usually break before the structure ignites. This allows burning embers and heat to enter the home, which may lead to internal ignition. Single-paned and large windows are particularly vulnerable. In high fire hazard areas, install windows that are at least double-glazed or tempered glass. Windows should not be vinyl framed.

**Vents:** Vents on homes are potential entry points for flying embers. All vent openings need to be covered with 1/8-inch or smaller wire mesh. Do not use fiberglass or plastic mesh because they can melt or burn.

**Rain Gutters:** Rain gutters trap flying embers. Always keep your rain gutters free of leaves, needles, and debris. Check and clean them several times during fire season.





**Roof:** Homes should be constructed using fire-resistant roofing materials include composition, metal, and tile. If you have a wood-shake or shingle roof, replace it with a fire-resistant type. Regardless of the type of roof you have, keep it free of fallen leaves, needles, and branches.

**Firewood:** Firewood stacks should be located at least 30 feet from the home. If the stacks are stored uphill from the house, make sure that burning firewood cannot roll downhill and ignite the home.

**Decks:** The underside of the deck should be enclosed with fire-resistant materials. At the very least, the underside of the deck should be covered with 1/8-inch wire mesh and be kept weed free. Keep this area free of all easily combustible materials.

**Flammable Items:** Keep the porch, deck, and other areas of the home free of easily combustible materials, such as baskets, dried flower arrangements, newspapers, pine needles, and debris.

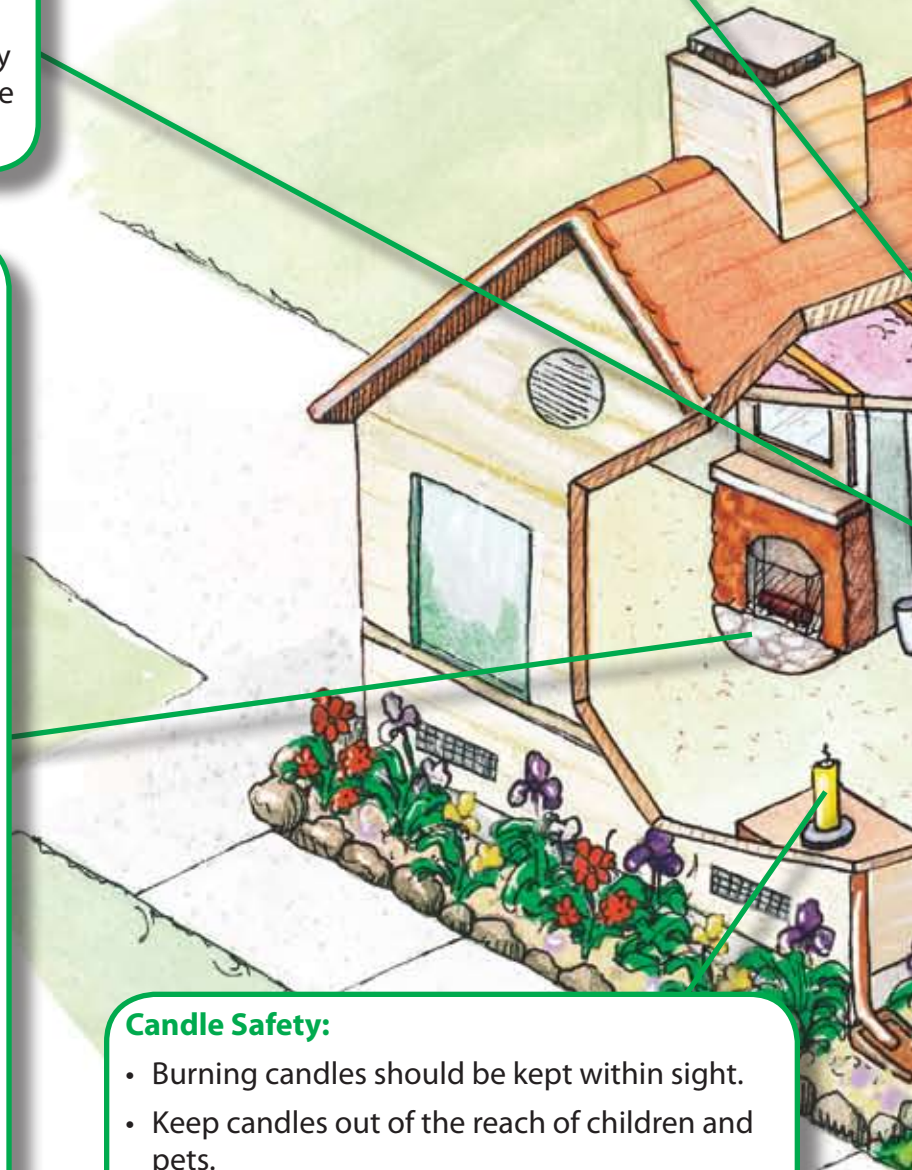
# Interior Zone

**Carbon Monoxide Detectors:** Carbon monoxide (CO) detectors are the only way to alert people to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide before tragedy strikes. Carbon monoxide is a byproduct of combustion from gas appliances or automobiles. Only use detectors that are officially approved and are clearly marked with the American Standard – UL2034 symbol.

**Wood Stove and Fireplaces:** Heat your home safely by following these tips concerning wood stoves and fireplaces.

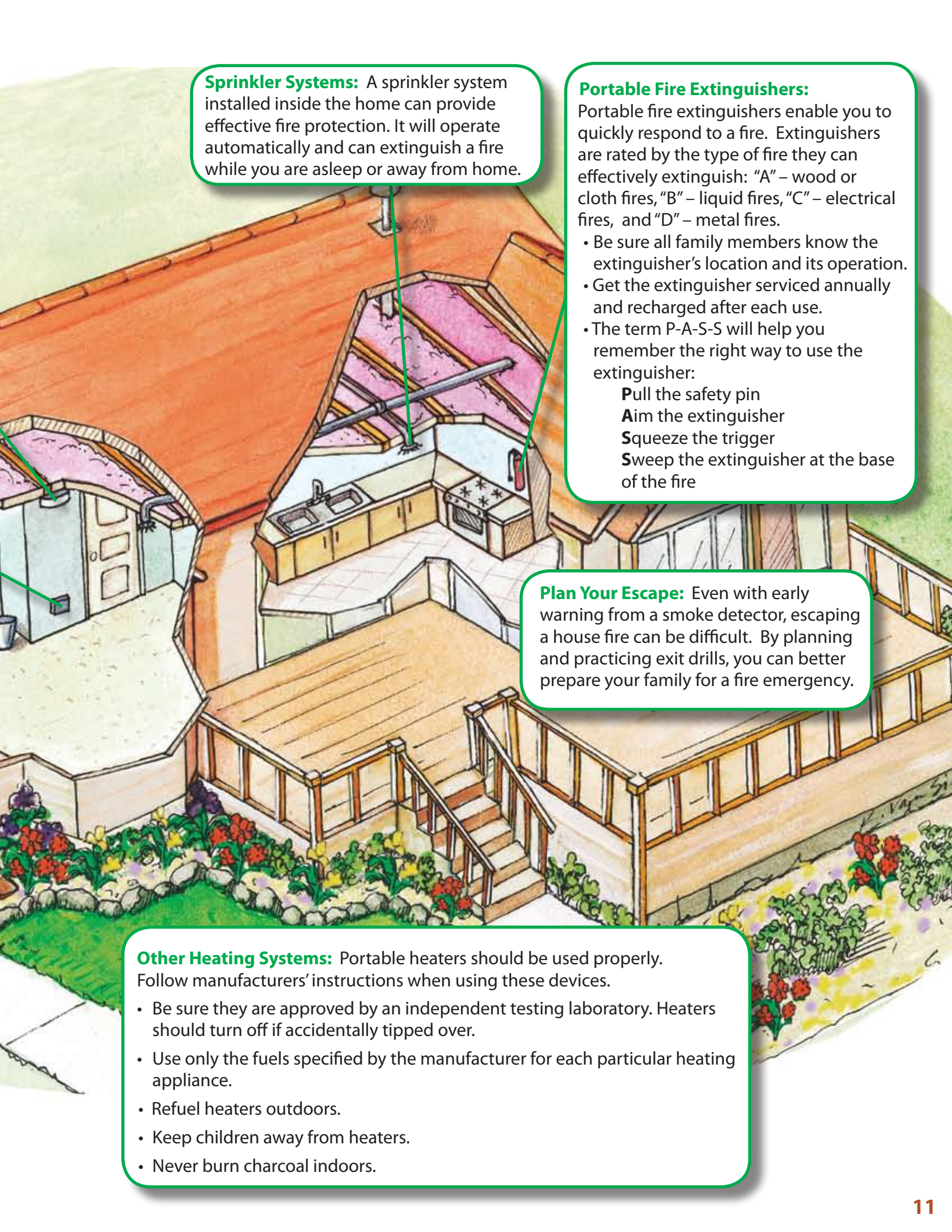
- Install APCD/EPA Certified devices according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Never use a flammable liquid such as gasoline to start a fire.
- Carefully follow directions when using synthetic logs.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening to prevent embers or sparks from escaping.
- Keep flammable materials off the mantle and at least 3 feet away.
- Do not use excessive amounts of paper to start your fire. Do not burn colored paper or household garbage; doing so can accelerate creosote buildup.
- Do not burn colored paper, which can accelerate creosote buildup and increase the likelihood of a chimney fire.
- Screen chimney and stovepipe openings with 1/2-inch or smaller noncombustible mesh or an approved spark arrestor cap.
- Have your fireplace and chimney cleaned and inspected yearly by an authorized chimney sweep.

**Smoke Detectors:** Smoke detectors are inexpensive devices that save many lives. Fire codes require a smoke detector in every bedroom and in common areas. Replace the batteries twice a year when adjusting your clocks for Daylight Savings Time or when the unit is "chirping" to indicate low battery power.



## Candle Safety:

- Burning candles should be kept within sight.
- Keep candles out of the reach of children and pets.
- Before burning, trim wicks to 1/4-inch.
- Always use a heat-resistant, sturdy candleholder that is large enough to contain any melted wax.
- Keep burning candles away from drafts, vents, air currents, and easily combustible materials.
- Always burn candles in a well-ventilated room.
- Extinguish the flame when 2 inches of wax remains, or when 1/2-inch remains if in a container.



**Sprinkler Systems:** A sprinkler system installed inside the home can provide effective fire protection. It will operate automatically and can extinguish a fire while you are asleep or away from home.

### **Portable Fire Extinguishers:**

Portable fire extinguishers enable you to quickly respond to a fire. Extinguishers are rated by the type of fire they can effectively extinguish: "A" – wood or cloth fires, "B" – liquid fires, "C" – electrical fires, and "D" – metal fires.

- Be sure all family members know the extinguisher's location and its operation.
- Get the extinguisher serviced annually and recharged after each use.
- The term P-A-S-S will help you remember the right way to use the extinguisher:

**P**ull the safety pin

**A**im the extinguisher

**S**queeze the trigger

**S**weep the extinguisher at the base of the fire

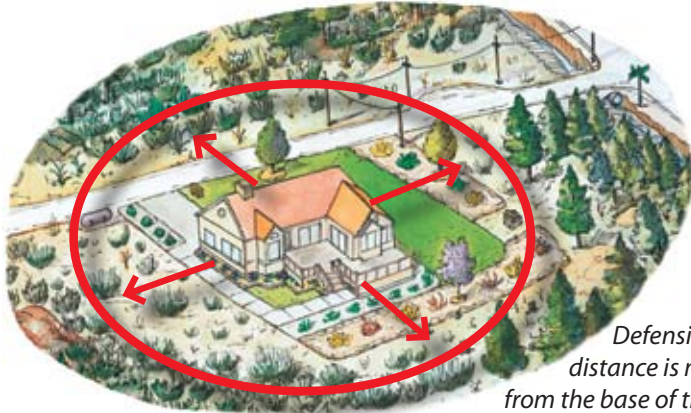
**Plan Your Escape:** Even with early warning from a smoke detector, escaping a house fire can be difficult. By planning and practicing exit drills, you can better prepare your family for a fire emergency.

**Other Heating Systems:** Portable heaters should be used properly. Follow manufacturers' instructions when using these devices.

- Be sure they are approved by an independent testing laboratory. Heaters should turn off if accidentally tipped over.
- Use only the fuels specified by the manufacturer for each particular heating appliance.
- Refuel heaters outdoors.
- Keep children away from heaters.
- Never burn charcoal indoors.

# 6 Steps to Creating an Effective Defensible Space

Please check with your local fire department for specific defensible space standards in your area. Check with your local planning department if you have endangered plants or animals adjacent to your home.



Defensible space distance is measured from the base of the house, extending outward.

## Recommended Defensible Space Distance

	Flat to Gently Sloping 0-20%	Moderately Steep 21-40%	Very Steep +40%
<b>Grass</b> Dry grass such as cheatgrass and weeds	30 feet	100 feet	100 feet
<b>Shrubs and Woodland</b> Sagebrush, pinyon, juniper, etc.	100 feet	200 feet	200 feet
<b>Trees</b> Forest trees, such as Jeffrey pine. If there's a substantial shrub understory, use those values stated above.	100 feet	100 feet	200 feet

The term "defensible space" refers to the area between a house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been managed to reduce the wildfire threat and allow firefighters to safely defend the house. In the event that firefighters are not available, defensible space also improves the likelihood of a home surviving without assistance.

Unfortunately, when some homeowners hear the term "defensible space," they envision a large expanse of bare ground surrounding their home. While this is certainly effective at increasing home survivability, it is unacceptable for aesthetic and environmental reasons.

## Step One

**Determine the size of an effective defensible space:** The size of the defensible space is usually expressed as a distance extending outward from the house in all directions. The recommended distance is not the same for every home. It varies depending on the dominant vegetation surrounding the home and steepness of slope. Use the Recommended Defensible Space Distance table to determine the right size for your home.

Once the recommended distance for defensible space is known, mark it by tying strips of cloth or flagging to shrubs. This becomes the "Defensible Space Zone."

If the Defensible Space Zone exceeds your property boundaries, seek permission from adjacent landowners before doing work on their property. It is important to note that the effectiveness of the Defensible Space Zone improves when entire neighborhoods implement defensible space practices.

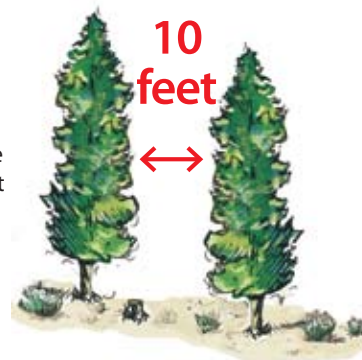
## Step Two

**Remove dead vegetation:** Within the recommended Defensible Space Zone, remove:

- dead and dying trees
- dead native and ornamental shrubs
- dead branches
- dead leaves, needles, and twigs that are still attached to plants, draped on live plants, or lying on the ground within 30 feet of the house
- dried grass, weeds, and flowers

## Step Three

**Create a separation between trees and shrubs:** Within the Defensible Space Zone, dense stands of trees and shrubs pose a significant wildfire threat. Thin dense tree and shrub stands to create more space between them.



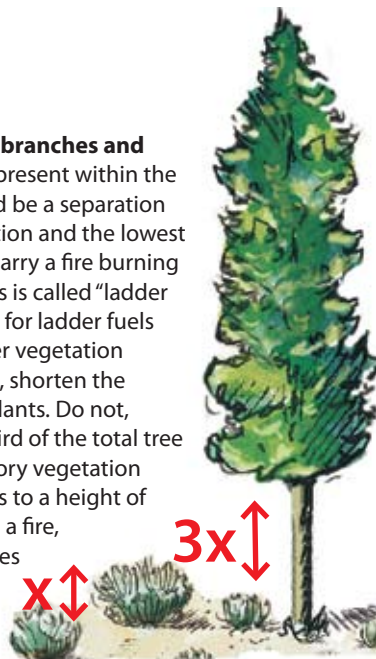
**Pine and Fir:** On flat to gently sloping terrain, pine and fir should be thinned to provide an average separation between canopies of at least 10 feet. For homes located on steeper slopes, the separation distance should be greater. When removing trees, consider cutting unhealthy, damaged, or weak trees.

**Brush and Shrubs:** On flat to gently sloping terrain, individual shrubs or small clumps of shrubs within the Defensible Space Zone should be separated from one another by at least twice the height of the average shrub. For homes located on steeper slopes, the separation distance should be greater. For example, if the typical shrub height is 2 feet, then there should be a separation between shrub branches of at least 4 feet. Remove shrubs or prune to reduce their height and/or diameter.



## Step Four

**Create a separation between tree branches and lower growing plants:** If trees are present within the Defensible Space Zone, there should be a separation between the lower growing vegetation and the lowest tree branches. Vegetation that can carry a fire burning in low growing plants to taller plants is called “ladder fuel.” The recommended separation for ladder fuels is three times the height of the lower vegetation layer. Prune the lower tree branches, shorten the height of shrubs, or remove lower plants. Do not, however, remove more than one-third of the total tree branches. When there is no understory vegetation present, remove lower tree branches to a height of at least 2 feet above ground. During a fire, this will help prevent burning needles and twigs that are lying on the ground from igniting the tree.



*A tree before and after ladder fuel removal. Removing ladder fuel will help prevent a ground-level fire from reaching the trees.*



## Step Five

**Create a Lean, Clean, and Green Area extending at least 30 feet from the house:** There are two goals for the Lean, Clean, and Green Area. The first goal is to eliminate easily ignitable fuels, or “kindling,” near the house. This will help prevent embers from starting a fire in your yard. The second goal is to keep fire intensity low if it does ignite near the house. By proper management of the fuels near the house, a fire would not be able to generate enough heat to ignite the home.

For most homeowners, the Lean, Clean, and Green Area is also the residential landscape. This area often has irrigation, is planted with ornamental vegetation, and is regularly maintained.

### Lean, Clean, and Green Area Tips

- Remove most or all flammable plants. If you wish to retain a few of these as specimen plants, make sure they are free of dead wood and leaves, pruned to reduce the amount of fuel, and separated from adjacent brush fields.
- Select less flammable plants for the home landscape. Some rules of thumb in selecting landscape plants for the Lean, Clean, and Green Area are...
  - Shorter plants, less than 2 feet tall, are better choices than taller plants.
  - When green, herbaceous plants, such as grass and non-woody flowers, are better choices than shrubs and trees.
  - Deciduous shrubs and trees are better choices than evergreen types. Avoid planting juniper, pine and palms.
- Emphasize the use of hard surfaces and mulches. Hard surfaces include materials such as concrete, asphalt, and brick. Mulches include rock and wood types. Wood mulches should not be used within 3 feet of the house.
- Clear all flammable vegetation from within 10 feet of the propane tank.
- Remove tree limbs that are within 10 feet of the chimney, touching the house or deck, within 6 feet of the roof, or encroaching on power lines.
- Create a noncombustible area at least 3 feet wide around the base of the house. Emphasize the use of irrigated herbaceous plants, such as lawn, ground covers, and flowers. Also use rock mulches and hard surfaces.

## Step Six

**Maintain the Defensible Space Zone:** Maintaining a defensible space is an ongoing activity. Plants grow back and flammable vegetation needs to be routinely removed and disposed of properly. Before each fire season, reevaluate your property using the previous five steps and implement the necessary defensible space recommendations.

Photo courtesy of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



**Miracle House?** This home survived northern California's Forty-niner Fire and has been referred to as the “Miracle House.” That title, however, is misleading. The reason this home survived was not due to a miracle. It survived because the homeowner was proactive and created a Lean, Clean, and Green Area, had a fire-resistant roof, and provided good access. It was designed to survive.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DEFENSIBLE SPACE

## WHAT IS DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

Defensible space is the area between a house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been modified to reduce the wildfire threat and to provide an opportunity for firefighters to effectively defend the house. Sometimes, a defensible space is simply a homeowner's properly maintained yard.

## WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VEGETATION AND WILDFIRE THREAT?

In terms of wildfire, the vegetation adjacent to homes can have considerable influence upon the survivability of property. All vegetation is potential wildfire fuel, regardless of whether it is native or ornamental. If vegetation is properly modified and maintained, a wildfire can be slowed, the length of flames shortened, and the amount of heat reduced, all of which assist firefighters in defending the home against an oncoming wildfire.

## THE FIRE DEPARTMENT IS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT MY HOUSE, SO WHY BOTHER WITH DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

During a major wildfire, it is unlikely there will be enough firefighting resources available to defend every home. In these instances, firefighters will likely select homes they can most safely and effectively protect. Even with adequate resources, some wildfires may be so intense that there may be little firefighters can do to prevent a house from burning. The key is to reduce fire intensity as wildfire nears the house. This can be accomplished by reducing the amount of flammable vegetation surrounding a home. Consequently, **the most important person in protecting a house from wildfire is not a firefighter, but the property owner.** And it is the action taken by the owner **before** the wildfire occurs (such as proper landscaping) that is most critical.

## DOES DEFENSIBLE SPACE REQUIRE A LOT OF BARE GROUND IN MY LANDSCAPE?

No. Unfortunately, many people have this misconception. Bare ground is both unnecessary and unacceptable due to appearance, soil erosion, and other reasons. Many homes have attractive, well-vegetated landscapes that also serve as effective defensible space.

## DOES CREATING A DEFENSIBLE SPACE REQUIRE ANY SPECIAL SKILLS OR EQUIPMENT?

No. For the most part, creating a defensible space employs routine gardening and landscape maintenance practices, such as pruning, mowing, weeding, plant removal, appropriate plant selection, and irrigation. Equipment needed includes common tools such as a chain saw, a pruning saw, pruning shears, loppers, a weed-eater, a shovel, and a rake. A chipper, compost bin, or large rented trash dumpster may be useful in disposing of unwanted plant material. Many communities in our county have well established chipping programs. Contact your local fire department for more information.

## DOES DEFENSIBLE SPACE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Yes. Homes with an effective defensible space are much more likely to survive a wildfire. Furthermore, homes with both an effective defensible space and a nonflammable roof (composition shingles, tile, metal, etc.) are many times more likely to survive a wildfire. Defensible space also allows firefighters to effectively and safely defend your home.

## DOES HAVING A DEFENSIBLE SPACE GUARANTEE MY HOUSE WILL SURVIVE A WILDFIRE?

No. Under extreme conditions, almost any house can burn. However, having a defensible space will significantly improve the odds of your home surviving a wildfire.

## What's your excuse?

### "I don't have the time or money"

If you live in a high fire hazard area, creating defensible space needs to be a high priority use of your spare time. Many defensible space activities require little or no money to implement.

### "It's wrong to cut trees"

In many areas trees occur in unnaturally dense stands. Thinning of these thick stands of trees not only reduces the fire threat, but often promotes forest health.

### "It won't look good"

There is a misconception that defensible space has to be ugly and barren to be effective. Through proper planning, a homeowner can have both an attractive landscape and an effective defensible space.

### "It's not my responsibility"

The manner in which a house is built, characteristics of the adjacent vegetation, and maintenance often determine survivability during wildfire. The homeowner, not the firefighter, is responsible for these factors.

### "I don't have an easy way to dispose of the unwanted vegetation"

The San Luis Obispo County Community FireSafe Council sponsors free chipping programs throughout the county. Contact your local fire department for more details.

### "It's against the law to remove vegetation"

If there are regulations that prohibit the removal of vegetation necessary to create defensible space, contact your local fire official and ask for help in resolving the conflict.

### "I've got insurance"

While insurance can rebuild a house, it cannot recreate a home. Photo albums, heirlooms, and other memorabilia are often irreplaceable.

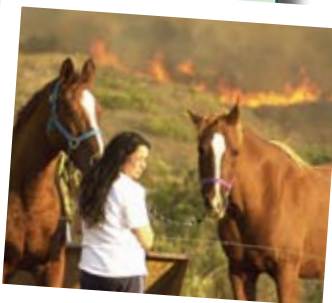
## The Horse Emergency Evacuation Team

What would happen to your animals in the event of a fire? After 2002's Highway 58/Parkhill fire, a concerned group of horse owners decided to address this concern by developing plans to evacuate affected livestock. The organization they formed, the Horse Emergency Evacuation Team (H.E.E.T.), is a volunteer group that lends its time and equipment at no cost to the owners of rescued horses.

The Horse Emergency Evacuation Team was formed in January of 2003 as a non-profit organization with divisions in both North and South San Luis Obispo County. Members have been trained in the Incident Command System, Red Cross Disaster Services, First Aid/CPR, Horse Handling, Trailer Handling, Fire Safety, Large Animal Rescue, and Horse First Aid.

A program to pre-register animals and thus expedite evacuation has been initiated. H.E.E.T. encourages new membership and volunteers. If you are interested in joining H.E.E.T. or would like to register your animals, please contact H.E.E.T. at the address below:

P.O. Box 2473, Nipomo, CA 93444  
North County phone: (805) 466-7657  
South County phone: (805) 264-3422  
Email: heeteam@hotmail.com



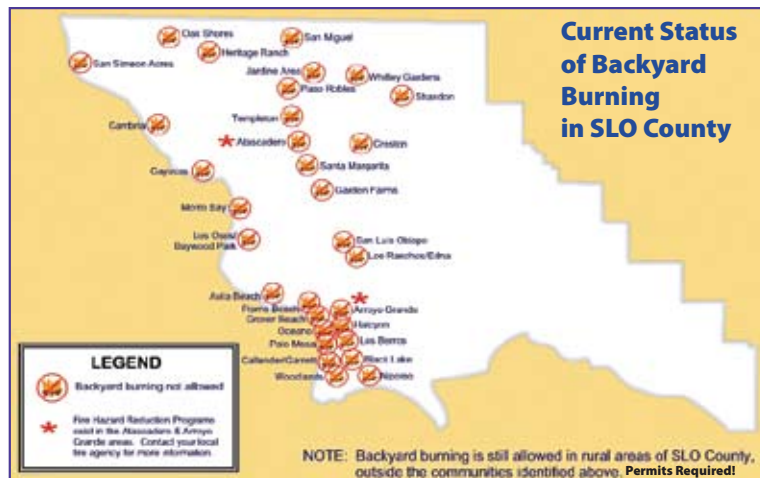
Air pollution can cause asthma, bronchitis and even cancer. To protect the air we breathe, **backyard burning is not allowed in developed areas of San Luis Obispo County.**

## Backyard burning is prohibited in the following communities:

Arroyo Grande • Atascadero • Avila Beach • Black Lake • Callender-Garrett • Cambria • Cayucos • Creston • Edna / Los Ranchos • Garden Farms • Grover Beach • Halcyon • Heritage Ranch • Jardine Area • Los Berros • Los Osos / Baywood Park • Morro Bay • Nipomo • Oak Shores • Oceano • Palo Mesa • Paso Robles • Pismo Beach • San Luis Obispo • San Miguel • San Simeon Acres • Santa Margarita • Shandon • Templeton • Whitley Gardens • Woodlands

## Stop the Burn & Choose Healthy Alternatives!

Turn your yard trimmings and prunings into mulch, compost or green waste recycling, or consider one of the alternatives listed below.



## ALTERNATIVES TO BURNING



**Green Waste Pickup** provides convenient curbside service on a regular basis. Green waste pick-up is currently available throughout most of the developed regions of the County through your local garbage collection service. By managing your home green waste build-up on a steady basis, this alternative works well, even for properties with a high volume of material. Contact your local garbage collection service for more information.



**Free Green Waste Chipping Events** are held throughout the County and are a successful way to eliminate green waste, reduce fire hazards and prevent unwanted air pollution. Volunteer and help ensure that more chipping events will be available in the future. Contact your local fire agency to find out about upcoming events. In between events, share the rental cost and chip away your green waste with a block party.



**Composting**, either at home or in your community, is a great way to reduce your green waste material, while improving your soil and garden. Contact the APCD for a brochure on composting.



**Community Green Waste Drop-off Sites** are located throughout the County where you can bring your green waste materials to be chipped or composted. Drop-off locations include the Nipomo Transfer Station, North County Recycling in Templeton, Chicago Grade Landfill in Templeton, Paso Robles Landfill and Cold Canyon Landfill in San Luis Obispo.

## In rural areas where backyard burning is still allowed, you must:

- Obtain an Air Pollution Control District (APCD) burn permit.
- Only conduct burning during the non-fire season (typically Nov. through April).
- Burn only between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on permissive burn days. Call (800) 834-2876 for burn day updates.
- Only burn DRY weeds, tree prunings and shrubbery that is free of trash and dirt.
- Keep your burn piles no larger than 4 feet high and 6 feet in diameter.
- Give burn piles adequate clearance—50 feet from neighboring property, 30 feet from structures, and 15 feet from combustible materials).
- Never allow smoke or ash to become a nuisance to neighbors.
- Have a responsible adult tending the fire at all time with adequate means to extinguish the fire if necessary.
- Green waste must originate on the property where burning occurs.

## EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION RESOURCES:

- **Composting Information:**  
Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo County (ECOSLO) 544-1777
- **Green Waste Recycling Info:**  
Integrated Waste Management Authority (800) 400-0811
- **Composting Information:**  
U.C. Cooperative Extension, Master Gardeners, 781-5939
- **Burning Permits and Proper Burning Techniques:**  
Air Pollution Control District, 781-5912
- **Permissible Burn Day Information:**  
(800) 834-2876

The potential for loss of human life and property due to wildfire is growing. In response, local, state, federal, private, and San Luis Obispo County Community FireSafe Council have banded together to create *Living With Fire*, a wildfire threat reduction program for homeowners.

*Living With Fire* is not about preventing fire. Its purpose is to teach people how to live more safely with the threat of wildfire. For many areas in our region, it is not a question of "if" wildfire will occur, but "when."



P.O. Box 827 • Nipomo, CA 93444  
[www.cdfslo.org/Firesafe/Firesafe.html](http://www.cdfslo.org/Firesafe/Firesafe.html)



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Supervisor Jim Pattersen, Chair

**US Forest Service**

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**HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS AS IMPORTANT AS FIRE BEHAVIOR IN SAVING YOUR HOME!**

The homeowner is the most important person in preventing a house from being destroyed by wildfire. The actions that a homeowner takes to protect his/her family and home before a wildfire occurs are critical.



**BEFORE**

*Originally the house is surrounded by brush and has a shake roof (as shown). The owner changed the roofing material and created defensible space.*

**DURING**

*Fire resistant roof tiles and defensible space give the home a chance to survive the fire.*

**AFTER**

*Residents can now safely move back in to their undamaged home.*

**Acknowledgements:** The original document, *Living With Fire: A Guide for the Homeowner*, was written by Ed Smith, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, with assistance from Sonya Sistare, *Living With Fire* program assistant. Graphic design provided by Lucy Walker, Office of Marketing and Communications, University of Nevada, Reno. Illustration services provided by Kirah Van Sickle and Animania, LLC. Funding for this project was provided by a National Fire Plan grant from the USDA Forest Service/Nevada Division of Forestry. For more information about *Living With Fire*, contact Ed Smith, (775) 782-9960 or [smithe@unce.unr.edu](mailto:smithe@unce.unr.edu); or Sonya Sistare, (775) 784-4848 or [sistares@unce.unr.edu](mailto:sistares@unce.unr.edu). A master CD is available to agencies who wish to create a customized version of this publication by registering at [www.livingwithfire.info](http://www.livingwithfire.info).

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