

Defensible space and home hardening tips you can accomplish right now, focusing directly around your home include:

- ❑ **First 5 feet from your home.** Get rid of anything combustible next to the house. Move it away or inside the closed garage. No recycling cans, old scrap wood, firewood or newspaper. Look at that first 5 feet closely. There should be no wooden bark, no weeds, nothing dead in this area. If you have plants, consider trimming them keep them well watered. Think embers: do you feel comfortable that you could drop a lit match in this area and it would not carry fire to the structure?
- ❑ **Cushions.** Got cushions on your metal furniture? Keep them inside the house if you are not there. It's a great place for an ember to land.
- ❑ **Water and hoses.** Hook up hoses and sprinklers to your hose bib. A "gated wye" to run two hoses is great if you have the water pressure. Spray nozzles are great. Have them available and ready to go if needed. Remember if you are on a community water system, you do not want to drain the community tanks by leaving them running 24 hours a day. Firefighters may need this water for fighting fires.
- ❑ **Fire tools.** Place your "fire tools"- shovels, rakes and kind of scraping tools together in a good location. You don't want to be digging deep in the garage when you really need them.
- ❑ **Water.** Put some water stashes around your home. Fill large trashcans with water, have buckets available to dose any hot spots you might find.
- ❑ **Ladders.** If you have a ladder place it next to your house in case fire fighters need it.
- ❑ **Volatile plants.** Have you got junipers close to the house? Get rid of them if you can. These are known as "little green gas cans" due to their resinous nature and can catch fire easily.
- ❑ **Fences.** Got a wooden fence? If it is attached to the house it is part of the house and can act as a wick to the house if it catches fire. Pay attention to things you have stored next to the fence and get them away. Clear around that fence too. If you have a wooden gate consider replacing it with a metal gate in the future. Firefighters will often open the gate to create a fire break.
- ❑ **Gutters and the roof.** Clean those gutters often! This is a perfect location for an ember to land. Check the valleys of your roof for accumulation of pine needles and behind skylights. Consider hardening your home with gutter screens or removing them all together.
- ❑ **Vents.** These can create a vulnerability to your home. If a fire is close, embers can enter into your home through your vent. Short term options for now are to cover your vents with plywood, cover with 1/8" metal screen (research has shown this diameter has good success keeping embers out) or cover vents with metal tape.
- ❑ **Decks.** Keep it clean. Check out the spots between the deck boards where debris gathers. Ensure the deck structure has clearance around any place the wood meets the ground.
- ❑ **BBQ's** Evacuation preparation includes disconnecting propane cylinders and moving them, as well as charcoal and lighter fluid away from the home.
- ❑ **Firewood.** Move it off the deck and away from the home. No storing firewood close to the house, it is a huge vulnerability for embers. Options including covering woodpiles with tarps. Fire resistant tarps are also available on line.

This is a partial list; please check out www.readyforfire.org for more tips.