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BLUEPRINT FOR SAFETY NEWS

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Protect Your Home Against Wildfires

This issue of *Blueprint for Safety News* details what you can do now to protect your home against the ever-increasing threat of wildfires.

As this issue of *Blueprint for Safety News* goes to press, wildfires are raging in California, Nevada, Florida, Colorado, Oregon, Alaska, Arizona, Utah and Washington - threatening lives, destroying homes, and costing hundreds of millions of dollars in lost property and state resources.

If 2004 is a typical year, an average of 140,000 wildfires will occur, and nearly one thousand homes will be destroyed.

Those numbers are likely to increase as more people make their homes in woodland settings, rural areas or mountain sites. A tremendous wildfire danger exists where homes blend together with the wildland, creating what's called the wildland/urban interface.

There are, however, steps homeowners can take - described in this issue of *Blueprint for Safety News* - to reduce property loss from wildfire damage. Some of these steps are as simple as removing debris from gutters and trimming trees. Other actions include using fire-resistant materials when building or retrofitting your home.

Blueprint for Safety News is an extension of FLASH's award-winning educational program, Blueprint for Safety. Since its inception four years ago, Blueprint for Safety has instructed thousands of building professionals about disaster-resistant residential construction. Course curriculum and other educational materials were developed by a blue-ribbon panel of experts in the fields of construction, emergency management, engineering and insurance.

Blueprint for Safety News' goal is to convey that same life- and property-saving information to both consumers and building professionals. As always, if you have questions or need more information on wildfire-resistant techniques or other residential construction best practices, visit www.flash.org, or call the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes toll-free at (877) 221-SAFE.



FLASH Has New Tools for Learning About Loss Prevention

By Leslie Chapman-Henderson, President & CEO, FLASH, Inc.

In an ongoing effort to keep homeowners informed about what they can do to strengthen their homes and safeguard their families before disaster strikes, FLASH has re-designed its website - www.flash.org. The site gives consumers disaster-safety tips that are both easy to find and simple to understand. As with all our educational resources - whether print or electronic - FLASH's goal is to make our tools accurate, informative and user-friendly. All our materials are thoroughly reviewed and approved by nationally recognized professionals in the fields of emergency management, construction and engineering. Please let us know if you have any suggestions or comments about our web site by e-mailing us at flash@flash.org, or by calling 1-877-221-SAFE.

Strengthening Homes and Safeguarding Families



www.flash.org

Protecting Your Home from Wildfires

Fires that occur in the wildland/urban interface differ from typical residential fires. Residential fires usually involve one structure with a partial loss. Wildfires in the wildland/urban interface can result in hundreds of homes being destroyed.

Factors that influence the ignitability of a home and continued burning in the wildland/urban interface include the home design, exterior building materials, flame and firebrands exposure, and distance from burning wildland vegetation.

Blueprint for Safety recommendations are based on the National Fire Protection Association's Standard 1144. A home built using these "Firewise" recommendations with a fire resistant roof, fire resistant siding, and 30 feet or greater of defensible space has a 95 percent survival rate from a wildfire.

The following are strategies you can employ in and around your home to reduce wildfire threat.



1. Defensible Space

Defensible space is a buffer around your home designed to slow the rate and intensity of an advancing wildfire and to create an open area in which firefighters can operate to protect your home. A defensible space of at least 30 feet around your home is recommended unless high-risk conditions necessitate a larger space.

Remove

- Dry vegetation, such as dead grass and leaves within 30 feet of your home
- Tree branches within 10 feet of chimneys
- Branches within 6-10 feet of the ground and other ladder fuels that link the grass with the trees
- Firewood within 50 feet of your home
- Thick beds of pine needles within 10 feet of your home
- Flammable plants including saw palmetto, wax myrtle, yaupon holly, red cedar, gallberry from within the defensible space.

Plant

- Fire-resistant vegetation such as dogwood, viburnum, redbud, sycamore, magnolia, beautyberry, oak, red maple, wild azalea, sweet gum and fern, or recommended native species for your area
- All shrubs and trees at least 10 feet apart
- Shrub islands or patches of perennials rather than a continuous bed of plantings

Maintain

- A healthy, watered defensible space of lawn and plants at least 30 feet around your home
- A legible and clearly marked street number
- A 12 foot wide by 15 foot high driveway clearance for fire engines
- Roof and gutters clean and free of debris

2. Roof

- Install a roof covering that has a Class A fire-resistant rating.

- Use noncombustible material for construction of soffits and eaves.
- Install noncombustible gutters and downspouts.

3. Walls

- Use fire-resistant wall cladding such as masonry or stucco.

4. Chimney

- Cover chimneys, attic and soffit vents with non-combustible screening of 1/4 inch mesh or smaller.
- Install spark arrestors in all chimney outlets.

5. Windows

- Use tempered or multilayered glass in windows, doors and skylights, or solid hurricane shutters.

6. Elevated Wood Decks and Manufactured Homes

Elevated wood decks and manufactured homes are extremely vulnerable

to wildfires because they trap heat and allow burning embers and flames to enter unprotected areas.

- Cover elevated wood decks with a noncombustible screening of 1/4-inch mesh or smaller.
- Install noncombustible skirting around manufactured homes.

7. Inside the Home

- Have at least one dry chemical fire extinguisher on hand.
- If your house is an older home, make sure the smoke alarm system complies with the building code.
- Make sure you have at least two ground level doors for emergency exit.

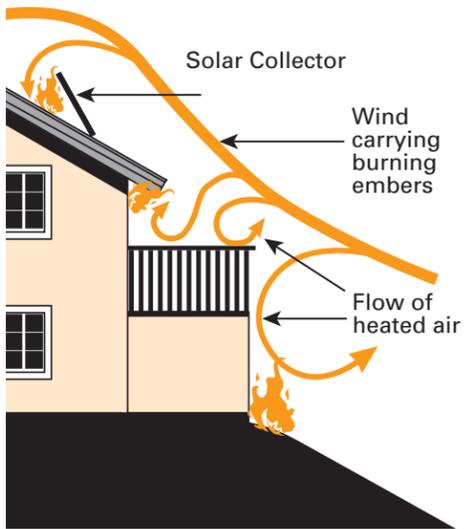
8. Water Supply

Maintain an emergency water supply within 1,000 feet of your home through one of the following:

- Community water/hydrant system
- Drafting site on a lake
- Cooperative emergency storage tank with neighbors
- Swimming pool 

Heat Traps

Certain areas of your home, because of their shape, trap heat and offer burning embers a path inside your home or to combustible areas. Fire-resistant materials are essential in areas where heat can be trapped or where burning embers can land. ☆



What Parts of the Home Ignite First?



Roofs— flammable roof coverings, plant and tree debris, combustible gutters and downspouts

Eaves/Soffits— burning embers enter the attic through open soffits

Windows— transmit heat and break under heat stress

Other flammable objects exposed to heat source— wooden decks, fences, combustible wall cladding. ☆

View Wildfire Animation on FLASH's New Website



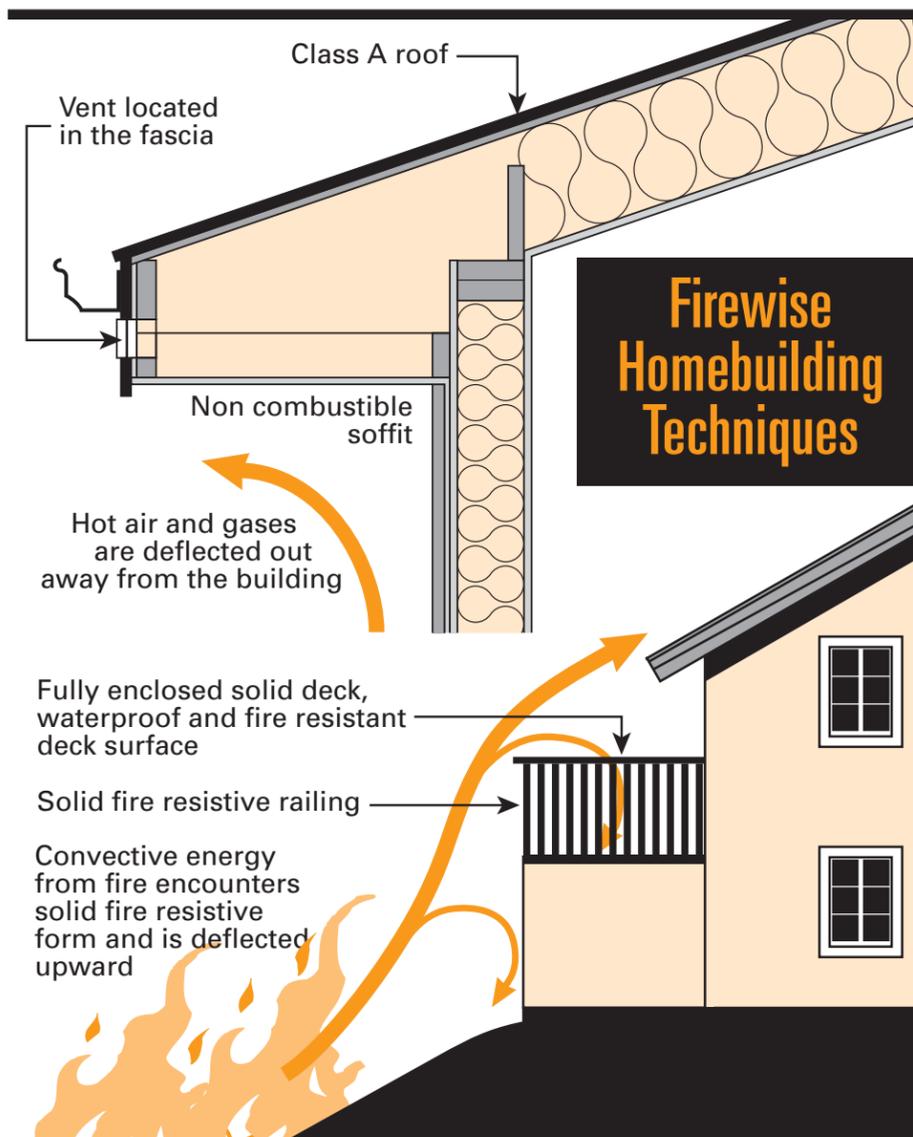
If you want to see a two-minute overview of how to protect your home against wildfire, visit the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes' new website at www.flash.org

This state-of-the-art site gives consumers disaster information and mitigation tips - on a variety of perils - that are easy to find and simple to understand.

In what is a first-of-its-kind feature for any disaster-safety website, FLASH.org contains a series of ten two-minute "Animated Homeowner How-To's" that clearly demonstrate how homeowners can incorporate mitigation practices into new or existing homes.

In addition to wildfires, the animated how-to topics include:

- High-wind protection building techniques related to: foundations; doors and windows; roof systems; roof types; straps; safe rooms; and walls
- Flood protection
- Hail protection ☆



FLASH Partners With Florida Fire Marshal to Provide Free Smoke Alarms

The Federal Alliance for Safe Homes-FLASH, Inc. joined Florida's Chief Financial Officer and State Fire Marshal Tom Gallagher to provide 300 smoke alarms to low-income families in Lynn Haven, Florida. The giveaway is part of an ongoing, collaborative effort to provide free smoke alarms to homeowners in the state's at-risk communities. Since the program began in 2002, more than 10,000 alarms have been distributed to Florida households.

"At least half of all fire-related deaths can be prevented by a smoke alarm," said Gallagher. "Our goal is to make sure every Florida home has one of these life-saving devices."

FLASH purchases the alarms using corporate grants and donations, and is supported by the Florida Fire & Emergency Services Foundation. Local fire departments work with the State Fire Marshal to perform safety inspections and smoke alarm installations.

During November 2002, a four-year-old Pensacola boy was saved when his mother was alerted to a house fire just ten days after installation of the free smoke alarm.

"This program has already saved lives, and we are confident that it can again," said Alliance President Leslie Chapman-Henderson. "We are extremely grateful for our partners, CFO and State Fire Marshal Gallagher and the Florida Fire & Emergency Services Foundation, for making the giveaway program possible." ☆

Communities Need to Become FireWise. Here's How.

Specific prevention actions completed on a single structure by an individual homeowner will reduce vulnerability to wildfire risk, but if neighboring homes remain at risk, their condition will increase the vulnerability of all structures in the area. Through community-wide coordination of mitigation efforts, the overall vulnerability of a community may be reduced and all homeowners will benefit.



is a project of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team. The program rewards a community's willingness to take responsibility for reducing its risk and has several minimum requirements that must

be met to earn national recognition. To attain Firewise Community status, a community must:

- Contact Firewise. Complete an online request for contact by a Firewise representative on the Firewise Communities/USA web site, www.firewise.org/usa.
- Request a site visit from the local Firewise Communities/USA representative. The visit is coordinated with local fire officials.
- Create a multi-disciplinary Firewise board/committee. It should include homeowners and fire professionals, and participation by planners, land managers, urban foresters and/or members of other interest groups is also encouraged.
- Schedule a meeting with the local Firewise board. The assessment and evaluation are presented for review and acceptance
- Create a plan. The local Firewise board uses the report

to create agreed-upon, area-specific solutions to its wildland/urban interface fire issues.

- Sponsor a local Firewise Task Force Committee to maintain the Firewise Community/USA program and tracks its progress or status.
- Implement local solutions following a schedule designed by the local Firewise board and wildland/urban interface specialist.
- Observe a Firewise Communities/USA Day each spring dedicated to a local Firewise project.
- Invest a minimum of \$2.00 per capita annually in local Firewise projects.
- Submit the registration form (available at www.firewise.org/usa). A completed Firewise community plan and Firewise event documentation must also be provided to the local Firewise representative. 

Sample Product List for Wildfire Protection

- Carbon Monoxide Alarms
- Double Paned Windows
- Fire Extinguishers
- Fire-Resistant Roofing Products (Class A designation)
- Smoke Alarms
- Spark Arrestors for Chimneys
- Wire Mesh Screening



*Special Edition
on the Damaging
Effects of Fire*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Landscaping Tips
- Fire-Resistant Building Materials
- Protecting Wooden Decks
- Maintaining and Emergency Water Supply

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