

Affordable Fire-Hardening Steps for Hillsborough Homeowners



FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

This list was developed as a practical but not exhaustive guide to assist homeowners make their homes more ignition-resistant from wildfires. Each home, lot and location fire risk is different but by taking proactive steps, we can make our community safer.

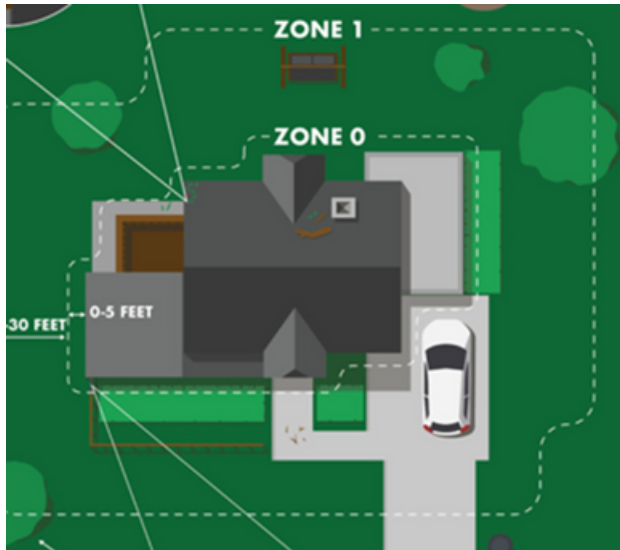
- 1. Create and Maintain Defensible Space** - Clear flammable vegetation and debris within 100 feet of your home to help stop flames and embers before they reach the structure.
- 2. Use Noncombustible Materials Near the House** - Replace wood mulch, plants and other combustibles within five feet of structure with gravel or hardscape to prevent ignition.
- 3. Harden Roof, Eaves, and Gutters** - Keep roofs, eaves, skylights and gutters clear of debris, leaves and pine needles. Install metal gutter screens to prevent future buildup. When replacing roof, use Class A fire-resistant roofing to stop ember ignition from above.
- 4. Install Ember and Flame-resistant Vents** - Install ember resistant vents as an affordable way to prevent embers from getting under the house or in the attic areas. Or install 1/16th-1/8 corrosion-resistant, stainless-steel screening over current vents.
- 5. Landscape with Fire-Resistant Plants** - Choose low-flammability plants, space them apart, and prune regularly to reduce fuel load around your home.
- 6. Enclose Decks, Eaves, and Underfloor Areas** - Remove combustibles and enclose open areas with nonflammable materials so embers can't ignite hidden spots. Ideally also have non-combustible furniture etc.
- 7. Cover Chimney and Stovepipe outlets** - Cover chimney and stovepipe outlets with corrosion-resistant metal mesh screen (spark arrestor), with 3/8-inch to 1/2-inch openings.
- 8. Upgrade Windows to Dual-pane** - When replacing windows, use tempered dual-pane to prevent heat breakage and ember intrusion.
- 9. Ensure Firefighter Access** - Keep driveways and access roads clear and wide with visible addresses so emergency crews can reach your home quickly.
- 10. Perform Regular Maintenance** - Clean roofs, gutters, and decks often and seal gaps with caulking so embers have no place to lodge or ignite materials especially if you have a clay barrel tile roof (bird stops). Inspect for dry rot, gaps, cracks, and warping and repair. Install compliant weather stripping to any gap over 1/8 inch especially for garage doors and door frames.
- 11. Keep Hoses, Nozzles and Fire Extinguishers Ready** - Keep hoses and fire extinguishers ready so you can put out small spot fires before they spread.

Firewise helps communities and homeowners take practical, affordable, common-sense steps to strengthen wildfire protection and prevention.

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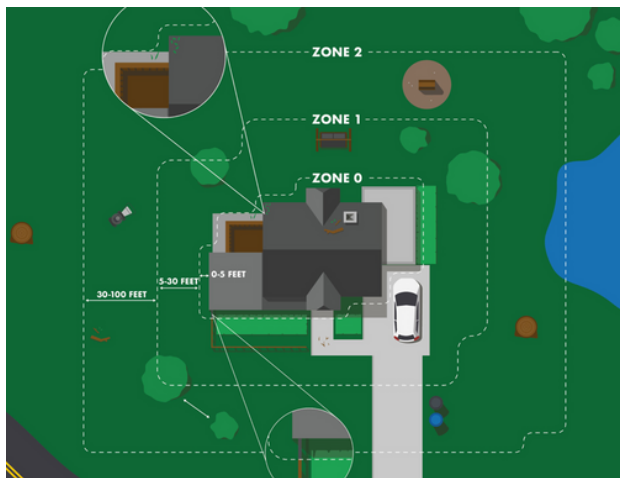
Defensible Space Zones

Requirements for 2026



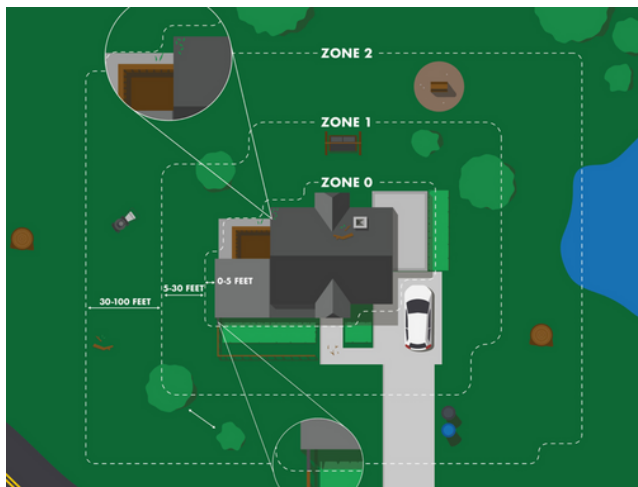
Zone 0-5 feet from the structure:

- Plant fire –resistive groundcovers and perennials in this area. Use hardscaping when possible
- Keep plants clear from windows and openings of your home
- Use stones or gravel instead of combustible bark or mulch
- Remove all branches within 10 ft of any chimney or stove pipe
- Remove leaves, pine needles, or other vegetation on roofs, gutters, decks, porches etc. and remove any dead vegetation



Zone 5-30 feet from structure:

- Should be a lean and green zone
- Remove or separate fuels by trimming and pruning to maintain spacing between vegetation to interrupt the fire's path
- When adding new plantings only use those that are fire resistant.
- Cut annual grasses and weeds down to a height of 4 inches
- Remove fuels to create horizontal and vertical spacing between shrubs and tree and remove lower tree limbs



Zone 30 to 100 ft. or to the property line:

- Remove all dead and dying: trees, branches, shrubs, or other vegetation.
- Surface litter: leaves, pine needles, twigs, bark, etc. may be permitted up to a depth of 3 inches.