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Be Wildfire Ready: New guide sets starting line and prioritizes actions most critical to prepare homes to resist wildfire

IBHS urges homeowners to take steps now to reduce risk ahead of traditional peak wildfire season

Richburg, S.C., September 1, 2020 – The Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety ([IBHS](#)) today released [Wildfire Ready](#), a new wildfire prep guide based on the latest science that takes homeowners through the most critical actions to improve wildfire-resistance. It prioritizes home improvements that can make the biggest impact in reducing wildfire risk and sets a clear starting line for homeowners to begin addressing those areas of the home most susceptible to ignition.

It's critical that individual homeowners and neighborhoods understand and take steps to reduce their wildfire risk, because when a home is ignited by wildfire there is a 90 percent chance it will result in a complete loss without firefighter intervention to stop the progression. IBHS urges homeowners in wildfire-prone communities to use Wildfire Ready to start wildfire preparedness projects now.

"Labor Day Weekend is an ideal time for homeowners who live in areas at risk from wildfire to take a look at their homes, make improvements to vulnerable areas and complete seasonal clean-up, removing combustible materials and yard waste," says Roy Wright, president and CEO of IBHS. "Compared to past years, we're seeing wildfires rage across several states early in the season, but we are not helpless against these fires. Wildfire Ready lays out the to-do list, and now is the time for homeowners to act."

A home is a system with multiple vulnerabilities, so no single action alone will significantly reduce wildfire risk. One part of a home may be wildfire-resistant while another remains highly vulnerable leaving the structure, and neighboring homes, at risk. To make the greatest impact in driving down that risk, homeowners should start by addressing the most vulnerable areas of the home and then continue with additional improvements paired with ongoing maintenance and debris removal.

Wildfire Ready builds on the latest wildfire research from IBHS, the Suburban Wildfire Adaptation Roadmaps, to progressively guide homeowners through key components of their home that can affect wildfire resistance, critical actions to take first and ways to further build resilience:

1. **Start Here:** the group of critical actions essential to making a meaningful reduction in wildfire risk.
2. **Keep Going:** the second group of actions to expand a home's wildfire resistance.
3. **Level Up:** as time and budgets allow, continue addressing these other vulnerable areas of a home.
4. **Go the Last Mile:** consider making larger modifications to reinforce the home's wildfire resistance.

Each cluster of mitigation steps includes three to four projects for homeowners to tackle and is supported by years of scientific research to understand wildfires and home vulnerabilities. The foundation of wildfire resilience lies in the Start Here cluster of critical actions essential to meaningfully address wildfire risk:

- Making sure the roof is fire-rated
- Creating a 0-5 foot home ignition zone buffer around the home
- Removing items under a deck
- Adding or upgrading vents to include 1/8 inch or finer metal mesh screens.

Once a homeowner completes the four critical actions, Wildfire Ready offers additional steps, including landscaping suggestions and vigilant maintenance practices, that can further reduce the risk a wildfire will ignite the home.

"IBHS research has analyzed components of a home like decks, fences, and the noncombustible zone. Yet knowing where to start can be struggle for homeowners," says Daniel Gorham, an IBHS research engineer and former firefighter himself. "Now, the Wildfire Ready guide brings the research findings into a step-by-step guide for homeowners, neighborhoods, and communities to map the journey to a more resilient home. This is so important, because firefighters simply can't be everywhere and protect every home during an active wildfire."

Embers, flames or radiant heat from neighboring homes can all ignite your home, so neighbors' actions protect your home too. Particularly in suburban communities, where homes are built close together, your neighbor's risk is your risk. Homeowners, neighborhoods, and the larger community should work together to reduce the chance any home ignites.

“When a home is destroyed by wildfire a family is displaced,” added Wright. “A community approach is vital to reducing risks for everyone living in areas that may be impacted by wildfires. Share the Wildfire Ready guide with your homeowners association, neighbors, and others in the community and encourage them to join you in taking action to be wildfire ready.”

When put into action in conjunction with vigilant maintenance, the Wildfire Ready guide can help communities be better prepared for the next wildfire threat. The full guide is available at disastersafety.org/WildfireReady.

Watch [here](#) to find out more about Wildfire Ready. For additional details and to learn about the science behind the guide, a virtual press conference will be held on September 3, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. Pacific/1:00 p.m. Eastern in collaboration with APCIA, iii, and NFPA. Click [here](#) to register.

[About the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety \(IBHS\)](#)

The IBHS mission is to conduct objective, scientific research to identify and promote effective actions that strengthen homes, businesses and communities against natural disasters and other causes of loss. Learn more about IBHS at DisasterSafety.org.

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