



### HOME IGNITION ZONE

Diagram courtesy Matanuska Susitna Borough, Alaska (matsugov.us)

The Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) is that circular area of 30-100 feet area around a house. **Zone 1** represents the first 30-foot area around a house. **Zone 2** represents the 30 to 60-foot area. **Zone 3** encompasses the 60 to 100-foot area around the house. Reducing ignitables and performing preventive maintenance in these zones are excellent ways to reduce risk of damage or loss due to wildfires. Begin with a complete walk around your house and look for vulnerabilities.

#### Roof and eaves:

1. Roofing materials should repel fires, such as: Class A fire-retardant shingles, metal, or tiles of clay or concrete. No missing shingles; no gaps; and litter-free peaks, valleys, and gutters.
2. Eaves should be closed. Soffits should be made of flame retardant materials or well painted (ply)wood. Vents should be metal. Decorative attic vents should be lined with fine mesh metal screening to repel embers.
3. If wood occurs in #2 above, maintain the condition of the wood surfaces with paint or paint-like products to prevent exposed wood grain which can harbor embers and ignite hours later.
4. Gutters should be kept clean of leaves. The way our homes are constructed in River Place, leaf-filled gutters are one of the most vulnerable areas to our homes from wildfires.

#### Outer walls:

1. Brick, stone, stucco or combined masonry materials are considered flame-retardant. Decorative wood-like insets should be flame retardant. If real wood grain is exposed to weathering, maintain with paint, varnish, stain, etc. to reduce exposed wood grain where embers can nestle.
2. Dual pane windows resist heat breakage but can overheat and break, allowing flame entry. Flammable materials should be kept away from windows so as not to break the windows and bring the fire inside.
3. Nooks and crannies should be free of litter and bird nests. Embers can ignite leaves and litter and generate enough heat to ignite a wooden front door.

**Trees, shrubs, and lawns:**

1. Remove tree limbs that overhang roof and/or eaves. When these trees drop leaves, they will fill the gutters that they overhang. Also remove those smaller branches that approach eaves.
2. Cut lowest tree limbs 6-10 feet from ground so climbing flames cannot ignite trees.
3. Keep shrubs under trees pruned low so they cannot ignite tree limbs.
4. Keep shrubs pruned 10-12" away from structural walls of the house.
5. Keep shrubs in front of windows pruned 2-3 feet below windows.
6. Keep climbing vines away from house, windows, entry arches, porch swings, etc.
7. Keep vines away from wooden fences or trellises.
8. Keep vegetation well watered so that stems and trunks stay moist.
9. Keep grass lawns trimmed and watered.
10. Keep driveway clear of flammables so as to serve as a firebreak.

**Wooden Decks:**

1. "If it's attached to the house, it's a part of the house."
2. Keep wooden decks well maintained with paint or stain finish so that wood grain is not exposed. When replacing decks, consider using materials that are fire resistant.
3. Remove self-starting artificial logs at least 30-feet away from the house or deck
4. Remove litter from under deck; replace with sand or pebbles.
5. Store flammables (propane) at least 30 feet away from the house or deck.
6. Keep hoses attached to bibs front and back to save seconds if fire should occur.
7. Keep wooden trellises maintained with desired finish.
8. Remove cushions from deck furniture when gone long periods of time.
9. Store door mats in garage when gone over long periods of time.

**Wooden fences:**

1. Maintain with desired finish to cover exposed wood grain and to slow weathering.
2. Keep vines away from climbing onto wooden fences.
3. Trim grasses to prevent contact with wooden fence slats.
4. Trim vegetation away from inner and outer side of wood fencing.
5. Consider replacing wood fencing with metal. As a minimum if the wood fence touches the home use metal flashing to isolate the fence from the home. A better solution is to use a metal fence to connect privacy fences along the property line to the home.

**Other considerations:**

- Crown Separation: Cut touching tree crowns so that flames do not spread at treetops. Try to obtain 3-5 feet between trees.
- Trim branches that hang over your property line to reduce spread of fire.
- Honor the size limitations of cuttings so that vegetation is hauled away on service days.
- Do not discard cuttings into adjacent wildlands.
- "Dead and down" trees tossed into wildland slopes ignite as easily as fireplace logs. Wind speeds increase with the angle of a slope, putting hilltop property at greater risk. If you enter adjacent land that is on a **restricted nature preserve**, you could be fined or, in worst case, your house could be destroyed by those "dead and down" flaming logs while you are away.