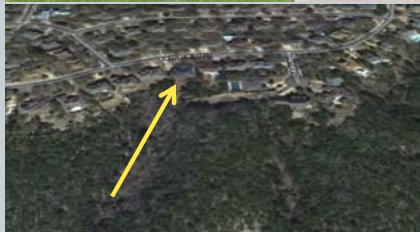


Protect Your Home From Wildfire



Lt. Josh Portie
AFD Wildfire Liaison

Jeffrey Shapiro, PE
Fire Protection Engineer

The Cold Hard Facts



- Our purpose today is to generate awareness and action not scare you
- Fact – Many neighborhoods in Central Texas are at risk of a catastrophic wildfire
 - Surrounded by wildland
 - Wildfires cannot be entirely prevented
 - Not adequately prepared
 - No fire department has the resources to fully protect large neighborhoods from a firestorm

The Cold Hard Facts

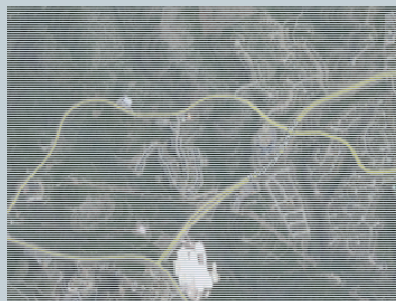


- Fact – There are things we can do, as a community, to reduce the risk of catastrophe.
- Fact – There are many things that you can do, as an individual homeowner, to reduce the risk to your family and your home.
 - You don't have to clear cut!
- We'll talk about both.

A Tale of Two Communities

- **Steiner Ranch**

- Fire Sept. 4, 2011
- 23 homes lost



- **Belvedere**

- Fire July 27, 2011
- Executed "Firewise" program
- No homes lost



A Tale of Two Communities



- **Jester and Steiner Ranch Have A LOT in Common**
 - Surrounded by wildland
 - Slopes and canyons
 - Homes/yards unprepared
 - Homeowners unprepared

A Tale of Two Communities



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- **What we don't want to have in common with Steiner Ranch**



So What Can We Do?

- **Step 1 – Understand the problem**
 - Wildfire behavior
- **Step 2 – Learn what to do**
 - Ready, Set, Go
- **Step 3 – Execute**
 - Don't put it off when you go home
- **Step 4 – Follow-up**
 - Jester needs an ongoing effort to keep a focus on wildfire risk

Understand the Problem


- You chose to live in Jester because it's a beautiful neighborhood surrounded by a beautiful preserve
- Being on top of a hill surrounded by wildland puts the neighborhood at risk



Understand the Problem

How Does Wildland Become a Wildfire?


- Weather
 - Wind
 - Humidity
 - Temperature
 - Precipitation
- Topography
 - Slopes increase speed of spread
- Fuel
 - Types of plants
 - Moisture content
 - Density
 - Continuity




Understand the Problem

Not All Homes Will Be Affected

- Unlike a tornado or flash flood, wildfire does not typically affect all homes in the path.
- “Little things” can make a big difference to your home’s survival.
- Protect the two most vulnerable areas
 1. The yard immediately surrounding the structure
 2. The roof area





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Understand the Problem

How do homes catch fire?

- Radiant heat
- Direct flame contact
- Flying embers





Riley Rd Fire Magnolia, Tx

This pictures shows two homes – one survived and one didn't.

The fire came from the woods behind the homes and ignited the wooden fence which burned all the way to the house.

The damage assessment team found that most of the homes that were destroyed had similarities

- wood fences carried the fire.
- wooden decks that the fire crept under.
- window air conditioning units with wooden platforms and surrounded by vinyl covered in pine needles.



Radiation

- There is a low risk of ignition from the big flames produced by a wildfire unless trees/brush are close to home



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Direct Flame Contact


Fences, Trees, Spot Fires

In this case, fire crept along the wooden fence.

Removing the gate helped to prevent the fire from burning up to the combustible siding, which saved this house.

This was the only house on the block still standing.





Embers

Embers/brands that will blow on and around the home and light combustible materials and debris

Examples of areas of concern

- Leaves
- Outdoor furniture
- Wood piles
- Combustible exterior siding
- Open soffits
- Attic vents




Your Protection Plan is Simple

READY, SET, GO!





- **Ready**
 - Prepare your family and home
- **Set**
 - “Fire weather awareness”
 - Defensive actions if fire occurs
- **Go**
 - Don’t delay when it comes time to evacuate.

Ready, Set, Go

Ready

- Have a plan to get out...know what you want to take
 - People...what if your kids are home alone?
 - Pets
 - Possessions (computer files, photographs...what can't be replaced)
- Store backup computer files and copies of important papers offsite
- Update insurance and video contents,
 - Store video offsite
- Have an evacuation plan and a "to go kit" that includes important papers and prescriptions.

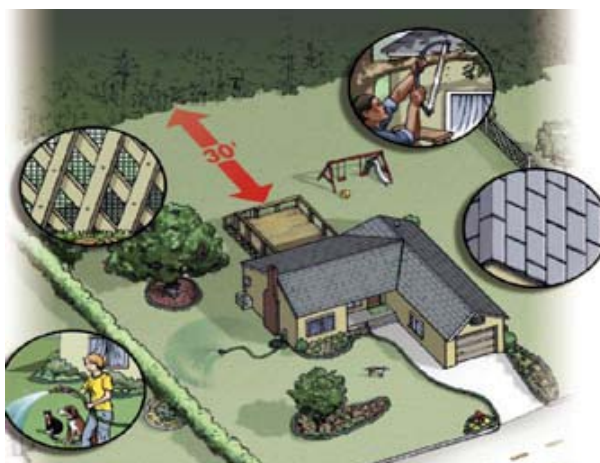
Defensible Space

READY -

Creating a defensible space around your home reduces the chance of ignition and gives firefighters a chance to help you

This is where the concept of "doing your part" comes in

Firefighters will triage homes to decide which ones can be defended



• Defensible Space

READY -

Trim or remove trees/shrubs to provide clearance around home + fuel breaks

6+ foot clear space under trees to avoid fuel ladders

Gutters

Debris around home or under deck



• Defensible Space - Magnolia, TX

READY -

Aerial view of one home that survived and some that did not.

Question?- What may have contributed to the survivability of the home on the right?

Answer- Defensible Space



Embers

Look at this house – start at the ground level, how could small flames penetrate the home?



- **Resistant Construction & Landscaping Choices**

READY -

How your home is built makes a difference

Landscaping plant selection and layout of your yard makes a difference


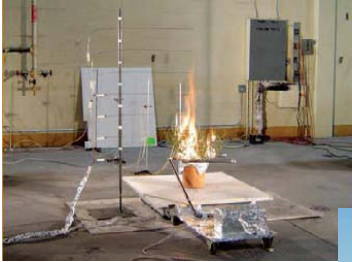


READY -

Fire-resistant plants often have or are:

- Broad, moist leaves
- Loose branching pattern (sparse leaves)
- Deciduous plants
- Self-pruning
- Slow growth
- Healthy plants

• “Firewise” Plants





READY -

- Remove the dead leaves.
- Repair the holes in the skirting and install fire resistant screening behind vent openings.
- Maintain an outside water hose.
- Keep the yard green – within the 30 foot zone.
- Plant less flammable vegetation close to the home.

Clear gutters

Little Things You Can Do



READY -


Make sure all vents are repaired.

Cover exterior attic and under floor vents with a wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to keep debris and embers from entering.

Embers will fly around a bent or broken vent, getting underneath your home or into the attic, igniting the floor or attic space.

Clean gutters


- Vents and Gutters

A close-up photograph of a white vinyl siding exterior wall. A rectangular vent is visible, which appears to be damaged or bent, with some debris or a wire mesh partially covering it. The ground below the wall is covered with dry leaves and twigs.

READY -

Question?- What is present in this picture that would encourage fire spread to the deck and eventually consume the house?

- Fuel Sources

A photograph of a wooden deck attached to a house. Underneath the deck, there is a significant amount of fuel: a lawnmower, a red gas can, a stack of firewood, and other debris. The deck is elevated on wooden posts, and the surrounding area is outdoors with trees and grass.

Ready, Set, Go

- **SET** - Monitor your environment and be ready to respond

- Awareness of fire weather or when wildfires are burning nearby.
 - ✦ You probably know of
 - Thunderstorm watch/warning
 - Tornado watch/warning
 - ✦ You may not know of
 - Fire weather watch/Red flag warning
 - Tells you to be alert and to be prepared

Austin American-Statesman

Central Texas could see critical fire weather conditions this weekend

By Ciara O'Rourke | Saturday, September 3, 2011, 10:24 AM

UPDATE: The National Weather Service has updated the fire weather watch to a "Red Flag Warning," meaning critical conditions are either developing or will shortly.

The warning is in effect from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. tomorrow and 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday.

EARLIER: Gusty, dry winds and low relative humidity in Central Texas could create critical fire weather conditions this weekend, according to the National Weather Service.

Any fires that develop will likely spread rapidly, the weather service warns.

A fire weather watch has been issued for several counties, including Travis, Williamson and Hays counties, in effect from Sunday morning through the evening and again Monday morning through the evening.

Today could be the 79th day of triple-digit heat, with a high near 101 degrees at Camp Mabry, according to the weather service.

Mabry saw a high of 104 yesterday, while Austin-Bergstrom International Airport saw a high of 102.

The 100-degree heat is expected to continue through tomorrow, but Labor Day could offer some relief with a high near 90 degrees.

Ready, Set, Go



- Prepare to leave
 - Execute your plan to gather family members, pets and possessions
 - Contact family members...we want everyone accounted for
- Prepare your home
 - Wet deck and combustibles around base of home at grade (Asphalt shingle and metal roofs should resist ignition.)
 - Bring patio furniture inside or toss away from home
 - Put out garden hoses and ladders
 - Open wood fence sections in backyard if you're near wildland
- Steiner Ranch began to evacuate 10 minutes after the fire was reported

Ready, Set, Go



Go!

- Evacuate when told to do so
 - You may be trapped by fire hoses and apparatus if you don't get out quickly
 - Jester has limited access, which could be cut off by an uncontrolled fire
 - Expect a traffic jam...you'll need as much time as possible
- How you'll be notified
 - Reverse 911
 - Police or fire apparatus
 - Register your cell phone for reverse 911
 - × <http://wireless.capcog.org>

Ready, Set, Go



Go!

- 1. Evacuate as soon as you are set!
- 2. Alert family, friends or neighbors.
- 3. Dress in appropriate clothing (i.e. -cotton clothes and work boots) Have goggles and dry bandana/mask handy.
- 4. Take your emergency supply kit and pets.
- 5. Stay tuned to your local radio stations for updates, or check Emergency Management and Fire Department websites.

Execute & Follow-up

- Go home and get READY
- Jester Action Plan
 - Community Wildfire Safety Committee?
 - Talk to neighbors...we all need to get READY
- Further info
 - www.firewise.org
 - www.wildlandfirersg.org

Questions