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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Wildfire Preparedness is Year-Round  
When Wind Blows, Embers May Follow!**

**Santa Fe** – New Mexico has experienced a slower fire season than in the recent past, yet we have still lost homes and structures to wildfires. While it's not possible to predict the start of every wildfire, we can think about wildfire from our home's perspective and take actions to reduce potential risks. Even the smallest ember can pose a risk to homes and structures when deposited by the wind, so the New Mexico Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Department's [Forestry Division](#) wants to remind everyone of this month's Wildfire Preparedness Is Year-Round Message: When Wind Blows, Embers May Follow!

Embers from wildfires can travel up to a mile from their source when carried by the wind. Their size can be larger, including pieces of burning wood or bark, not just small glowing embers. These embers can ignite a structure when they land under steps, porches, or decks, in rain gutters, woodpiles, accumulated vegetation, mulch, dry grass, or on wooden fencing, and even through openings in the house such as unscreened vents. Watch the effect small embers can have on various building materials in this [video](#) by the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vh4cQdH26g>.

Home hardening and yard maintenance is critical to reducing your risk and hazards near your home. Start with low-cost actions:

- Maintain a 5-foot area around all structures on the property free of flammable vegetation or material.
- Trim all vegetation away from structure walls and roof.
- Screen all vents with 1/8" noncombustible mesh.
- Screen all stovepipes or chimneys with noncombustible mesh that's no larger than 1/2".

- Install metal flashing between decks or fences and any combustible siding on the house.
- Install weather stripping or caulk openings around garage doors, inspect for cracked or degraded wood where embers could land and fix or replace.
- Regularly clean up accumulation of windblown leaves, needles or other flammable materials on and around structures and fences on your property.

For more information on home hardening, see the “Built Environment” section in the [New Mexico Living with Fire Guide for Homeowners](#). While embers are a common denominator in cases of structure loss, taking a holistic approach to any type of fire exposure is important. The US Fire Administration discusses this and provides more resources in a recent blog post called [Protecting Structures from Wildfire Embers and Fire Exposures](#).

The New Mexico Forestry Division is working with the [Forest Stewards Guild](#) and [FACNM](#), the [Santa Fe](#), [Cibola](#) and [Carson](#) National Forests, [New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts](#), [National Park Service](#), [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#), and [Bureau of Land Management New Mexico](#) to continue our wildfire preparedness calendar in 2023 and share the message across multiple platforms, including social media, webinars and community events. Bookmark the [wildfire preparedness webpage](#) to follow the campaign throughout the year.



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*The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.*

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