

NAME _____ DATE _____

Wildland fire is an element of nature, just like weather, soils, minerals, plants, animals, and water. In fact, some landscapes depend on periodic fire to maintain a healthy ecosystem. As with other natural elements, fire is unpredictable and cannot always be controlled. Householders in fire-prone areas must make their homes “defensible” against wildfire.

Use this checklist to assess wildfire safety in three zones around your home. (Note: Check with your local fire safety agency for requirements in your area, which may be different.)



Immediate Zone (within 5 feet)

- Nothing flammable within 5 feet of any structure
- No plants, mulch, woodpiles, furniture, or stored or decorative items within 5 feet of structure

Intermediate Zone (5–30 feet)

- Area is “lean, clean, and green”
- All dead plants, grass, and weeds are removed
- Tree branches are trimmed so that they are a minimum of 10 feet from other trees
- Plants are watered regularly
- No woodpiles (move them to Extended Zone)
- Trees and shrubs are separated from items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture or swing sets

Extended Zone (31–100 feet)

- Annual grass is cut or mown to a maximum height of 4 inches
- Trees branches are removed if less than 6 feet from the ground
- Shrubs and trees are planted in “islands” with space around them
- Shrubs and trees are pruned to eliminate fire ladders (places where fire could climb from the ground to the plant’s crown)
- Fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches are removed (but may be permitted to accumulate on the ground to a depth of 3 inches)

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CAREER CORNER

FIRE PREVENTION SPECIALISTS work to reduce the risk and extent of forest fires. They may inspect outdoor public and residential areas for fire hazards, enforce fire regulations, and recommend fire prevention measures.

