



City of Anaheim

ANAHEIM FIRE DEPARTMENT

May 2008

Dear Homeowner:

Wildfire season in Southern California now is a year-round event. I want to take this time to provide you with information on what you can do to make your property "fire safe." Residents who own homes in the Wildland Urban Interface area (homes adjacent to wildland areas) can take precautions by creating a defensible space to protect them from the threat of devastating wildfires.

Wildfires often begin unnoticed. As we have seen with the recent wildfire in the Anaheim Hills area, they spread quickly, igniting dry brush, trees and homes. Add strong winds and periods with little or no rainfall and a wildfire can jump from a burning hillside and race through a community within a matter of minutes. Reduce your risk by preparing a defensible space now, before wildfires strike.

❑ **Rate Your Roof**

Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your house in a wildfire. If you have a wood shake roof, consider replacement to make it more fire-resistive. If you have a fireplace or woodstove, install an approved spark arrestor on your chimney to prevent sparks from reaching your roof or flammable vegetation.

❑ **Define Your Defensible Space**

Defensible space is a buffer zone, a minimum 100-foot of non-combustible area around your house that reduces the intensity and risk of a wildfire from starting or spreading to your home. Defensible space depends on clearing flammable materials away from your home. Defensible space not only helps protect your home in the critical minutes it takes a fire to pass, it also gives firefighters a safer area to work in. During a large-scale fire, when many homes are at risk, firefighters must focus on homes they can safely defend.

❑ **Reduce Flammable Vegetation, Trees, and Brush Around Your Home**

Replace flammable landscaping with fire-resistive, low-fuel plants instead. Choose plants with loose branching, non-resinous woody material, high moisture content in leaves, and little seasonal accumulation of dead vegetation. Examples are lawn, vegetable gardens, ice plants, agapanthus, oleander, daylily, pyracantha, star jasmine and periwinkle.

❑ **Remove or Prune Trees**

Reduce the density of surrounding vegetation by removing or thinning overcrowded or weakened trees. Be sure to prune low-hanging branches to keep a ground fire from climbing into upper branches. By pruning you cut the chances of ground fires climbing into tree canopies and becoming unpredictable flame or firebrand throwers. Also eliminate dry or dead vegetation from underneath trees. These "ladder fuels" allow ground fires to jump onto tree crowns.

❑ **Cut Grass and Weeds Regularly**

Fire spreads rapidly in dry grass and weeds. Mow grasses and other low vegetation and keep them well watered, especially during periods of high fire danger.

❑ **Relocate Wood Piles and Leftover Materials**

Stack all wood, building debris and other combustible materials at least 30 feet away from your home and other buildings. Then clear away flammable vegetation within ten feet of wood/debris piles as an additional safeguard against the spread of wildfire.

❑ **Keep It Clean**

Clear pine needles, leaves and debris from roof, gutters and yard to eliminate an ignition source for tinder-dry vegetation. Remove dead limbs and branches within ten feet of your chimney and deck. Tidying-up is especially important during these hot, arid months of fire season when a single spark can lead to an inferno.

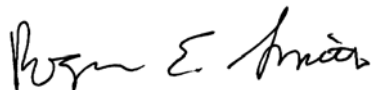
❑ **What To Do If A Wildfire Strikes**

- ✓ Wear protective clothing such as sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothing, long pants and long-sleeved shirt, gloves and handkerchief to protect your face.
- ✓ Back your car in the garage, heading out with windows closed and the keys in the ignition.
- ✓ Close the garage door, but leave it unlocked; disconnect the automatic garage door opener in case of power failure.
- ✓ Place valuable documents and family mementos inside the car in the garage for a quick departure, if necessary.
- ✓ Make plans for your pets in case you must evacuate; most shelters do not accept pets.
- ✓ Keep a flashlight and portable radio with you at all times.
- ✓ Move combustible yard furniture away from the house and store it in the garage.
- ✓ Connect the garden hose to outside water spigots.
- ✓ Assemble in advance a disaster supply kit with items you may need if advised to evacuate.
- ✓ Listen to your local news for reports and evacuation information.

Remember, when advised to evacuate, do so immediately and follow the instruction of local officials.

For additional information or assistance, contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at (714) 765-4040.

Sincerely,



Roger E. Smith
Fire Chief