

Firescaping Top 5 Maintenance Tasks

Plan | Prevent | Protect

1. Maintain Emergency Access

To successfully flee due to fire threat, be sure the road in front of the property, the driveway and paths around the house are maintained.

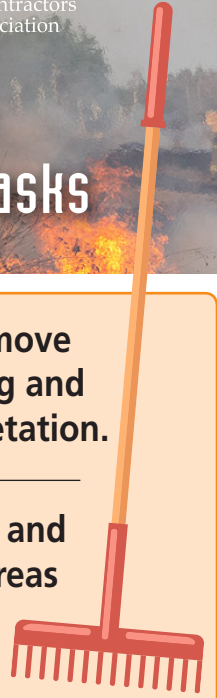


- Remove flammable vegetation from 5 feet on either side.
- Prune overhead vegetation to maintain at least 10 ft. clearance.
- Maintain non-skid treatments on sloping paths.

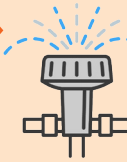


Prune and remove all dead, dying and diseased vegetation.

Sweep leaves and debris in all areas of property.



Irrigate plants to ensure leaf moisture.



Cut all non-irrigated grasses to 4 inches.

Remove flammable material and combustible ground covers at least 2 feet around the dripline of trees.



2. Clean the First 5 Feet Around a Structure

Remove the clutter — it creates an opportunity for a firebrand to ignite a structure.

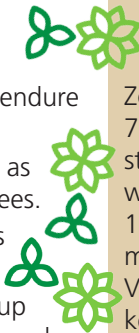
- Remove tools, trash, recyclables, stored wood, and leafy litter next to structures. Store items in the house, in a non-flammable shed, or 10 feet away from a house.
- Keep tree limbs and large shrubs 15 feet from a structure and 10 feet above its roof.
- Remove dry woody mulches. Use inorganic mulches or humus instead.



3. Clean and Nourish Landscape 30 Feet Around a Structure

The goal of Zone 1 is to extinguish firebrands and endure intense heat.

- Remove loose bark and companion plants, such as mistletoe and Spanish moss, from shrubs and trees.
- Maintain proper distances between large islands of vegetation.
- Prevent ground covers and vines from climbing up fences, shade structures, shrubs, trees and utility poles.



4. Maintain Outlying Areas

Zone 2, which is 30 feet to 70 feet from a structure, must stop a ground fire. Zone 3, which is from 71 feet to 100 feet from a structure, must dramatically slow a fire. Vegetation management is key in these outlying areas.

- Remove flammable vegetation and debris from around LPG tanks, outbuildings, and woodpiles.
- Maintain distance between shrubs and trees.
- Audit irrigation systems looking specifically for any signs of erosion (rills and gullies), overspray (circular stains), or regular runoff (algae in curbs).

5. Operate Machinery Properly

Mowers, weed-eaters and chainsaws, and other machinery, are a source of friction, heat and sparks.

- Use spark arresters on portable gas-powered equipment such as chainsaws, weed-eaters and mowers.
- Check for a build-up of carbon in exhaust system and on spark plugs.
- Never lay a running or hot engine in grass or other ignitable vegetation.
- Have a fire extinguisher with you.
- Avoid working past 10 a.m. during the fire season.
- Avoid work that involves machinery during extreme fire weather conditions — hot, dry, windy days.

