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Reducing risk to wildfire loss does not have to be costly

Blog Post created by Faith Berry on Apr 24, 2018

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As I was finishing raking up the mess from this year's past storm fronts, I was thinking about how residents living in wildfire prone areas can do so much to reduce risk of loss to wildfires by completing some simple and low cost property maintenance chores. Spring cleaning can also improve your wildfire safety. In a recent article, *Making Homes Resistant to Wildfire May be Cheaper Than We Thought*, Jack Cohen shares, "So that raises the question: can we actually prevent home ignition during extreme wildfires," Cohen said. "And again: a resounding 'Yes!'"

Start by removing accumulations of flammable vegetative matter (leaves, pine needles, sticks etc.) that may have accumulated around or on your home.

Most homes that ignite, and are ultimately destroyed during a wildfire do so as the result of small burning embers that collect on and in areas around the home where there are accumulations of flammable materials. For example gutters are a great place for leaves and pine needles to collect, a fuel bed for many embers generated during wildfire. Another area to check are the inside corners of the outside of the home. Leaves and other matter build up here from the wind, this is the same place that embers will collect during a wildfire. Other areas under the deck and next to the home where leaves and material gather also are vulnerable to ignition during an ember storm generated by a wildfire.

Small nooks and crannies on the outside of your home that may provide openings into your home because of small cracks and holes (such as areas in your eaves, areas where window frames are not flush to the house and other open areas in siding, and garage doors that do not close flush to the ground) can all provide avenues for embers to enter and ignite your home from the inside. Caulk all cracks and holes and buy weather stripping material for the sides and bottom of your garage door.

Pay special attention to your roof and vents. Repair holes and replace missing shingles or roof tiles. Add bird stops or cement in openings in the front of clay tiles to prevent embers from igniting nesting material from birds or other animals in this area. Screen vents to prevent ember entry or update them with ember resistant vents.

Steps taken today in the form of simple spring maintenance projects can pay big dividends in the survivability of a home. Learn more about steps you can take to make your home safer with information provided on NFPA's Firewise USA® webpage.

OUTCOMES

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