



## How to Protect Your Home from Wildfire

Rhode Island has not seen wildfires of the enormous scope of those in the west, and, more recently, the south. However, small wildfires are common throughout the state. And, when drought or near-drought conditions warrant, the potential for spreading wildfires is real. After all, forests cover more than half of Rhode Island's land area, and home sites are increasingly being carved out of the state's woodlands.

If you are a homeowner living in or at the edges of woodlands, there are a number of steps you can take to reduce potential exposure to flames and radiant heat from wildfires, by creating a 30 to 50 foot safety zone around your home. Those in and around pine forests, should have a 100-foot safety zone.

Here are some tips from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the United States Fire Administration:

- Regularly clean roofs and gutters.
- Thin a 15-foot space between tree crowns, and remove limbs within 15 feet of the ground.
- Remove dead branches that extend over the roof.
- Prune tree branches and shrubs within 15 feet of a stovepipe or chimney outlet.
- Inspect chimneys at least twice a year, and clean them at least once a year.
- Remove vines from the walls of your home.
- Keep a ladder that will reach the roof.
- Rake leaves, dead limbs, and twigs. Clear all flammable vegetation.
- Remove leaves and rubbish from under structures.
- Mow grass regularly.
- Clear a 10-foot area around propane tanks and barbecues. Place a screen over the grill, using non-flammable material with mesh no coarser than one-quarter inch.
- Regularly dispose of newspapers and rubbish at an approved site. Follow local burning regulations.
- Place stove, fireplace, and grill ashes in a metal bucket, and soak in water for two days, before disposal.
- Store gasoline, oily rags, and other flammable materials in approved safety cans. Place cans in a safe location away from the base of buildings.
- Stack firewood at least 100 feet away and uphill from your home. Clear combustible materials within 20 feet.
  - Keep handy household items that can be used as fire tools: a rake, axe, handsaw or chainsaw, bucket and shovel.
  - Identify and maintain an adequate outside water source, such as a small pond, cistern, well, swimming pool, or hydrant.
- Install freeze-proof external water outlets on at least two sides of your home and near other structures on the property.
- Have a garden hose that is long enough to reach any area of the home and other structures on your property.
- Make sure your name and street number are posted at driveway entrance. Your driveway should be at least 16 feet wide to allow emergency vehicle access.

