

Fire harden your home

clearing out a [defensible space](#) around the home. A defensible space is a buffer between the house and the surrounding area that slows and stops the spread of fire.

The most affordable and critical component of hardening a home is by clearing all dead and dry vegetation and other flammable materials to create a 100-foot defensible space around the home. Removing vegetation, firewood, and other combustible materials from on to or under decks is also crucial in protecting a home from wildfires.

Even then, most homes destroyed in wildfires are ignited by embers traveling long distances, sometimes over a mile and land on weak spots, like leaves in the gutters or underneath garage doors, resulting in the home catching on fire.

Here are the main ways homeowners can harden their homes, [according to a guide](#) created by the US Forest Service and the United States Department of Agriculture:

- **First priority:** Install a Class A-rated roof such as asphalt fiberglass shingles or metal panels. Clear leaves, pine needles, and other flammable material from the roof, gutters, and areas near fences. Install flame and ember-resistant vents.
- **Second priority:** Replace wood or plastic fences attaches to the home with noncombustible metal fencing. Enclose low decks and areas under bay windows with mesh screening or ventilated noncombustible material. Remove branches overhanging the roof and gutters.
- **Third priority:** Replace at least the lower foot of wood or vinyl siding with fiber cement, stucco, brick, or stone siding. Enclose open eaves with noncombustible soffit material. Use dual-paned, tempered glass in windows and doors. Replace wooden decking with fire-rated composite material, metal, or lightweight concrete.