

Wildfire Home Protection

Wildfires destroy millions of acres of forests and grasslands each year. They happen most often in the western states, but a wildfire can start almost anywhere. Some are caused by lightning, but nine out of ten wildfires are started by people who are careless with fire outdoors.

Each year, wildfires also damage or destroy hundreds of homes. To help protect homes from wildfire, experts recommend creating a wide space around the home where there are few trees and plants for the fire to burn. This open space helps keep a wildfire away from the home by reducing the fuel it needs to spread.

Here is a home at risk of being damaged or destroyed in a wildfire. Which **six tips** on the list below could help this family protect their home? All of the tips are good ways to keep wildfire away from a home, but this family doesn't need to do everything on the list. Look at the picture to decide which six tips are right for their home. Check off those tips so this family knows what chores they need to do to help keep their home safe from wildfire.



Tips for Protecting a Home from Wildfire

- 1. Keep the lawn mowed to a height of four inches or less, and water frequently to keep the grass green.
- 2. Keep all trees and shrubs at least five feet away from the home.
- 3. Trim low hanging tree branches and keep branches far away from the chimney.
- 4. Trim or remove trees and shrubs so that they are spaced far apart around the home.
- 5. Remove all dead leaves, pine needles, and branches from the lawn, decks and porches, the roof, and rain gutters.
- 6. Clear dead leaves, pine needles, and other debris out from under decks and porches, and remove anything stored underneath a deck or porch.
- 7. Keep firewood and propane tanks at least 30 feet away from the home.
- 8. Make the home address easy to see so firefighters can find it quickly in an emergency.

Now here's a bonus question: You can't see it in the picture, but this house has a pile of firewood and a deck in the back. Find two more tips on the list above that this family should know about to protect their home from wildfire. Write the tip numbers in the answer spaces below.

TIP _____ TIP _____

ANSWERS: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8; Bonus: 6 and 7

Be Prepared! Ask your neighborhood firefighters if you live in an area with a wildfire risk. If you do, get together with the people in your home and make your own "to-do list" to help protect your home from wildfire. Make it a fun project for everyone – assign "chores," check them off your list, and afterwards, plan a "we did it" activity. If a wildfire happens in your area, make sure the grownups in your home listen to the news to find out if the authorities say you should evacuate from your neighborhood. If you do evacuate, be aware of where the wildfire's smoke is, and be prepared to move away from the fire if it suddenly changes directions.

To Learn More about preventing wildfires, visit www.smokeybear.com/kids. To learn how to protect your home from wildfire, visit www.firewise.org and www.readyforwildfire.org, and play the wildfire episode of Monster Guard, a free app available at redcross.org/monsterguard. To learn how to stay safe when a wildfire happens, visit www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/wildfires. You can also ask an adult to download the free Red Cross Wildfire App at redcross.org/mobile-apps/wildfire-app. To learn more about all kinds of emergencies, visit redcross.org/pillowcase.