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HOME IGNITION

How do Homes Ignite?

- Surface fires travel along the ground consuming vegetation and other combustibles. This type of fire could likely occur locally and ignite structures surrounded by tall grass or firewood.
- Airborne fire embers, also known as fire brands are small pieces of organic material. These spruce needles, cones, dry leaves, bark and small branches can travel via heated air currents created by the surface fire.
- Spot fires may ignite when these embers collect in areas with combustible materials such as wood piles and dry leaves.
- Embers can travel long distances, and homes become threatened when they accumulate on shake roofs, near siding, fencing and flat surfaces like decks, patios, and stairs.
- Embers can travel under surfaces where combustibles are present to cause a home ignition. Enclose areas underneath the house, stairs, balconies, and decks with fire-resistant materials.

Fire Protection Applications

- Set up outdoor sprinklers during the warm summer months on wood decking and cedar shake roofing. Store water in buckets around your yard, especially if you are on a well system.
- Foam is concentrated soap that helps water absorb into vertical and horizontal surfaces, as well as shrubbery. While foam is available for use by homeowners, it does require pressurized water and a continuous power supply.
- Gels absorb a high volume of water thereby protecting buildings from ignition. They require a pressurized water source and power to apply and may last between four hours to several days, depending on weather conditions.
- Protective coatings may be sprayed or brushed onto structures (siding and roofing) to insulate against fire's heat.
- Wraps similar to giant sheets of aluminum require labor and time to install. An easy home made solution is to have heavy duty aluminum foil and a staple gun ready to apply to wood decks and other vulnerable areas of your home.
- Application instructions, prices and endurance times of all of these products may vary. Research each option carefully.

Protect the structure

- Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your house because the large surface area can accumulate windblown firebrands. Consider non-combustible roofing material such as metal, asphalt shingles, slate/clay tiles, cement/concrete products.
- Since many homes have wood siding, the best fire defense is creating a three-foot, non-combustible buffer that would protect from the airborne fire embers that may pool at the base of the siding.
- Create a non-combustible barrier between the home and the fence.