

Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Residents' Property Preparation Checklist

PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY CHECKLIST	
<i>Your property will provide fuel for the fire but there are some actions you can take to reduce the fuel load, minimise the impact of direct flame and radiant heat on your house and slow down the spread of the fire. A well prepared and constructed house is more likely to survive a bushfire than an unprepared one. Firefighters cannot defend every property and are unlikely to defend a poorly prepared one - their lives are at risk too. Remember that in preparing your property you are not only protecting an asset but also providing an option for your bushfire survival.</i>	
STARVE THE FIRE	
<i>Vegetation is a fire's main fuel source. 'Fine fuels' such as grass, leaves, bark and twigs ignite readily and burn rapidly when dry. Fine fuels and dense undergrowth increase the risk and intensity of bushfires. Shrubs, branches and bark provide a continuous ladder of fuel into the canopy creating very large amounts of heat and a crown fire. A garden bed stretching from the bush to the house provides a continuous pathway of fuel and increases the speed, spread and heat of the fire onto your property. Avoid continuity of fuel both horizontally and vertically.</i>	
	Weed regularly, keep grass short and keep garden mulch away from house
	Cut long grass and dense scrub. Remove dead material
	Regularly rake up leaf litter, needles, dead plant material, bark and twigs under trees
	Keep dense shrubs away from house, particularly under windows
	Remove shrubs and small trees under and between larger trees or prune tops of shrubs so that their tops are well away from the lower branches of trees
	Clump plants together but ensure there is a gap between the clumps or garden beds to break up fuel continuity
	Prune lower tree branches to stop a ground fire spreading into canopy of trees
	Prune lower branches of shrubs to separate foliage from surface fuels underneath
	Clear vegetation along the boundary of your property to create a firebreak
MAKE A DEFENDABLE SPACE	
<i>A defensible space separates the bushfire hazard and the house. The greater the separation from the bushfire hazard, the lower the risk. A defensible space can prevent direct flame contact and minimise the effect of radiant heat on your home. Having enough defensible space is critical in surviving the passage of a fire front.</i>	
	Create a defensible space/circle of safety around your home and other buildings. This area needs to be cleared of all rubbish, long dry grass, bark and material that may catch fire
	Create and maintain a minimum two metre gap between your house and tree branches. Make sure no branches overhang the house
	Plan your garden so that your vegetable garden, lawn, pool or patio is on the side of the house likely to face a fire (where the bush is)
	Use paths and driveways on your design to separate vegetation and house
FILL THE GAPS	
<i>Ember attack is the most common way houses catch fire during bushfires and can happen before, during and after the bushfire. Ember can get into roof spaces, a wall cavity, on to ledges or under a house and trigger a fire.</i>	

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	Block any gaps under floor spaces, in the roof space, under eaves, external vents, skylights, chimneys, around doors and wall cladding
	Keep exposed woodwork in good repair
	Repair any loose tiles or gaps in your roof
	Enclose under decks and, if made of timber, ensure there are no rough patches to catch embers
	Place metal fly wire mesh on all windows, vents and evaporative air conditioners to keep sparks and embers out
FIX THE FIRE TRAPS	
<i>Plants in your garden are not the only material near your house that can catch fire</i>	
	Keep gas cylinders on the side of the house furthest away from the likely direction of the fire. Ensure the pressure relief valve is directed away from the house. Store gas cylinders upright and secure them with a metal chain to a secure, non-combustible post to prevent cylinders from falling over
	Move all fuel containers into a shed away from your house and have a firebreak around it
	Remove any timber, rubbish and old junk lying around
	Clear gutters of dry leaves and other combustible material
	Do not use mulch such as wood chip or pea straw within a 10 metre radius of your home. They are fine fuels and can ignite during ember attack. Use non flammable material such as pebbles, gravel, scoria, sand or rocks. Cover flammable mulch in the fire season with sand or soil
	Do not pile firewood against or near the house
PROTECT YOUR ASSET	
	Have a sufficient, independent water supply of at least 20,000 litres and a petrol, diesel or a generator powered pump capable of pumping 400 litres per minutes. Make sure your tank is concrete or steel.
	Remove vegetation from around pump and ensure that it is sheltered from bushfire
	Ensure all pipe fittings are metal (PVC melts)
	Ensure hoses are long enough to reach every part of home
	Ensure roofing is firmly fixed as fires create strong winds
	Check that your home and contents insurance is adequate
	Make sure your house number is clearly visible so emergency services have no difficulty in finding your residence