

Albany Fire Department

MARCH SAFETY MESSAGE

From the AFD Fire Prevention and Public Education
Division

GUARDING YOUR HOME AGAINST WILDFIRE

Wildfire destroys hundreds of homes every year. In fact, if you clear flammable vegetation from the vicinity of your home, you can reduce the risk of destruction by wildfire as much as 70 percent. Wildfires are one disaster that should be prepared for, just as much as earthquakes, floods and home fires.

- Maintain a “defensible” space around your home by clearing all flammable vegetation within 30 feet of the structure. Clear dead leaves and cut small trees and brush to leave widely spaced, larger trees.
- Remove all leaves and needles from the roof, eaves and rain gutters.
- Trim tree limbs within 10 feet of your chimney and trim all dead limbs hanging over your house and garage.
- Cover your chimney outlet or vent with a vertical spark arrester of ½” mesh screen.
- Attach spark arresters on chainsaws, motorcycles, grass mowers and all other small internal combustion engines.
- Select low growing and less-flammable plants when landscaping your home; plant larger trees no closer than six feet from the structure.
- Make sure your home can be quickly identified, by ensuring that its address is clearly marked and visible; also make sure that neighborhood or street signs are clearly identified to assist firefighters in locating your home in an emergency. If you have questions or need help, call Fire Prevention at 510-528-5775





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SPRING CLEAN-UP

March is the month we like to stress Spring clean-up “inside” and “out”. Spring? you ask. It’s hard to think about spring with the rain coming down. It still looks an awful lot like winter to me. Unfortunately, even with the rain a fire can occur, so eliminating those hazards throughout the house will reduce the fire risk and provide for safe conditions for firefighters if a fire does occur. Think of your home as a hazardous material area, in times of disaster, chemicals can leak and cause hazards.

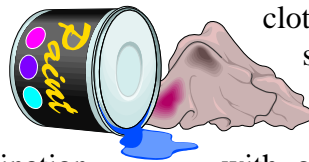
Inside

All you need to know is your ABCs. That’s Attic, Basement, and Closets. These areas store all that extra “stuff” you haven’t needed in ages. All that clutter is heaven to a fire.



Under the sink you can usually find an accumulation of drain cleaners, oven cleaners and various household products, which are flammable or poisonous. These chemicals should be disposed of in a safe manner and their use even avoided. These chemicals can be extremely harmful if disposed of improperly and if they’re ingested can be fatal. There are many non-toxic, environmentally safe products on the market today. Read the labels before you purchase and store cleaning supplies in your home. Look for key words such as poison, corrosive, caustic, volatile, flammable, or irritant. These products should be avoided. Purchase only the quantity you need and never mix products.

The garage is another place where removal of unnecessary combustible storage should be done. Items such as mattresses, extra bedding, boxes, old clothes, and papers can make the difference between a large hot fire or a small, easily controlled fire. Oily rags, used motor oil, gasoline, paint, weed killers, pesticides and other flammable materials stored in excess can be dangerous, and some materials in combination with others can cause harmful results. You should always read the labels and follow directions for proper use, storage and disposal.



Outside



Reducing the weeds and debris around your house will greatly reduce the fire hazard potential. We suggest a “defendable” space around your home. Reduce flammable vegetation within thirty feet of structures. Clean the roof and gutters. Keep branches at least ten feet from your chimney and house, and a spark arrester on your chimney is a must!

There are many things you can do to make and keep your home a safe place to live and now is the time to do it. If you have questions or need help, call Fire Prevention at 510-528-5775.