Here’s How to Get Started: Create a Firewise Landscape in Seven Steps

Step One
Evaluate the environment around your home. What will catch on fire? Be on the lookout for those “little things” that can burn your home. Also consider slope, prevailing winds, vegetation type and density, and exposure to direct sun.

Step Two
Determine what you need to do. Start with the closest Home Ignition Zone and work toward the Defensible Space Zone and through the Wildland Fuel Reduction Zone.

Step Three
Develop a plan for correcting any firewise problems identified in steps one and two. Consider completing your work prior to June 1st of each year before fuel conditions become too dry. Make sure your power tools have approved spark arresters and, if working in the summer months, complete all work before 10 am. Coordinate with adjacent landowners if possible and incorporate existing formal landscape features.

Step Four
Consider codes and regulations related to defensible space, burning, work performed near waterways, and tree removal; if necessary, secure permits such as burn permits.
- The Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (CDF) should be consulted if any wood products from your property are sold, traded or bartered. Types of regulated wood products include sawmill logs, firewood or wood chips. For more information, contact CDF at 530/387-7111.
- The Department of Fish & Game should be notified and, if work occurs near a river, stream, lake, or tributaries, call 911/358-2000, or look on the web at: http://www.dfg.ca.gov
- Before cutting down trees, residents of Paradise should review 1998 Town of Paradise Tree Preservation Ordinance 301, Section 2, and also the Paradise Municipal Code, Section 8.50.160.

Step Five
Implement the plan. Get help and any needed equipment. Begin work in the Home Ignition Zone and work out from there. Remember: It’s the little things—such as patio furniture, leaves, needles, bark, etc.—that can ignite and cause a fire to your home.

Step Six
Remove all slash and debris generated during the fuel modification process by chipping, burning or disposal at your local vegetative waste site. Contact your local fire department for permit requirements. For information on the Community Chopper Program, sponsored by the Butte County Fire Safe Council, phone 530/877-0984.

Step Seven
Continue to monitor and evaluate the firewise condition of your home and landscape. Maintain your home’s resistance to fire and the defensible space in the surrounding property on a routine basis—annually or more frequently if needed.

For more information:
Butte County Fire Safe Council
767 Birch Street
Paradise, CA 95969
phone: 530/877-0984
www.ButteFireSafe.org

Contact your local fire department for guidance in making your home and property firewise, defensible space regulations and burn permits.
- California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection/Butte County Fire Department, also serving the cities of Biggs and Gridley, 530/387-7111 http://www.ButteFireSafe.org • http://www.fire.ca.gov
- Paradise Fire Department; 530/872-6265 http://www.TownOfParadise.com
- Chico Fire Department; 530/895-4930 http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/fire/home_Page.asp
- Oroville Fire Department; 530/538-2487 http://www.CityOfOroville.org/Fire/FireDepartment.html

On the Web:
- http://www.ButteFireSafe.org Home site for the Butte County Fire Safe Council
- http://ceres.ca.gov/foreststeward California Forest Stewardship
- http://www.tree-pruning.com Information on tree pruning techniques
- http://www.fire.ca.gov California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection, includes forest management information
- http://www.firesafecouncil.org California State Fire Safe Council

Other references:
- Will Your Home Survive? by R.D. Harell and William Teie (Deer Valley Press, 2001); 800/455-1950
- Pruning Mature Trees International Society of Arboriculture P.O. Box 3129, Champaign, IL 61826
- Contact your local community or property owners’ association for landscaping guidelines and applicable CC&Rs

During the summer and fall months, a combination of low humidity, high temperatures and strong winds results in a “red flag” weather warning. During such a condition, the fire danger is very high. The X-Factor explained above helps provide that extra margin of defensible space necessary to keep your property firewise.

Produced by the Butte County Fire Safe Council. Our mission is to “provide education, exchange information and foster fire prevention and fire safety within the County of Butte.”
www.ButteFireSafe.org
1. Keep your rain gutters and roof clean of all flammable material.
2. Get rid of dry grass, brush and other flammable materials around your home—and don’t forget leaves, pine needles and bark walkways. Replace with well maintained (watered) landscape vegetation, green lawn, and landscape rocks.
3. Clear all flammable materials from your deck. This includes brooms, stacked wood and easily ignitable patio furniture. Also enclose or board up the area under your deck to keep it from becoming a fuel bed for hot embers.
4. Move woodpiles and garbage cans away from your home. Keep woodpiles away from the home a distance of 2 times the height of the pile—more if lot size allows.
5. Use fine mesh screen (1/4" or less) to cover eaves, roof and foundation vents to prevent windblown embers from entering.
6. Inspect and clean your chimney every year. Trim away branches within 10 feet. Install a spark arrester with 1/4" or smaller mesh screen.
7. Got a propane tank? Get rid of any flammable materials within 10 feet of it and, if possible, position it at least 30 feet from any structures.

Experts recommend a minimum of 10 feet of spacing between individual trees and shrubs, measured at the crown (widest part) of the tree or shrub. You may need to increase this distance based on your property’s X-Factor.

Mature trees should also be limbed up 10 feet, or 1/3 of their live crown height, whichever is greater.

It’s possible, depending upon the size of your property, that you will be limited by your property boundary and unable to complete the firewise measures identified in Zones 2 and 3. If this happens, talk with your neighbors and ask for their cooperation. A safer home means a safer neighborhood for everyone.

Create a Defensible Space Zone by keeping in mind the three R’s of defensible space:
- **Remove**—dead and dying grass, shrubs and trees.
- **Reduce**—the density of vegetation (fuel) and ladder fuels, those fuels extending from the ground to the tree canopies.
- **Replace**—hazardous vegetation with less flammable, irrigated landscape vegetation including lawn, or other low growing groundcovers and flowering plants.

Burning embers landing on wood shake roofs are one of the leading risk factors for losing your home to a wildfire. If possible, replace wood shingle roofs with non-flammable (Class-A) roofing materials, such as asphalt shingles, tile or metal roofing.

Find out more ways to make your home fire safe: www.ButteFireSafe.org