MENDOCINO COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

HOW DOES YOUR HOME RATE?

Use this checklist to determine your home's risk of destruction by wildfire!

In each small section, circle the number across from the description that's most like your situation.

Be honest! When finished, total your score and compare it to the risk categories on the last page.

This checklist is based on California laws intended to help you protect your life and home from wildfire. The first option in each category is the safest for you, your home, and the firefighters who come to assist.

In a large wildfire, firefighters from other counties may be assigned to your area. They will not know you or where your home is. There will not be enough fire engines to defend each home. In these situations firefighters must make quick decisions based on what they see as they drive down your road. If your home looks savable – if the driveway is wide, vegetation is cleared back from the house, and there's room for a fire engine to turn around – an engine will likely be assigned to your home. If your home can't be seen, or it is surrounded by thick brush, your home may be passed by as "indefensible" -- too dangerous for firefighters to try to defend. This assessment should help you make your home a defensible "keeper"!

FIREFIGHTERS' ACCESS TO YOUR HOME

During a wildfire, cars will be leaving -- and fire engines will be attempting to enter -- your area on the same road(s). Lives may be at stake. Will you be able to evacuate safely? Will fire engines be able to get to your home? Will they be able to find it? Will they have room to park and work once they get there? Options rated 15 or 20 are situations that could prevent fire engines from getting to your home at all.

Number of Access Routes to your home	
There are two or more roads in and out	0
I live on a dead-end road less than 2 miles long	5
I live on a dead-end road more than 2 miles long	10
Width of Road(s) to home (see below for driveways)	
The roads are all two lanes -- 18 or more feet wide	0
The roads are between 10 and 18 feet wide	5
The roads are less than 10 feet wide	15
Existence of Turnouts for Vehicles to Pass on single-lane roads (if applicable)	
Turnouts for passing are located every 400 feet, and they are at least 10 feet wide and 80 feet long	0
There are turnouts every 400 feet, but not this wide and long	10
There are 10 x 80 foot turnouts, but not this often	10
There are no turnouts	20
Number of Homes on your dead-end road (if applicable to your road)	
1-10 homes	0
11-25 homes	5
26-50 homes	10
More than 50 homes	15
Condition of Roads and Driveway (see page 3 for explanation of % grades)	
Paved, with grades of 16% or less	0
Unpaved, with grades of 16% or less	5
Unpaved, with some grades more than 16% (steep)	10

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Radius of Turns and Curves on Roads and Driveway to home

Fire engines may be 28 feet long, 8 feet wide, and 15 feet tall. They need lots of room to maneuver!

All turns and curves have at least a 50 foot radius (gentle turns)	0
Some turns and curves might require a fire engine to back up and try again	15
Some turns and curves are too tight for a fire engine to make at all	20

Vertical Clearance above Roads and Driveway

There's at least 15 vertical feet of clearance	0
There's less than 15 vertical feet of clearance	15

Bridges on Roads or Driveway

A fire engine full of water can weigh 30,000+ pounds. If a bridge collapses, firefighters could be hurt or killed – and your evacuation route could be cut off. Ask a structural or civil engineer about your bridge.

All bridges can hold 40,000 pounds and have signs at both ends stating this	0
Bridges are rated to hold 40,000 pounds but have no signs	10
Bridges were built with only cars in mind and can't hold 40,000 pounds	20

Road and Street Signs in area

Signs are present on all roads, with reflectorized letters at least 3 inches tall on a contrasting color background, and visible from 100 feet away in both directions in the dark in a fire engine's headlights	0
Signs meet requirements, but are visible from only one direction	5
Signs are present but are faded and don't meet the above requirements	10
Some intersections on the way to my home have no road signs	15
There are no road or street signs in my area	20

House Number Sign

My sign is posted at the road, with reflectorized numbers at least 3" tall on a contrasting color background, visible from 100 feet from both directions	0
My sign meets these requirements, but is visible from only one direction	5
My sign is present but doesn't meet the above requirements	10
There's no number sign for my house posted at the road	15

Room for Fire Engines to Maneuver near home

There's a circular driveway around or in front of my home	0
There's a large open area (40'x40') in front of or next to my home	0
There's a backup spot at least 40 feet long & 15 feet wide	10
There's no room for fire engines to turn around near my home	20

FIRE DEPARTMENT AND WATER SUPPLY

Response Time from Nearest Fire Department

Fire department is less than a 5-minute drive from my home	0
Fire department is a 5-10 minute drive away	5
Fire department is 11-20 minutes away	10
Fire department is more than 20 minutes away	15

Water Supply near your home

Most wildland fire engines carry only 500 gallons of water. Having water near your home that fire engines can <u>find and tap into</u> is critical in rural areas. Contact your local fire department for information.

A pressurized fire hydrant is less than 300 feet away and is identified by a blue reflectorized dot that's on or near the road and visible from the road	0
I have a standpipe (small hydrant) with a fire department connector near my home, piped to a pond or tank that holds at least 2500 gallons of water. The standpipe is marked and the number of gallons is posted. *(Firefighters will love you!)*	0

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A pressurized fire hydrant is located 300 to 1000 feet away, with a blue dot 5
There's a pond, pool, or stream near my home, located so a fire engine can safely park within 15 feet of the water's surface and pump water out 5
There's no water supply nearby that fire engines can access 15

VEGETATION AND OTHER FLAMMABLE ITEMS NEAR HOME

Removing brush and trimming up branches prevents a grass fire from climbing plants like a "ladder," going from grass, to brush, to trees, and then to the tops of trees, where fires rage out of control.

Main type of vegetation (also called "fuels") within 300 feet of home
Light fuels: grasses 0
Medium fuels: light brush and small trees 5
Heavy fuels: dense brush, timber, hardwood trees, logging slash 10

Distance of brush, dead grass, and other flammable vegetation from home (not including trees)
100 or more feet from home has been cleared of brush and dead grass (state law) and all remaining plants within 30 feet of home are pruned of dead material 0
I've cleared back between 30 and 100 feet from my home 10
There's brush and dead grass within 30 feet of my home 20

Condition of trees *(Note: you are not required to cut down trees, just to trim them up!)*
All dead limbs above my roof or within 10 feet of my home have been pruned away, and all trees within 30 feet of my home have their lower branches trimmed up to 10 feet above the ground (state law) 0
Trees branches are trimmed up 10 feet from the ground but dead branches hang over my roof 15
There are no branches over my roof but branches hang low to the ground 15
Tree branches hang directly on my roof and down to the ground 20

Location of propane tank or other fuel tank (if applicable)
Vegetation is cleared at least 10 feet from tank, and tank is 30+ feet from home 0
Tank is between 10 and 30 feet from home, surrounded by dry vegetation 10
Tank is less than 10 feet from home, surrounded by dry vegetation 20

Location of other flammable items and fire hazards
Firewood, lumber, flammable liquids, and other fire hazards are stacked at least 30 feet from my home, and there are no wooden fences attached to the house (wooden fences can carry fire to a house) 0
Firewood, lumber, etc., are stacked 10-30 feet away from home 10
Firewood, lumber, etc., are stacked right next to my home 15

TOPOGRAPHY NEAR HOME

Steepness of terrain within 300 feet of home

Note: Slope is the vertical steepness compared with the horizontal distance. A slope of 10% means the terrain rises 10 feet for every100 feet horizontal. The steeper the slope, the faster a fire will travel up it.

The slope up to my home is 10% or less 0
The slope up to my home is 11% to 50% 5
The slope up to my home is more than 50% 10

Home's location relative to slopes covered with dry, flammable vegetation (if applicable)
My home is located more than 100 feet back from a steep upslope 0
My home is located 30-100 feet back from steep upslope 5
My home is located right on the edge of a steep slope 15

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Other terrain features that can increase a wildfire's speed (circle all that apply)

My home is at the top of a drainage gully (called a "chimney" or "draw")	10
My home is in a narrow canyon	10
My home is on top of a hill	10

Remember: It's as natural for a fire to run uphill as it is for water to run downhill!

BUILDING MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION

A home can survive a wildfire even without the fire department's intervention -- IF it is built to resist both (1) radiant heat from nearby flames and (2) burning embers flying through the air. Radiant heat can break windows from100 feet away, and the larger the panes the more likely they are to break. In a wildfire the wind often drives burning embers into cracks and vents anywhere on the home, or through windows broken by heat, igniting the house. The first options in the next three categories are the optimum fire safe choices.

Walls, Eves, and Deck or Porch

My home has noncombustible or fire resistant siding, eaves, and deck; undersides of deck and eaves are enclosed; and all vents are covered with metal mesh that has openings of 1/4" or smaller	0
My home has fire resistant siding, eaves, and deck, BUT my eaves and deck are not enclosed, and vents are not covered with mesh	10
My home has wood/combustible siding and deck, but the undersides of eaves and deck are enclosed and vents are covered with mesh	10
My home has wood/combustible siding and deck, and nothing is enclosed	20

Windows and Sliding Glass Doors

All my windows have double-paned or tempered glass, and no windows have panes larger than 2 x 3 feet	0
My windows have double-paned or tempered glass, but they have large panes	5
My windows are single-paned, but the panes are less than 2 x 3 feet	5
I have large single-pane picture windows or glass doors	15

The Roof

I have a Class A roof (cement, sheet metal, slate, or concrete)	0
My roof is made of composition shingles or tar and gravel, and I keep my roof and gutters swept clean of pine needles and dead leaves	5
My roof is made of composition shingles or tar and gravel, and pine needles and dead leaves collect on the roof and in the gutters	15
I have a wood shake roof (a main cause of homes lost to wildfires!)	25

page total ____

TOTAL POINTS FOR WHOLE ASSESSMENT: _____

INTERPRETING YOUR HOME'S WILDFIRE RISK SCORE

Less than 50 points	=	Low Risk
50 to 90 points	=	Moderate Risk
95 to 135 points	=	High Risk
140 points or more	=	Extreme Risk

Concerned about your score? Go back and look at the categories where your risk points are high and work on improving them. Every step you take will increase your safety from wildfire !

For more information on saving your life and your home, contact your local fire department or the

Mendocino County Fire Safe Council

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