
On _____ the local fire agency conducted a defensible space fire safety inspection of your property. The purpose of the inspection was to help your home survive in the event of a wildland fire, and help your property comply with state and local fire safety ordinances. If your property was found to be "not in compliance" your property may be re-inspected within 30 days. If you have any questions about the results of this inspection, or need further information on actions you should take, please call your local fire district or department.

CHECKLIST EXPLANATIONS

1. Houses are often destroyed by flames that ignite combustible materials under or adjacent to decks and stairways. Overhangs, because of their angle, can catch and trap hot embers and fire brands. To avoid this threat, you should not store combustible materials under decks and stairs. Keep areas under and adjacent to decks and stairways free of pine needles, leaves, or other debris. A thin layer of gravel, rock, or aggregate should be applied under decks and stairways.
2. Fire spreads from the wildland to homes and other buildings by traveling along the fuel bed (plants, trees, brush) until it is close enough to ignite the structure.

Regulations require the removal of all dead and dry flammable vegetation within 30 to 100 feet of any structure depending on the slope of surrounding terrain. In the Lake Tahoe Basin we will allow for thinning of vegetation. If you decide to allow some flammable brush to remain such as manzanita, scrub oak, white thorn, etc., then it must be thinned. A good rule of thumb is a space between shrubs 2 times the height of the shrub. For example, if you have a shrub 3 feet high, then the space before the next shrub should be 6 feet across, as it generates too much heat.

The above does not apply to short, green, well-maintained groundcovers, which do not need to be thinned. Also, do not rake to bare dirt, unless within two feet of a structure. (See #3)

Regarding clearance distances, if your lot is flat, then a distance of 30 feet from the structure may be sufficient. If your lot is on a steep slope, the distance may need to be increased up to 100 feet below, or on the downhill side. If the property line is closer than the required distance, you must only clear to the property line.
3. Please remove ALL combustible debris including branches, bark chunks, and scrap lumber, from your yard within 30 feet of your structure. This will help reduce the chance of fire spreading from the wildland to your buildings. When removing debris, rake to bare dirt within 2 feet of structures and apply a thin layer of gravel, rock, or aggregate. Beyond 2 feet, DO NOT rake to bare dirt. A thin layer of pine needles, small twigs, or wood chips is needed to prevent erosion.
4. Limbs should be removed from green trees to a height of at least 6 feet from the ground. If the tree is small, no more than one-third of the live green limbs should be removed from any tree. Taking more than this amount can weaken the tree and make it susceptible to bark beetle attack.
5. Please remove all tree limbs, whether live or dead, within 10 feet of any chimney. In California, a spark arresting screen with no greater than 1/2 inch mesh is required on all chimneys. This helps to prevent sparks, embers or flames from a chimney fire spreading to the wildland.
6. Dead trees are hazardous because they will fall, in time, and could damage property, or injure or kill a person. In addition, the dry wood of a dead tree is a tremendous fire hazard. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency does not require a Tree Removal Permit to remove a DEAD tree if it is under 30 inches in diameter and if it is not within a Stream Environment Zone (SEZ). If the tree is over 30 inches in diameter and in a SEZ, contact the TRPA at (775) 588-4547 ext. 310 to schedule an appointment with their forester. The forester will inspect your tree(s) and issue a Tree Removal Permit if necessary.
7. Airborne fire brands account for the majority of homes burned by wildfire. The part of a house most vulnerable to fire brands is the roof. You can help minimize this problem by keeping the roof and rain gutters free of debris. Routinely remove pine needles, leaves, and litter from these locations.
8. Please ensure that all dry weeds and grasses are cut to a height of no more than 6 inches within 30 feet of your structure. Fire travels extremely fast in tall grass or weeds. Cutting them to 6 inches or less helps to reduce that threat.
9. Firewood, lumber, or other large woody material should not be stacked within 30 feet of any structure on your property. They can act as a fuel source to spread fire to the structure. In addition, green firewood should be covered with 6 millimeter CLEAR plastic sheeting to prevent breeding of bark beetles. Lumber and other large woody material can be covered with any material that is durable enough to withstand sun and wind and would prevent embers and burning brands from becoming lodged in the wood, igniting the pile.
10. The proper address to your property should be displayed so that the numbers can be easily read from the street, both day and night. This assists firefighters in locating your property during all types of emergencies including medical aid calls. Houses that do not have correct addresses posted are in violation of county codes.
11. Please remove all dry, flammable vegetation within 10 feet of any propane tank. In the event of a fire, this will help reduce the amount of heat that the tank is exposed to by preventing fire from traveling through a fuel bed right up to the tank.
12. If excessively dense tree cover removed is checked "NO" you should call the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency at (775) 588-4547 ext. 310 to schedule an appointment with their forester. The forester will inspect your trees and issue a Tree Removal Permit if necessary. If your trees are less than 6 inches in diameter, then no permit is required. Excessive tree cover is not only hazardous to your home, but also to the health of the trees.

LOCAL FIRE AGENCIES

North Tahoe Fire Protection District
Meeks Bay Fire Protection District
Fallen Leaf Lake Protection District
Lake Valley Fire Protection District
City of South Lake Tahoe Fire Department
Alpine Meadows Fire Department

(530) 583-6913
(530) 525-7548
(530) 542-1343
(530) 577-3737
(530) 542-6167
(530) 583-6913
