



LIVE BURN DEMONSTRATION SHOWS EFFECTIVENESS OF RESEARCH-BASED WILDFIRE MITIGATION ACTIONS IN WILDFIRE PREPARED HOME

Officials gather for a side-by-side look at fire behavior impacts on mitigated and unmitigated structures

Sacramento, Sept. 19, 2023 – The Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety ([IBHS](#)), in collaboration with CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal and Sacramento City Fire, conducted a live wildfire demonstration to show the effectiveness of research-based wildfire mitigation actions in its Wildfire Prepared Home designation program, including maintaining a noncombustible five-foot buffer around a home – Zone 0 – to help reduce its risk of ignition.

Embers, not the main fire front, are the leading cause of home ignitions during a wildfire. As part of a CAL FIRE/California Office of Emergency Services joint powers authority meeting, the live fire demonstration featured a side-by-side look at fire behavior impacts on mitigated vs. unmitigated structures.

“Northern Californians live with the reality of wildfire,” said IBHS CEO Roy Wright. “Yet, they may be unaware of how embers can attack an unmitigated structure. Following the actions captured in Wildfire Prepared Home gives them a better chance of having a house to come home to in the event of wildfire entering their neighborhood.”

Based on the latest wildfire research, IBHS created [Wildfire Prepared Home](#), a system of mitigation actions addressing the three most vulnerable areas of a home – the roof, specific building features such as gutters and vents and Zone 0 – that California homeowners can take to meaningfully reduce their home’s risk of ignition and receive a designation that may help with insurance availability.

IBHS and CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal urge homeowners to get started now. Most California homes have Class A roofs, meeting that component of the designation requirements. Mitigation actions for building features include ensuring a home’s vents are ember resistant, gutters are debris free and the last six inches of vertical space on the exterior wall are made of noncombustible material.

Creating a non-combustible five-foot buffer around the home involves removing combustible items and vegetation, replacing groundcover like wood or rubber mulch with materials such as river rocks or gravel and replacing the first five feet of combustible fencing attached to the home. Items on top of or underneath attached porches and decks should also be non-combustible and any deck four inches or lower to the ground should be enclosed with 1/8 inch or finer metal mesh. Keeping Zone 0 free of debris build up over time is critical.

“Developing a combustible free zone around your home doesn’t mean taking away its curb appeal,” said IBHS Chief Engineer Anne Cope. “There are great choices for decorative décor and hardscaping that are not only attractive, but also low maintenance.”

During a wildfire, [embers may collect in Zone 0](#), also known as the home ignition zone, and smolder, ultimately igniting and spreading to the home. Once a home ignites in a wildfire, it is almost always a total loss without firefighter intervention.

“Peak wildfire season is here, but there is still time to prepare your home before a wildfire strikes your community,” urged Acting State Fire Marshal Daniel Berlant. “Today’s demonstration showed how vulnerable a home can be and how much of a difference taking steps to prepare your home for wildfire can make.”

View images and videos from the events [HERE](#).

About the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS)

The IBHS mission is to conduct objective, scientific research to identify and promote effective actions that strengthen homes, businesses and communities against natural disasters and other causes of loss. Learn more at ibhs.org.

About Wildfire Prepared Home

Wildfire Prepared Home is the first-ever wildfire mitigation designation program. Based on the latest wildfire research conducted by the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS), it offers California homeowners a path to take the system of science-based actions shown to meaningfully reduce a home’s wildfire risk. Learn more at wildfireprepared.org.

About CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is the CAL FIRE program that protects life and property through the development and application of fire prevention, engineering, training and education, and enforcement. The Office of the State Fire Marshal’s Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division works with federal, tribal state, and local agencies, as well as non-profit entities, and other stakeholders to prepare California communities against the devastating effects of wildfire. The various programs within the division allow CAL FIRE to continue to build local and regional capacity, as well as developing, prioritizing, and implementing strategies and projects that create wildfire prepared communities.

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