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Protecting Your Home From Interface Fires

Homes that are adjacent to forests or grasslands are called interface areas, and are potentially at risk from interface wildfires.

Residents in these areas should take steps to minimize the risk to them and their property.

- The first thing is to ensure you have adequate fire insurance, not only for your home, but also for any outbuildings or structures like private bridges.

Some simple steps to take immediately include:

- Move any firewood, building materials, debris piles or other flammable materials at least 10 metres (approximately 30 feet) from structures;
- Ensure gutters are clear of any leaves or debris that might allow embers to take hold on your roof.
- Thin any brush or trees within 30 metres (approximately 100 feet) of your structure, and remove any dead grass or debris from this zone.
- On sloped ground, extend these distances, to allow for wildfire's tendency to burn upslope.
- Prune trees near your structures, removing lower branches from trees to a height of 2.5 metres (approximately 8 feet) from the ground.
- Remove and dispose of any logs, needles, twigs, dead grass and weeds, and shrubs that encourage fire to spread along the ground.

For information on longer term steps you can take to minimize your vulnerability to wildfires, contact your nearest Ministry of Forest office, or go to their website at www.for.gov.bc.ca/protect/

You may also find information on Emergency Preparedness and the Regional District of Central Okanagan Emergency Response plan by checking the Crime and Emergency Services section and Regional Disaster Plan. There you'll find links outlining specific aspects of the plan and information on how to prepare for an emergency. The Provincial Emergency Program has another useful site www.pep.bc.ca. This website provides specific information about preparing for a fire evacuation.