

# Guide to Protecting Your Property Against Wildfires



Wildfires can cause devastating, costly damage to your building. Read below to discover ways you can be prepared.

## Did You Know These Wildfire Facts?

- ▶ Burning embers can be carried by strong winds, meaning fires miles from a building could cause damage
  - When embers land on combustible materials or travel through open windows and unprotected vents, fires can ignite in a building
- ▶ Fires emit radiant heat that travels in invisible waves
  - When waves hit combustible materials, they are converted to heat, making such materials susceptible to fires
- ▶ Buildings have multiple vulnerabilities, including roofs, exterior walls, windows, vents, gutters, decks and combustible materials stored in or around the building

## What Can You Do to Reduce the Threat of Damage to Your Property?

- ▶ Evaluate the landscaping around your building
  - Placing plants strategically around your property can reduce the chances of flames spreading
- ▶ Remodeling? Think about the materials you are using:
  - Opt for concrete/brick, which provide greater protection against wildfires, burning embers and radiant heat
- ▶ Install Class A-rated roofing
  - Class A-rated roofs provide the greatest protection against wildfires
  - Some examples of Class A-rated roofs include:
    - Flat or low-sloped roofs with stone-ballasted single-ply membranes or loose gravel
    - Steep-sloped roofs with asphalt shingles, clay, slate and concrete, or metal
- ▶ Regularly inspect your gutters, roof and any surrounding areas to clear any debris that could aid in igniting a fire

- ▶ Install double-pane windows with tempered glass to increase protection against radiant heat
- ▶ Protect vents with a 1/8-inch metal screen to block floating embers from entering your building

## Buffer Zones: What Are They?

A buffer zone can be used to reduce fire damage to buildings and sensitive areas in landscapes prone to wildfires. Create zones around your building to keep fire/embers from igniting materials and causing fires. The zones include:

- ▶ **Zone 3:** the first line of defense, with a range of 100-plus feet
  - Remove any dead plants or trees in this area
  - Trim and space out any shrubs, keeping branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees
  - If your building is located on a slope, extend the zone anywhere from 150 to 200 feet
  - Storage sheds, trailers and outbuildings should all be in Zone 3
- ▶ **Zone 2:** preventative damage control, with a range of 30 to 100 feet
  - Remove any dead vegetation and cut back trees and shrubs
  - Keep grass to a maximum height of 4 inches, eliminating any tall grasses
- ▶ **Zone 1:** the last line of defense, from 0 to 30 feet
  - Clear away all dry and dead vegetation
  - Take into consideration the type of landscaping in this zone
  - Do not keep items and structures such as firewood, storage buildings or other combustible materials in this zone
  - Consider replacing any decks, wood walkways or balconies with noncombustible materials

