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Utah Interagency Fire Information

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Bureau of Indian Affairs



Bureau of Land Management



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State of Utah,
Forestry, Fire and State Lands



U.S. Forest Service



US Fish and Wildlife
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News Release

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SPRING CLEANUP CAN REDUCE FIRE HAZARD AT HOME

Thursday, April 19, 2007 ... Salt Lake City, Utah ...Is your home or cabin ready for the 2007 wildfire season? Federal, State and local fire officials urge all residents who have homes and other structures, along the urban interface and in forested areas, to protect their property by creating a defensible space around it.

Wildfire hazards around your home can be reduced by simple spring cleanup projects around the yard and regular maintenance of the home. Something as simple as branches touching your roof could be the avenue for a wildfire to ignite your home.

In Utah, wildfires happen in both remote and urban areas where you might least expect it. It is each homeowner's responsibility to make their home safe from wildfire and now is the time to take action. The combination of new homes being built in wildland areas and vegetation overgrowing older subdivisions makes wildfires increasingly more difficult to fight.

“As spring approaches, now is a great time to take action to prepare your property to survive the potential damage caused by wildfires” says Tracy Dunford, Fire Management Officer for the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands. “The best action homeowners can take it to create a space around their homes or cabins that may allow the property to survive a wildfire without firefighter assistance,” he added. “This is known as defensible space.”

(more)

Property owners can create this defensible space by following these tips:

- Clean out gutters, sweep decks and clean off your roof. These places can catch wind-driven embers that will ignite your home.
- Remove leaf clutter and branches overhanging the roof. Vegetation should not touch the home.
- Make sure that there are no flammable materials within 3 to 5 feet around the building.
- Dispose of plant debris according to local regulations.
- Keep your grass cut short and well watered within a 30-foot radius of structures
- Store firewood away from the house.
- Organize a neighborhood cleanup day. By helping your entire community, you'll be providing better protection to yourself.
- Contact your local fire department or agency office for more specific information.

“Research has shown that homes with defensible space, free of flammable fuels, can often survive a wildfire. Defensible space later offers firefighters the advantage of extra room to operate equipment to safely reach and extinguish any active fire when they check your home after the fire passes,” added Dunford.

There are many other things you can do if you are landscaping your yard or remodeling your home that may add to the safety of your home and the likelihood firefighters will be able to defend it. For more information and tips about landscaping go to www.firewise.org, or www.utahfireinfo.gov.

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