



# Wildland Fire Checklist – Preparing your property

## Prepare your home and property for the Wildfire season

### Starve the fire

Reduce the fuel load around your home so that embers will have less chance to ignite when they hit the ground. This will also help reduce the damage caused by the fire.

For at least 20 metres around your home and other buildings:

- ☐ Cut long grass and dense shrubs. Remove all dead material.
- ☐ Remove all rubbish and rake up leaf litter, twigs, bark and material that may catch fire.
- ☐ Ensure that flammable items are well away from the house e.g. firewood piles, boxes, garden furniture, rubbish bins, fuel containers, etc.
- ☐ Maintain a minimum two metre gap between your house and tree branches. Make sure that no trees overhang the house.
- ☐ Prune lower branches (up to two metres off the ground) to stop a fire on the ground spreading to the canopy of the trees.
- ☐ Do not clump shrubs, ensure that there is a gap. Shrubs should be planted at a distance of at least three times their height at maturity from buildings.
- ☐ Keep your gutters free of leaves and other combustible material.
- ☐ Create a firebreak, with no flammable vegetation along your boundary.
- ☐ Build your paths adjacent to the building and have your driveway placed so that it maximises the protection to the house.
- ☐ If possible, plan your garden so that your vegetable garden, lawn, pool or patio is on the side of the house likely to face a fire (where the bush is).
- ☐ Store firewood away from the building.

☐ Ensure that your gas bottles are secured and positioned so that it will vent away from the building if it is subject to flame contact or radiant heat.

☐ Ensure fences are non-combustible so they can help to shield your home from a wildfire and radiant heat.

### Fill the gaps and fire traps

Houses usually catch fire when embers get into the roof space, a wall cavity, on to ledges or under the house. Prevent embers from entering your house by blocking all the gaps.

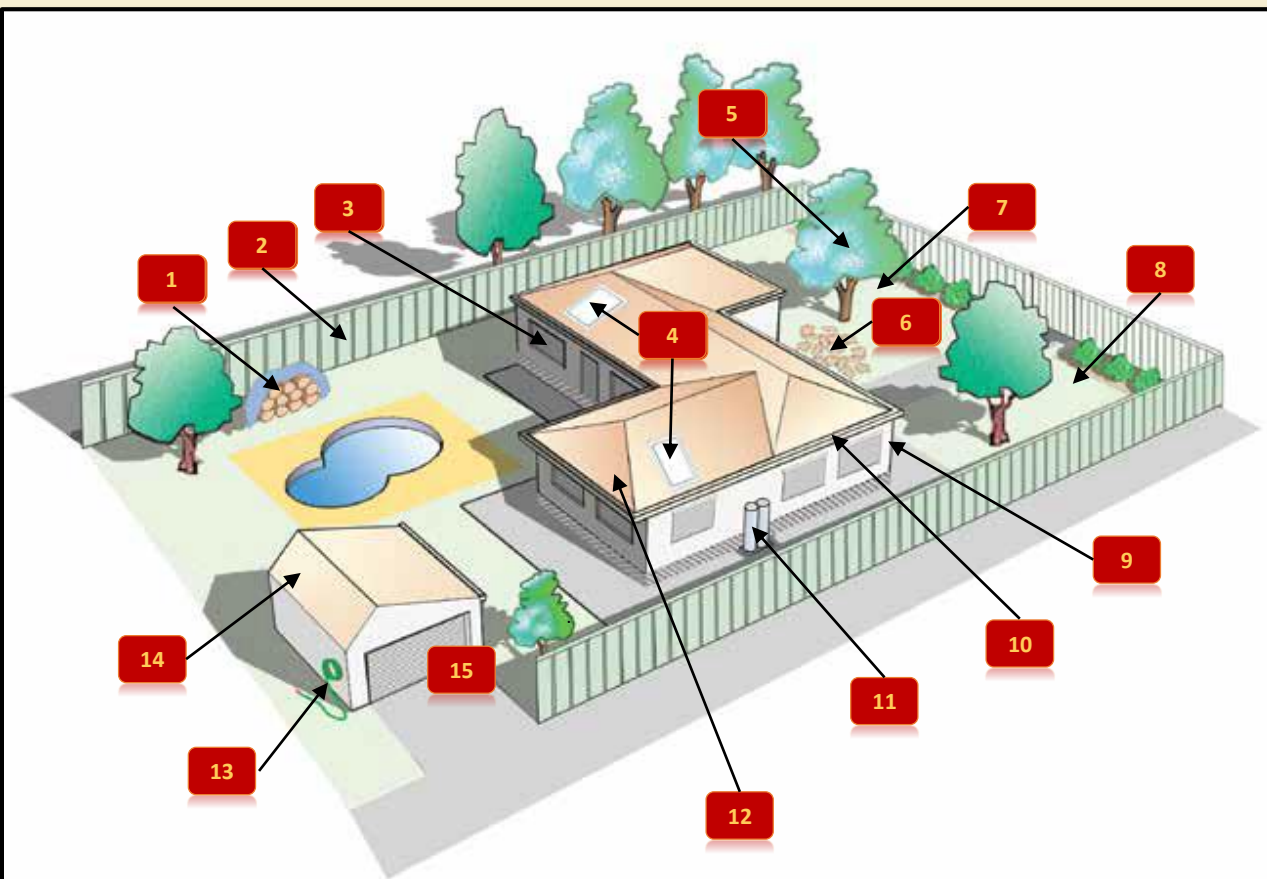
- ☐ Block any gaps under floor spaces, in the roof space, under eaves, external vents, skylights, chimneys and wall cladding.
- ☐ Place metal wire mesh on all windows, chimney vents, other vents and install an ember protection screen on evaporative air conditioners to keep sparks and embers out.
- ☐ Do not pile firewood up against or near the house or other structures.
- ☐ Remove any timber, rubbish and old junk lying around.
- ☐ Move all fuel containers into a shed away from your house and have a firebreak around it.
- ☐ Keep gas cylinders on the side of the house furthest away from the likely direction of a fire (where the bush is). Ensure the pressure relief valve is directed away from the house. Store gas cylinders upright and secure them with a metal chain to a secure, non-combustible post to prevent cylinders from falling over.

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## Example of an Urban property in close proximity to the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)



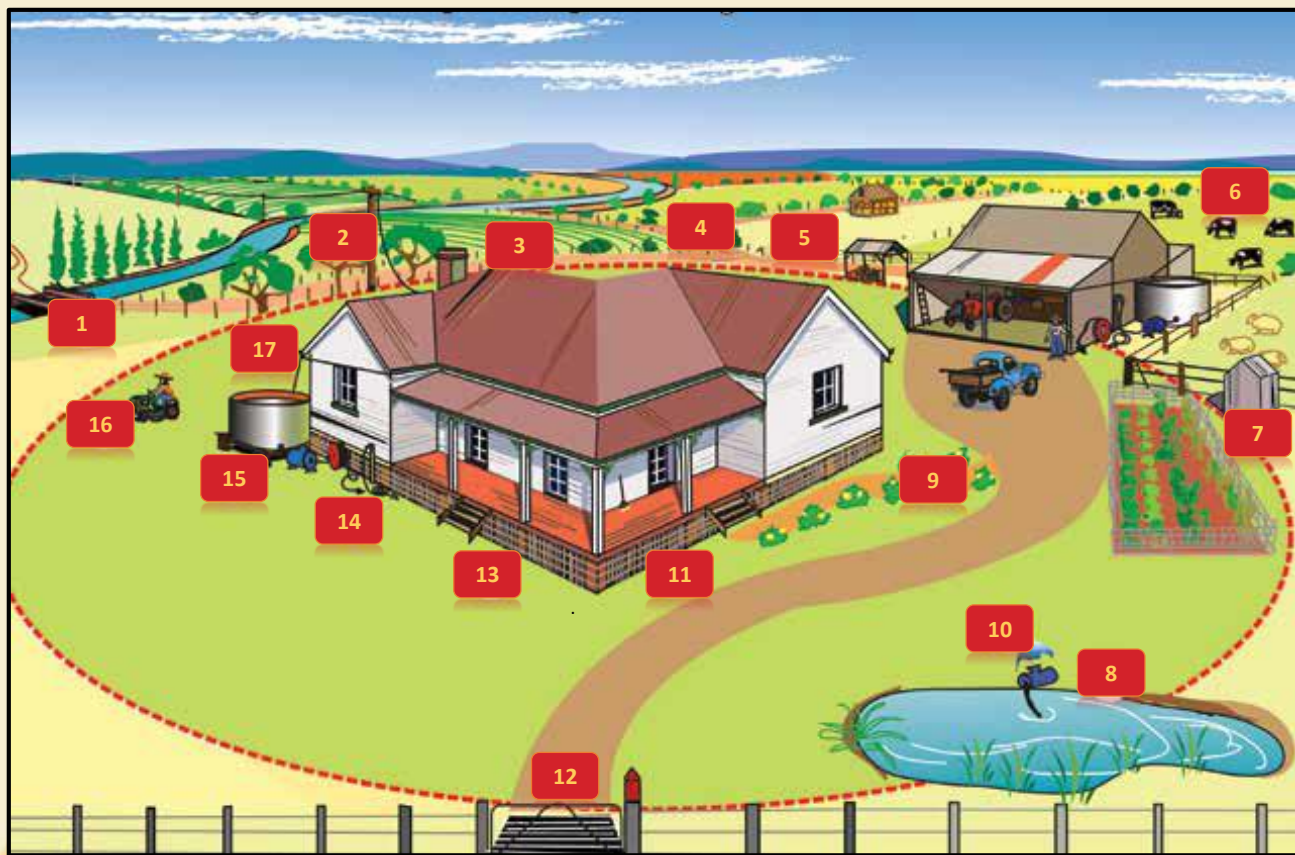
1. Do not pile firewood up against or near the house
2. Install a fire or heat radiation shield such as a solid wall or fence
3. Place metal wire mesh on all windows, vents, chimneys and install an ember protection screen on evaporative air conditioners to keep sparks and embers out
4. Block any gaps under floor spaces, in the roof space, under eaves, external vents, skylights, chimneys and wall cladding
5. Create and maintain a minimum two metre gap between your house and tree branches
6. Rake up leaf litter and twigs under trees
7. Remove shrubs and small trees under and between larger trees
8. Ensure garden mulch is kept away from the house and grass is kept short
9. Ensure all gaps in external wall claddings are sealed
10. Keep roof gutters and valleys clear of leaves, debris and bark
11. Keep gas cylinders on the side of the house furthest away from the likely direction of a fire (where the bush is). Ensure the pressure relief valve is directed away from the house. Store gas cylinders upright and secure them with a metal chain to a secure, non-combustible post to prevent cylinders from falling over
12. Block any gaps in the roof space
13. Hoses must be long enough to reach all parts of your house. Use metal hose fittings for taps as they are less likely to melt
14. Remove flammable materials and store them away from the house
15. Have a sufficient independent water supply in water tanks and a petrol, diesel or a generator powered pump capable of pumping 400 litres per minute.

**Wildfire resilience is everyone's responsibility!**



# Wildland Fire Checklist – Preparing your property

## Example of a Rural property with defensible space



1. Check bridge loading for fire tanker access
2. Trim branches away from power lines and telephone lines
3. Replace or repair damaged roofing and weatherboards where embers can enter
4. Put in firebreaks along yard boundaries
5. Store firewood away from the house
6. If wildfire threatens, move livestock to a well grazed area
7. Store petrol and gas safely away in a shed
8. Draw water from dams, tanks and pools. Don't rely on mains water supply
9. Keep a well maintained area with fire resistant plants
10. Install pumps with a spray nozzle
11. Seal under floor spaces to prevent embers entering
12. Check cattle grid loading for fire tanker access
13. Place water pipes underground from the dam pump to the house
14. Have a hose fitting on an internal tap to douse spot fires in the roof cavity
15. Fill water tanks and connect them to pumps for firefighting
16. Keep grass cut
17. Keep gutters well maintained and clear of leaf litter and debris

**Wildfire resilience is everyone's responsibility!**

For more detailed information:  
contact your local CPFPA Manager  
or go to [www.cpfpa.org.za](http://www.cpfpa.org.za)





# Wildland Fire Checklist – Preparing your property

## Example of a Rural property with excellent defensible space



**Defensible Space** in the context of wildfire control, is a natural and/or landscaped area, around a structure, that has been maintained and designed to reduce fire danger. The practice is also used in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). This defensible space reduces the risk that fire will spread from one area to another, or to a structure, and provides firefighters access and a safer platform from which to defend a threatened area. Firefighters sometimes do not attempt to protect structures without adequate defensible space, as it is less safe and less likely to succeed.

Creating defensible space is essential to improve your home's chance of surviving a wildfire. It's the buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surrounds it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and it protects your home from catching fire - either from direct flame contact or radiant heat.

**Wildfire resilience is everyone's responsibility!**