One Foot for Fire Safety

By Jan Foster, Greater Auburn Fire Safe Council

Ahhh, the weather is cooling. It's a great time to tackle a few fire safety projects.

How about picking one project and getting it done? Maybe you'll be inspired to tackle another and another over time. It's a process and every step you take improves the safety of your property.

Let's look at the 1-foot area from the side of your home and other structures. How about one of these projects?

- Install 1/8" screens on all of your vents to prevent embers from entering your home. They are available at hardware stores and take minimal effort to install.
- Clean roofs and gutters of leaves and other debris.
- Remove all dead wood, bark mulch and leaves within 1 *foot* of structures; 5 feet is recommended.
- Trim bushes within 1 foot of the siding of your home and other structures. One foot of clearance reduces your chance of siding igniting in a fire; 5 feet of clearance is recommended.
- Trim bushes below the level of windows to reduce the chance of them breaking in extreme heat. Embers can easily enter through broken windows and ignite inside your home.
- Trim trees away from gutters and siding. 1 foot is beneficial; 10 feet is recommended.

If you've already done these projects, consider these:

- Trim all limbs up off the ground – 3 feet is good; 10 feet is recommended.
- Trim shrubs up off the ground – 1 foot is good; 1/3 the height of the shrub is recommended.
- Trim shrubs and trees away from roadways to help you and your neighbors evacuate safely.
- Install gravel or decorative rocks 1 foot from siding; 5 feet is recommended.
- Trim back groundcovers to 4" in height and rake out dead leaves and debris. Groundcover will recover with the rains.

Every single step you take will reduce your chances of your home and structures from being destroyed in the event of a fire.

Don’t let the 5-foot and 30-foot CalFire recommendations overwhelm you and prevent you from doing something. One step at a time will make you safer and gradually get you in a better position to prevent loss or severe damage to your home and property in the event of a fire.

Jan Foster serves on the Greater Auburn Fire Safe Council and is a leader in her Firewise Community.