

# Seasonal Wildfire Preparation

## Preparing Your Home and Property Throughout the Year

Wildfire preparation is not something that happens in a single weekend. The most resilient properties are maintained **throughout the year**, with small actions taken each season to reduce risk.

In wildfire-prone regions—especially areas where homes meet forests, grasslands, or rural landscapes—conditions can change quickly. Dry weather, wind, and accumulated debris can all increase the chance that **wind-driven embers ignite materials around a home**.

Seasonal preparation focuses on **maintaining defensible space, protecting the structure itself, and ensuring your property is ready before fire danger rises**.

By spreading preparation across the seasons, homeowners can make wildfire protection **manageable and consistent rather than overwhelming**.

---

## Winter: Planning and Property Assessment

Winter is often the best time to **evaluate your property and plan improvements**. Vegetation is dormant, and homeowners can assess the layout of trees, shrubs, and structures without the pressure of wildfire season.

### Key tasks

- Walk your property and identify potential wildfire vulnerabilities
- Look for areas where vegetation is dense near structures
- Identify ladder fuels such as shrubs growing beneath trees
- Check roofs, vents, and siding for areas that may collect debris
- Review emergency access for vehicles and equipment

Winter is also a good time to research potential improvements such as **home hardening upgrades, defensible space adjustments, or protective systems like rooftop sprinklers**.

Planning ahead allows work to be completed before wildfire season begins.

---

## Spring: Property Cleanup and Risk Reduction

Spring is one of the most important seasons for wildfire preparation. As snow melts and vegetation begins to grow, debris from the previous year often becomes exposed.

This is the time to **remove accumulated fuels and prepare the property before conditions dry out**.

### Key tasks

- Clean leaves and debris from roofs and gutters
- Remove dead vegetation around structures
- Trim shrubs and trees near buildings
- Dispose of fallen branches and yard waste
- Maintain spacing between trees and vegetation

Spring is also an ideal time to inspect **vents, decks, fences, and other attachments** that could act as ignition points during ember storms.

Early preparation helps prevent dry fuels from building up around the home.

---

### **Early Summer: Maintaining Defensible Space**

As temperatures rise and vegetation dries, maintaining defensible space becomes critical.

Defensible space refers to the **managed area around your home where fuels are reduced to slow or prevent fire spread.**

#### **Key tasks**

- Keep grass trimmed short
- Maintain separation between shrubs and structures
- Thin dense vegetation where needed
- Remove ladder fuels beneath trees
- Store firewood away from buildings

Regular maintenance during early summer helps prevent vegetation from becoming **a continuous fuel source near the home.**

---

### **Peak Fire Season: Monitoring and Active Preparation**

During periods of high fire danger, conditions can change rapidly. Wind, heat, and drought can increase wildfire risk within hours.

Homeowners should shift their focus to **monitoring conditions and keeping the property ready.**

#### **Key tasks**

- Check local wildfire danger ratings regularly
- Keep roofs, decks, and gutters free of debris
- Move combustible materials away from structures
- Maintain access routes for emergency vehicles
- Prepare emergency supplies and evacuation plans

This is also the time to ensure that any **active protection systems**—such as pumps, water tanks, or rooftop sprinklers—are ready to operate if needed.

---

## Late Summer and Fall: Ongoing Maintenance

Wildfire risk can continue into late summer and early fall, especially during dry weather.

Maintaining your property during this time helps prevent new fuel buildup and prepares the home for the following year.

### Key tasks

- Remove fallen leaves and needles from roofs and gutters
- Clear debris from decks and patios
- Continue trimming vegetation near structures
- Inspect fences and attachments for fire pathways
- Maintain spacing between vegetation and buildings

Regular maintenance ensures that debris does not accumulate in areas where **embers could easily ignite materials**.

---

## Understanding Ember Exposure

One of the most important reasons for seasonal preparation is the risk posed by **wind-driven embers**.

During a wildfire, embers can travel **kilometres ahead of the main fire front** and land on structures, decks, roofs, or surrounding vegetation.

Common ember ignition points include:

- Leaves in gutters
- Dry mulch near siding
- Wooden decks and patios
- Vents and openings
- Stored firewood

By maintaining your property throughout the year, you reduce the chance that **embers will find something to ignite near the home**.

---

## Combining Preparation with Home Hardening

Seasonal maintenance works best when paired with **home hardening improvements** that make the structure itself more resistant to wildfire.

Examples include:

- Fire-resistant roofing materials
- Ember-resistant vents
- Non-combustible siding near the foundation

- Fire-resistant decking materials
- Improved window protection

These upgrades help reduce the likelihood that heat or embers will ignite the building.

---

### **Active Protection Measures**

Some homeowners choose to add additional layers of protection through **active systems designed to reduce ignition risk during wildfire events.**

Examples include:

- Rooftop sprinkler systems
- Perimeter sprinkler systems
- Dedicated water storage tanks
- Pump systems connected to lakes or ponds

These systems help wet surfaces and surrounding areas, making it harder for embers to start fires during high-risk periods.

---

### **Emergency Preparedness**

Wildfire preparation also includes planning for the possibility that a fire may approach your community.

Homeowners should consider:

- Preparing an evacuation plan for family members
- Keeping emergency kits accessible
- Ensuring access routes remain clear
- Monitoring wildfire alerts and local emergency communications

Being prepared helps families respond quickly if conditions change.

---

### **A Year-Round Approach to Wildfire Resilience**

Wildfire preparation is most effective when it becomes **part of regular property maintenance** rather than a last-minute effort.

By spreading tasks throughout the seasons, homeowners can steadily improve their property's resilience without major disruptions.

A well-prepared property typically combines:

- Defensible space management
- Home hardening improvements
- Regular seasonal maintenance

- Emergency planning
- Additional protection systems where appropriate

These combined steps help reduce wildfire risk and support safer communities in wildfire-prone regions.