

Preparing for Fire Season

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : May 19, 2010 at 7:32 am

Drought conditions are expected to persist or worsen in the Northwest which may lead to higher fire potential in Washington this summer. "Due to the possibility of heightened fire danger, it is important for homeowners to start preparing for fire season now," says State Fire Marshal Chuck Duffy. Homeowners living in wildland areas should understand the basics of wildfire and be prepared for when a wildfire occurs. Concentrate on reducing the exposure and flammability of the home by clearing debris from under decks, keeping the roof and rain gutters free of pine needles and other flammable material, and storing firewood away from the house.

It is also important to reduce and manage fuels in the Home Ignition Zone:

Within 30 feet of the home – Plant fire-resistant vegetation and water plants and trees regularly to ensure that they are healthy and green, mow the lawn regularly. Prune shrubs and cut back tree branches, the lowest branches should be at least 6-10 feet high and should not overhang any part of the home.

Within 30 to 100 feet from the home – Any trees should be spaced 20-30 feet between crowns to prevent fire spread. Plant in small, irregular clusters or islands. Separate shrubs by at least 2 times their mature height. Create fuel breaks, such as driveways, gravel walkways and lawns.

Beyond 100 feet – Prune and thin trees and brush. Break up the fire ladder leading from brush up into trees. Thin dense tree groups so canopies are not touching to slow the spread of fire. Remove heavy accumulation of woody debris, such as piles of stem wood or branches.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State including inspections of state licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data.