

Firewise Guide to Construction

NOTE: All Firewise suggestions are voluntary upon the owner, but all elements must still comply with "The Settings of Black Mountain Architectural Design Standards and Construction Guidelines".

"When considering improvements to reduce wildfire vulnerability, the key is to consider the home in relation to its immediate surroundings. The home's vulnerability is determined by the exposure of its external materials and design to flames and firebrands during extreme wildfires. The higher the fire intensities near the home, the greater the need for nonflammable construction materials and a resistant building design." – Jack Cohen, USDA-Forest Service

Use Rated Roofing Material. Roofing material with a Class A, B or C rating is fire resistant and will help keep the flame from spreading. Examples:

- Composition shingle
- Metal
- Natural or synthetic slate

Use Fire-Resistant Building Materials on Exterior Walls. Examples include:

- Cementitious Fiber
- Masonry
- Stucco

Use Double-Paned or Tempered Glass. Double-pane glass can help reduce the risk of fracture or collapse during an extreme wildfire. Tempered glass is the most effective. For skylights, glass is a better choice than plastic or fiberglass.

Enclose Eaves, Fascias, Soffits and Vents. 'Box' eaves, fascias, soffits and vents, or enclose them with metal screens. Vent openings should be covered with 1/8" metal screen.

Protect Overhangs and Other Attachments. Remove all vegetation and other fuels from around overhangs and other attachments (room additions, bay windows, decks, porches, carports and fences). Box in the undersides of overhangs, decks and balconies with noncombustible or fire resistant materials. Fences constructed of flammable materials like wood should not be attached directly to the house.

Anything attached to the house (decks, porches, fences and outbuildings) should be considered part of the house. These act as fuel bridges, particularly if constructed from flammable materials.

- 1) If a wood fence is attached to the house, separate the fence from the house with a masonry or metal barrier.
- 2) Decks and elevated porches should be kept free of combustible materials and debris.
- 3) Elevated wooden decks should not be located at the top of a hill. Consider a terrace.