

CFS FACT SHEET

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IDENTIFYING HAZARDS AROUND YOUR HOME

Burning debris is carried by strong winds that accompany bushfires. These sparks and embers may enter your home through small openings such as vents or may be large enough to break windows and ignite curtains and furniture etc. They may also settle on flammable material outside your home causing a small fire ('spot fire') to start. If this fire happens to be on your wooden deck, doormat or woodpile, it may eventually grow large enough to destroy your home.

Your home is more likely to survive a bushfire if you have prepared it properly. The most important job is to create a defensible space, which is an area around your home where you have modified the vegetation and removed most of the other flammable materials to reduce the fire's intensity. Removing flammable materials will mean sparks and embers will have less fuel to ignite, and any spot-fires will be easier to put out. Also, the impact of the flames and radiant heat from an approaching bushfire will be reduced. A defensible space makes it much easier to defend your home.

And if you choose to leave early, a defensible space will help fire-fighters protect your home, or may even protect your home if fire-fighters can't be there. Once a defensible space has been created, it needs to be maintained year-round to be ready for summer.

Some basic measures to improve your home safety are:

- **Smooth surface** – Paint or refurbish dried exterior timber, remove nooks or crannies where leaves and debris can gather
- **Roofing** – Well-secured metal roofing is preferable. A tiled roof needs to be well fitted with fire-resistant sarking (that is, fibreglass-based aluminium foil)
- **Walls** – Choose Non-flammable wall materials such as brick, mud brick and fibre cement. Vinyl weatherboards, rough timber and other cladding can warp or catch fire
- **Windows, crevices and vents** – Spark-proof the home with metal flywire screens on windows and doors, or install fire resistant metal shutters. Cover all wall cavities in fine wire mesh
- **Skylights** – Ensure skylights are made of wire-reinforced glass or a thermos-plastic, if not you can protect them with metal mesh screens. Plastic can melt and glass can break in intense heat
- **Property access** – Gateways should be at least three metres wide and there should be clear access with a turnaround point for fire-fighting vehicles
- **Gutters** – Regularly clean gutters and remove leaves and bark from any areas where they become trapped
- **Sprinkler system** – A home bushfire sprinkler system that directs water over the roof, windows, doors and underfloor areas is one of the most effective ways of protecting against radiant heat, direct flame and ember attack. Seek professional advice for design and installation

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Walk around your home and identify the potential problem areas:



Hazardous vegetation will increase the fire intensity close to your house.



Burning embers may ignite leaves in your gutters.



Gaps in eaves may allow entry of sparks and embers.



Woodpiles located close to your house may ignite and burn fiercely.



Exposed vents may allow entry of sparks and embers.



Trees overhanging your house will drop dead leaves and twigs into your gutters.

For more information, contact the **Bushfire Information Hotline** on 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677), visit www.cfs.sa.gov.au or download the [Alert SA mobile phone app](#)