



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

■ UC Cooperative Extension

Wildfire Preparedness for Small Farms

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SMALL FARMS SEMINAR

MAY 6TH, 2025



WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS WEEK

MAY 4-10, 2025



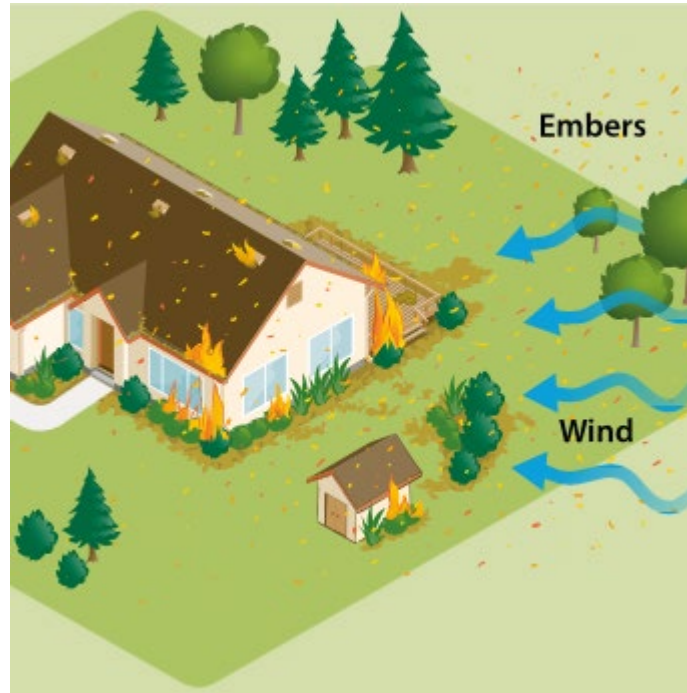
How can I prepare for wildfire season?



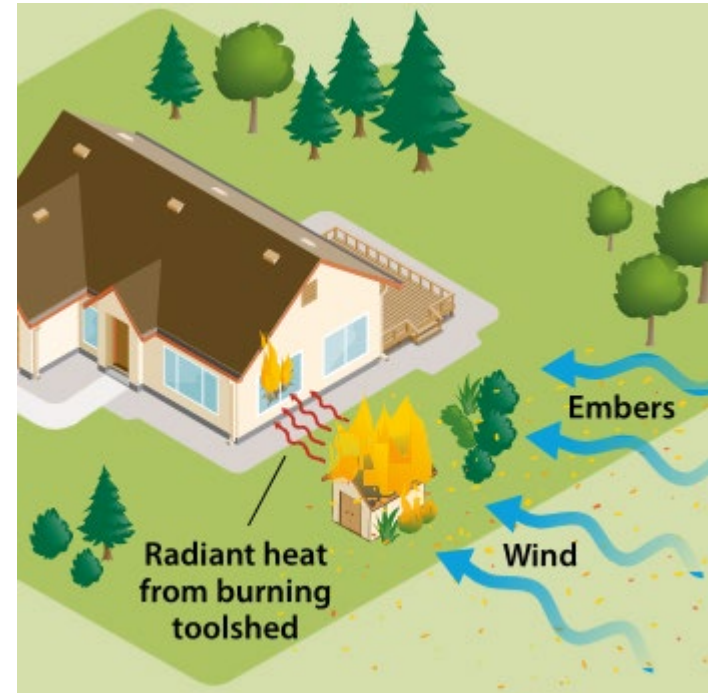
How Do Structures Burn?



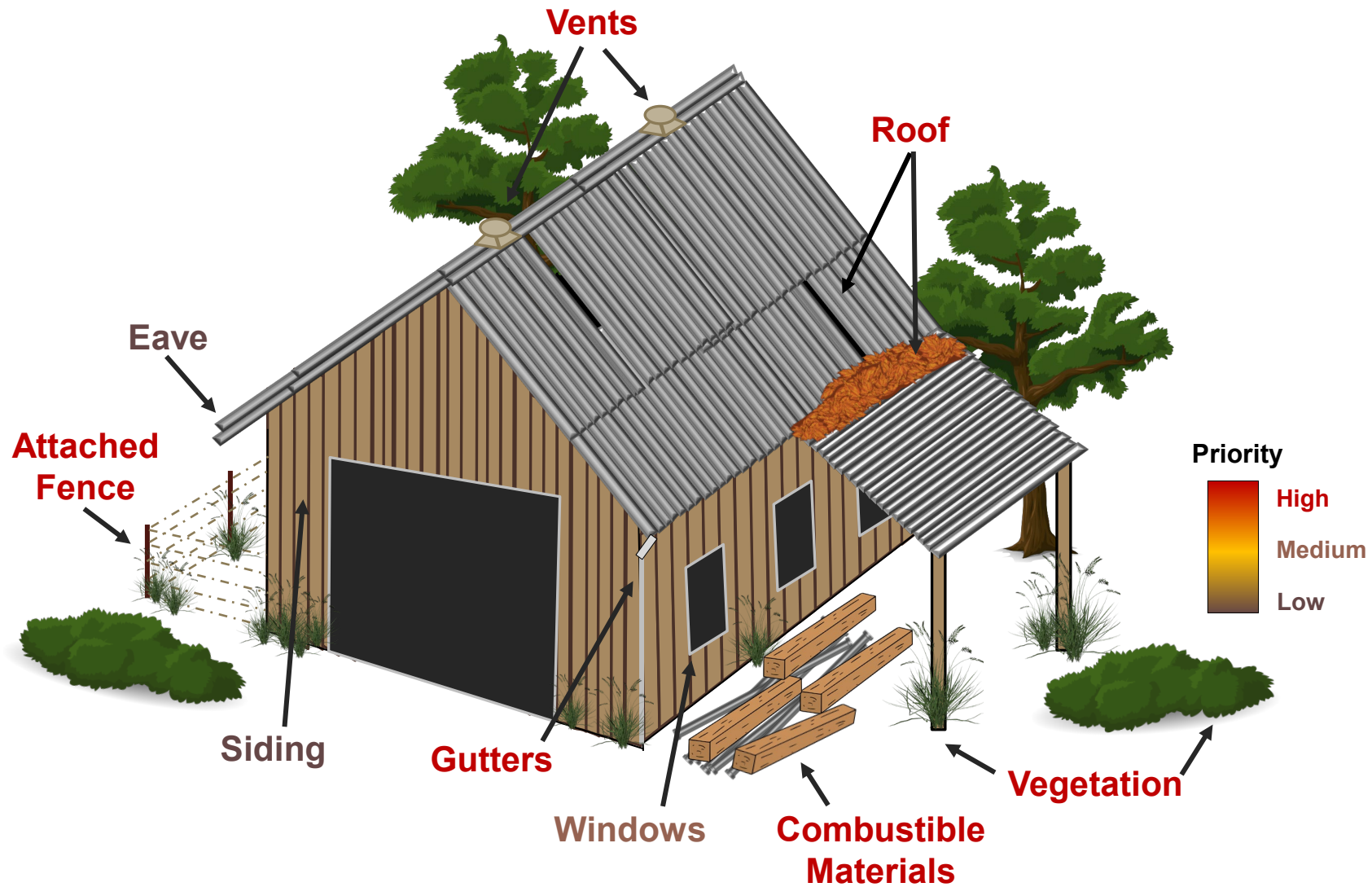
1. Direct Flame Contact



2. Embers



3. Radiant Heating



Hardening Structures

Barns and Wooden Structures

- **Remove combustible materials** within 5 feet of walls and openings
- Retrofit/replace roofing, vents, siding, etc.
- Prepare plywood boards or metal tape to cover openings before evacuation
- If you can't implement hardening components, improve defensible space within at least 30 feet (remove dead vegetation, trash, wooden materials, etc.)



Trailers



- **Keep area surrounding trailers free of wood, trash, brush, weeds**
- Skirt trailer with metal to protect underside
- Prepare plywood boards or metal tape to cover windows and vents before evacuation
- Close windows, skylights, doors before evacuation

Greenhouses

- Glass can shatter and plastic can melt/burn when exposed to high heat
- **Improve defensible space** around greenhouse
- **Avoid storing critical equipment/materials inside** during wildfire season



Other Critical Infrastructure



- E.g., Water pumps, water filtration systems, power generators, packing sheds, fuel tanks, cold storage containers
- **Clear debris, stored materials, and vegetation from these areas** to protect from flame contact and embers
- Aboveground fuel tanks should be on a noncombustible pad and be clear of vegetation
- Label water sources (ponds, tanks, wells, etc.) and other resources that can be used by firefighters

Equipment Storage

- **Store equipment inside hardened structures if possible**
- Otherwise, park equipment in a large area that is clear of vegetation with 20 ft between each piece of equipment
- Inspect equipment for fuel leaks and flammable debris buildup
- Keep windows and doors closed
- Cover with a fire-resistant tarp



Fields

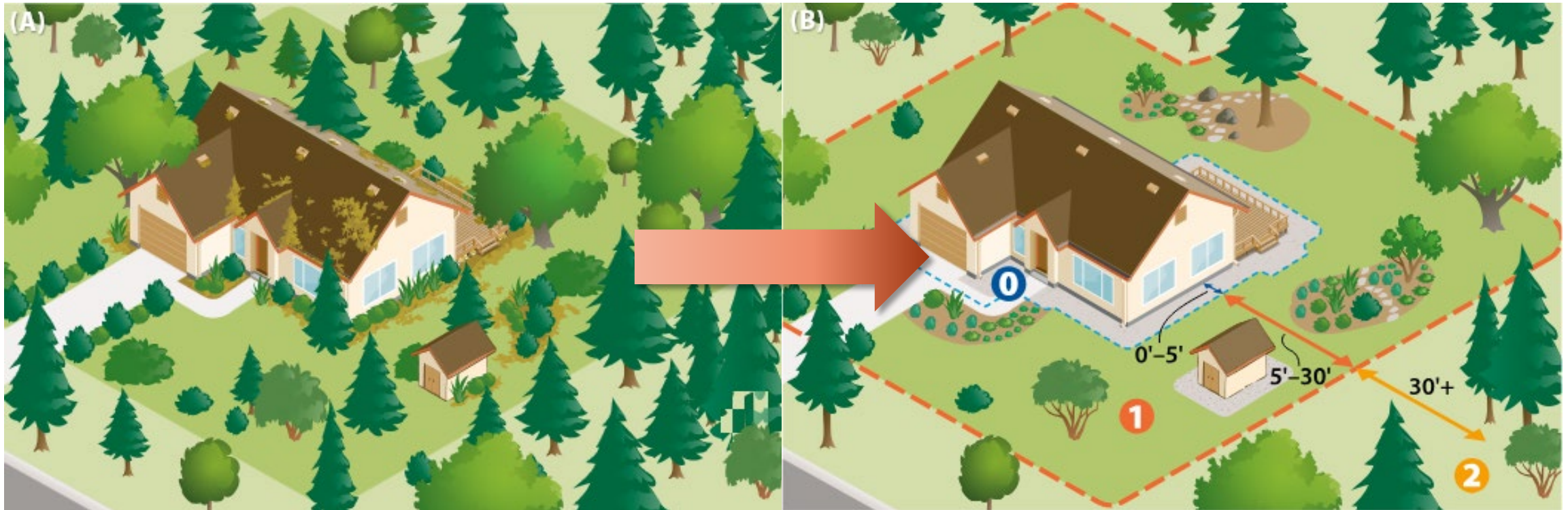


- **Consider creating fuelbreaks** around fields by disking/grading, herbicides, or targeted grazing at field boundaries
- Keep roads free of vegetation and keep vegetation low immediately adjacent to roads
- Keep natural or cover crop vegetation to a minimum height during wildfire season with mowing or grazing
- Infrastructure (e.g., fence lines, hoops, poly tunnels) should be kept free of vegetation along the edges
- Consider creating blocks separated by roads that can act as firebreaks

Hay and Crop Storage

- Hay and crop storage containers (cardboard, wood boxes) can be easily ignited
- Move to enclosed hardened buildings if possible
- If storing hay outside, stack neatly on bare soil, gravel, or concrete with defensible space around the stacks
- Consider storing in separate areas to mitigate risk of losing entire inventory





Defensible Space

Zone 0: Ember-Resistant (0-5 ft)

- **The most critical part of your defensible space strategy!**
- Remove and dispose of woody vegetation and combustible mulches
- Relocate wood piles, unprotected hay, other flammable material to Zone 2
- Consider concrete, gravel, or rock mulch around buildings
- Replace last 5 feet of fences attached to buildings with noncombustible panel or gate
- 6" vertical noncombustible section where exterior siding meets the ground



Zone 1: Lean, Clean, and Green (5-30 ft)



- **Goal: Reduce connectivity between islands of vegetation**
- Remove and dispose of all dead and dying vegetation
- Space shrubs two times the height of mature plants, increasing spacing on steeper slopes
- Remove limbs of tall trees from 6-10 ft off the ground. For younger/smaller trees, prune over time, but only remove branches in the lower one-third of the tree
- Remove branches of trees that are within 10 ft of a structure
- Mow or graze grasses to a maximum height of 4 inches

Zone 2: Reduced Fuel (30+ ft)

- **Goal: Reduce flame height and slow spread of an approaching fire**
- Remove and dispose of all dead and dying vegetation
- Thin trees so all branches or groupings of trees are separated by at least 10 ft
- Limb lower branches of taller trees up to a height of at least 10 ft
- Mow or graze grasses to a maximum height of 4 inches
- Distance between vegetation islands should increase on steeper slopes



Evacuation Planning

SIGN UP FOR GENASYS EMERGENCY ALERTS:



- Apply for your local Ag Pass program
- Prepare a go-bag with important documents, valuables, etc.
- Make a Wildfire Action Plan
 - What route will you take out of the evacuation area?
 - What will you take with you?
 - How will you prepare your property before you evacuate?
 - How will you communicate with your loved ones?
 - How will you evacuate your pets and livestock?

Where should I start?

- **Start at your home and work your way out!**
- Clear your roof and gutters of debris
- Check your vents and cover with 1/8" metal mesh screens
- Clear combustible materials at least five feet away from your structures
- Make an evacuation plan for yourself, loved ones, and animals
- Make a go-bag of essentials
- Sign up for emergency alerts



Resources

- Plumas County Fire Safe Council: plumasfiresafe.org
 - Fire Safe Home Visits
 - Community Chipping Program
 - Senior/Disabled Assistance Program
 - Hazardous Fuel Reduction Program
 - Plumas Underburn Cooperative
 - HEPA Purifier Loan Program
 - Firewise Communities
- Cal Fire: readyforwildfire.org
- UC Cooperative Extension: ucanr.edu/fire
- Plumas County Office of Emergency Services
- Feather River Resource Conservation District: frrcd.org
 - Technical and financial assistance programs



Personal Preparedness → Community Preparedness

Want to learn more?
Visit the UC ANR Fire
Network website:

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