

Wildfire preparedness important for Tahoe residents

May is Wildfire Awareness Month in the Lake Tahoe Basin. This year's theme is Prepare Your Home for Wildfire.

A fire adapted community is a community located in a fire-prone area that requires little assistance from firefighters during a wildfire. Residents of these communities recognize the responsibility of living in a high fire-hazard area. They possess the knowledge and skills to prepare their homes and property to survive wildfire, evacuate early, safely and effectively, and survive, if trapped by wildfire.

Things homeowners can do to become more fire adapted include:

- Talk to local fire departments about how to prepare for a wildfire, situational awareness, when to evacuate, and what communities should expect during a response.
- Contact local fire departments to conduct a property risk assessment.
- Develop a personal and family preparedness plan.
- Support land management agencies by learning about wildfire risk reduction efforts, such as using prescribed fire to manage local landscapes.
- Contact local planning/zoning offices to find out if the home is in a high wildfire risk area and if there are specific local or county ordinances to follow.
- Work with homeowner associations to identify regulations that incorporate proven preparedness landscaping, home design, and building material such as the recommendations from the Lake Tahoe Basin Living with Fire website.

Create a plan to address issues in the defensible space zone, including:

- maintaining a non-combustible area around the home perimeter
- managing vegetation along fences
- clearing debris from decks, patios, eaves, and porches
- selecting proper landscaping and plants
- knowing the local ecology and fire history
- moving radiant heat sources away from the home (wood piles, fuel tanks, sheds)
- thinning trees and ladder fuels around the home.