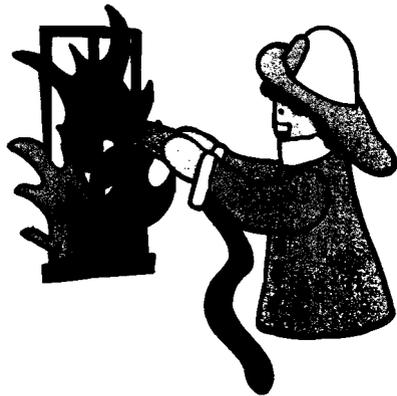


COUNTY OF CLARION

CITIZEN'S GUIDE
TO
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

**PROTECTING YOUR
PROPERTY FROM FIRE**



Fire protection can involve a variety of changes to your house and property -- changes that can vary in complexity and cost. You may be able to make some types of changes yourself. But complicated or large-scale changes and those that affect the structure of your house or its electrical wiring and plumbing should be carried out only by a licensed professional contractor.

ROOFING

Some roofing materials, including asphalt shingles and especially wood shakes, are less resistant to fire than others. When wildfires and brush fires spread to houses, it is often because burning branches, leaves and other debris buoyed by the heated air and carried by the wind falls on roofs. If the roof of your house is covered with wood or asphalt shingles, you should consider replacing them with fire-resistant materials.

You can replace your existing roofing materials with slate, terra cotta or other types of tile, or standing-seam metal roofing. Replacing roofing materials is difficult and dangerous work. Unless you are skilled in roofing and have all the necessary tools and equipment, you will probably want to hire a roofing contractor to do the work. Also a roofing contractor can advise you on the relative advantages and disadvantages of various fire-resistant roofing materials.

TIPS

Keep these points in mind if you plan to have your existing roofing materials replaced:

- ❖ Tile, metal and slate are more expensive roofing materials, but if you need to replace your roofing anyway, it may be worthwhile to pay a little more for the added protection these materials provide.
- ❖ Slate and tile can be much heavier than asphalt shingles or wood shingles. If you are considering switching to one of these heavier coverings, your roofing contractor should determine whether the framing of your roof is strong enough to support them.
- ❖ If you live in an area where snow loads are a problem, considering switching to a modern standing-seam metal roof which will usually shed snow efficiently.

DEALING WITH VEGETATION AND COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS

If the area immediately surrounding your house contains trees, shrubs and other vegetation; yard debris; or other materials that burn easily, your house will be at an increased risk of damage during wildfires and forest fires. These combustible materials provide a path by which fire from nearby areas can reach your house.

You should clear the area around your house. Shrubs, brush, woodpiles and combustible debris should be removed within a radius of 30 feet. The distance from your house and any nearby tree should always be greater than the height of the mature tree by at least 10 feet. Similarly, any outbuildings, such as storage sheds, should be at least as far away as their height.

TIPS

Keep these points in mind when you remove vegetation and other combustible materials from around your house:

- ❖ Removing large trees near your house can be very dangerous, for both you and your house, and is therefore a job for a skilled contractor.
- ❖ Rather than plant shrubs near your house, consider landscaping alternatives, such as creating a rock garden.