Lakehills Fire Safe Council
Community Bulletin

December 2017

Holiday Safety

Best Wishes to everyone – have a pleasant and joyful holiday season!

Whatever your activities this season, please make them safe activities. Whether indoors, outdoors, cooking, barbecuing, bike riding, working in the yard, etc., do them safely.

El Dorado Hills Fire Department and CAL FIRE websites have extensive prevention and safety information with very helpful seasonal reminders:

CLICK THIS LINK: <<EDH FIRE>>
CLICK THIS LINK: <<CAL FIRE>>

Seasonal Reminder about holiday candles and decorations safety:

⇒ Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed.
⇒ Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

Two of every five home decoration fires are started by candles.

Nearly half of decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.

For Christmas Tree Safety Tips, see this video: <<CLICK LINK>>

Assessing your property

Inspect your entire property when assessing fire risks. It may extend beyond your fence & front access; you are responsible for all of your property. Review the other side of your fence. Evaluate your street-side clearance (especially if your parcel fronts 2 streets). Dispose of trimmings using your green waste bins or EDCFSC’s free chipping program. Do not dump trimmings (FUEL) on empty lots or public land.

Thank you, Partners!

Thanksgiving, Christmas, Holidays, New Year - It’s time to count our blessings! Thanks to those who partner with LHFSC & provide their help, expertise and time:

- El Dorado Hills Fire Department
- CAL FIRE
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- CA State Parks/Folsom Lake SRA
- El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
- El Dorado County Dept. of Transportation
- California Conservation Corps
- El Dorado County Fire Safe Council
- Senator Ted Gaines

And to all our many volunteers!

Lakehills Fire Safe Council is a community organization. Join and Email us at: lakehillsfiresafecouncil@gmail.com

Next Council Meeting
No December Meeting
Next Meeting: March 13th 7:00 PM
EDH Fire Department Main Fire Station #85
El Dorado Hills Blvd. and Wilson Blvd.

Contributions are always appreciated! Support this all volunteer, non profit group by selecting “Lakehills Fire Safe Council” as your choice on AmazonSmile. Thanks!

<CLICK HERE>

Reporting Numbers to Call
Report non-desired activities in a proper and timely fashion.

- Report illegal parking or traffic problems to the Highway Patrol (916) 861-1300.
- Report illegal parkland activities to State Parks (916) 358-1300.
- Report illegal activity on non-park properties to the Sheriff (530) 621-6600.

<CLICK HERE>
Noncombustible Fencing Products Research - NFPA Cathy Prudhomme

Noncombustible fencing products reduce potential home ignitions.

As homeowners in wildfire-prone areas continue to search for ways to reduce potential home ignitions during a wildfire, the October edition of the five-part Wildfire Research Fact Sheet series produced by the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Firewise USA™ program and the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS), provides them with details on how noncombustible fencing products can have an impact.

The research fact sheet details how fencing placed within five feet of a building (the Immediate Zone) should be constructed of noncombustible materials. Using noncombustible fencing where it attaches to the building reduces the opportunity of a burning fence igniting the exterior of the structure.

It’s attached as page 3 in this bulletin, or you can read the fact sheet here: <<CLICK LINK>>

Thomas Fire / Ventura, CA - Sarah Gibbens, National Geographic

Everyone is certainly aware of the many horrific fires that occurred in Northern California in October and are now occurring in Southern California. Some of the realities of these fires are just incredible:

- Freeways closed
- Mandatory evacuations for hundreds of thousands
- Blazes erupting and fire spreading at the rate of a football field every second

It’s during events like these we are reminded of why we are part of the Fire Safe Council and why we work preventively and proactively to make our communities safer in the event — and real possibility — of local catastrophic wildfire.

This is an excerpt and video from a December 4th article by National Geographic.

California has been plagued by wildfires over the past few months, and overnight, flames reached deadly proportions in Ventura County. The ongoing disaster highlights the danger and science of wildfires, the conditions that help lead to them, and the increasing risks in a changing climate.

The Ventura County Fire Department describes the current blaze as fast-moving and difficult to contain—as many such wildfires are. In only a few hours, the blaze was able to cover 48 square miles, destroy 150 structures, and leave one dead. Ventura County sits just an hour's drive north from central Los Angeles. As the flames continue to grow, thousands are facing evacuations.

The video link from National Geographic shows unbelievable scenes from the Ventura area. Use the link below to view: <<CLICK LINK>>

Dry Conditions and Winds

Some things are not under our control: dry conditions, stands of diseased, dying & dead trees, and winds. Certain fires—driven by environmental forces similar to hurricanes, tornadoes or too much rainfall—cause wide spread & total disaster. In other wildfires, however, the destructive path is more conditional. Those homeowners who create defensible space, those who have removed ladder fuel, those who perform their maintenance year after year may detour the fire’s path. Every year for 5 years, the Fire Safe Council has worked with our partners to perform shaded fuel break work reducing & removing fuels on the public lands. Help ensure the conditions inside our communities also contribute toward reducing risk. Be FIREWISE!
NONCOMBUSTIBLE FENCING PRODUCTS REDUCE POTENTIAL HOME IGNITIONS

Many wildfire educational programs, along with the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) recommend noncombustible fencing products when placed within five feet of a building. As a necessary component, fencing located within the zero to five-foot noncombustible zone should be constructed of noncombustible materials.

A noncombustible zone minimizes the likelihood of wind-blown embers igniting fine fuels (such as bark mulch) located close to the building. Ember-ignited mulch can result in radiant heat and/or flaming exposure to the building’s exterior. Using noncombustible fencing where it attaches to the building reduces the opportunity of a burning fence igniting the exterior of the structure. Fencing products are often available in eight-foot pieces and use of that full section of noncombustible material is recommended. Observations made during the 2012 Waldo Canyon fire in Colorado Springs, CO provided evidence that burning fencing generates embers that can result in additional ignitions down-wind.

PERIMETER FENCING

When neighboring buildings are located within 20 feet of each other, use of steel fencing for the perimeter area can serve as a radiant barrier, providing added protection should a neighboring building ignite and burn. Research in Australia demonstrated the ability of panelized steel fencing to resist a radiant heat exposure.

RESEARCH FINDINGS TO HELP AVOID FENCE IGNITIONS

Recent research conducted by IBHS and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), both independently and in a collaborative project, provided additional information about the vulnerability of combustible fencing.

Photo Captions:

A. Flame spread to the building when combustible debris was at the base of the fence.
B. Gates made from noncombustible materials should be used where a fence is attached to the home. Source: University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources
C. Ignition from ember accumulation at the intersection of the vertical planks and horizontal support member.

1. Use a noncombustible fence section when it’s attached to a building.
2. The area at the base of the fence should be kept clear of debris. Flame spread to the building will be more likely if fine vegetative fuels (e.g., pine needles, leaf litter and small twigs) have accumulated. Avoid placement of combustible mulch near the fence.
3. A fence design that allows for greater air flow, such as a single panel lattice fence, makes it more difficult for wind-blown embers to accumulate at plank, or lattice panel to horizontal support locations. If an ignition occurs, it’s also more difficult for lateral flame spread to occur in the fencing material. Fence ignitions from wind-blown embers are more likely to occur at locations where vertical fencing planks attach to horizontal support members. The most vulnerable fencing from this perspective is a “privacy” fence, where the fence planks are on the same side as the horizontal support members.
4. A fence built from lattice that’s applied to both sides of the support posts may be desired for privacy or other landscaping purposes, but should be avoided in wildfire-prone areas. Recent research at NIST has demonstrated that fire growth and lateral flame spread are much greater in this design style.
5. Vinyl fencing is not vulnerable to ember exposures alone, but did burn when subjected to flaming exposures from burning debris. Vinyl fencing will deform if subjected to radiant heat.