

IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home™ Base Level Checklist

Every standard listed below is mandatory. The IBHS system uses a binary pass/fail framework; a single point of failure disqualifies the property until remediated.

1. Roof System & Debris Clearance

- **Class A Roof Covering:** Asphalt fiberglass shingles, metal panels, concrete or clay tile, or slate in sound structural condition. No missing shingles, tiles, or exposed underlayment. Wood shake or shingle roofs are ineligible.
- **Complex Roofs & Intersections:** Valleys, roof-to-wall intersections, and dormer junctures must be cleared of dead needles, leaves, branches, and organic litter.
- **Gutters & Downspouts:** All gutters must be completely free of organic debris. Metal gutter covers or micro-mesh guards must be kept clean.
- **Chimneys & Stoves:** Chimney outlets and flue caps must feature a corrosion-resistant metal spark arrestor screen with openings between 3/8 inch and 1/2 inch.

2. Exterior Vents (Ember Intrusion Prevention)

- **Mesh Sizing:** All attic vents, gable vents, crawlspace/foundation vents, and exterior soffit openings must be covered with noncombustible, corrosion-resistant metal mesh with openings no larger than 1/8 inch (1/16 inch to 1/8 inch wire mesh) or utilize an ASTM E2886-tested ember-resistant assembly.
- **Dryer & Exhaust Vents:** Must have backdraft dampers that close firmly when the appliance is off.
- **Turbines & Ridge Vents:** Must be fitted with approved inner metal baffling or internal fine-mesh screening.

3. The 0–5 Foot Perimeter Buffer (Zone 0)

- **Zero Combustibles:** Absolute removal of all combustible material within 5 horizontal feet of the structure foundation and attached structures.
- **Ground Cover:** Bark mulch, wood chips, pine needles, organic compost, and decorative railroad ties must be removed. Ground must consist strictly of bare dirt, decorative gravel, crushed river rock, flagstone, brick pavers, or concrete slabs.

- **Vegetation:** No bushes, shrubs, decorative grasses, trees, or planters containing organic potting soil within this 5-foot zone.
- **Stored Items:** Firewood piles, lumber, patio furniture made of wood or wicker, outdoor cushions, grills, brooms, and trash containers must be relocated beyond the 5-foot perimeter.
- **Attached Combustible Fencing:** Any wooden fence connecting directly to the home must be modified. A minimum 5-foot noncombustible gap (metal fence section, wrought iron, stone pillar, or metal gate) must sit directly against the home to prevent fire from traveling like a fuse into exterior siding.
- **4. Decks, Porches, & Elevated Structures**
- **Under-Deck Clearance:** The space underneath any low deck or porch must be clear of combustible storage, leaves, and needles. If open, the ground beneath must be noncombustible or fully enclosed with 1/8-inch metal mesh or fire-resistant skirting.
- **Deck Surface Maintenance:** Gaps between deck boards must be swept clean of trapped pine needles, dirt, and organic litter.
- **5. Defensible Space (5–30+ Feet & Outbuildings)**
- **Lawn & Ground Fuels:** Mowed grasses (maximum height 4 inches), fallen branches gathered, and dead brush removed.
- **Ladder Fuel Elimination:** Low-hanging tree limbs must be pruned up to a minimum clearance of 6 feet from the ground (or 1/3 of the tree height for smaller trees).
- **Tree Canopy Spacing:** Tree crowns should not overhang the roofline or touch neighboring trees within the immediate defensible envelope.
- **Outbuildings & Propane Tanks:** Sheds, uncertified detached workshops, wood piles, and exterior propane tanks require a minimum 30-foot clear defensible space buffer from the primary residence