



CHELAN FIRE and RESCUE
232 East Wapato
Chelan, WA 98816
www.chelan7.com

509-682-4476

Fall Cleanups Clearing Close to Home



While the home ignition zone (HIZ) typically includes property within 150 feet of your home, concentrating on surfaces closest to your home – 0 to 5 feet from structures – can make a tremendous difference when it comes to preventing harmful ignitions. Fall is an especially good time to focus (inward) as the areas closest to your house often provide nooks and crannies where debris can accumulate, endangering your home in the event that embers or flames come near.

Following are some actions you can take during your fall cleanup efforts to make sure your “0 to 5 zone” is truly safe.

- ▶ Clear gutters of leaves, pine needles, twigs and trash particles that collect. And remove all cut vegetation, dead material and debris from your property.
- ▶ Close off spaces under decks and exterior vents with 1/8 inch metal screening to prevent embers from entering. Also repair screens and venting around your home through which embers could enter or allow a fire to ignite.
- ▶ Keep spaces under a deck free of all combustible materials such as lumber, leaves and firewood. The same goes for spaces under bushes that may be near structures.
- ▶ Use flowerbeds, walkways, rock walls, and lawn to break up the continuity of vegetation in this zone. These can help create a firebreak close to your house.
- ▶ Make sure that any plants growing within the zone are non-flammable and will not ignite easily.
- ▶ Trim any grasses growing within the zone and be sure that any plants do not offer a “ladder” to other vegetation growing nearby. Also trim vegetation away from windows. Burning vegetation close to a window can break the glass, allowing fire to enter.
- ▶ Thin “ladder fuels” from under trees. Lowest limbs should clear vegetation underneath the tree by 3 times the height of the undergrowth.
- ▶ Trim trees so foliage is no closer than 10 feet from the outlet of any chimney, roofline, eaves and walls. Also thin trees and shrubs to prevent interlocking canopies. Space trees at least 10 feet apart at branch tips, more if on a slope.
- ▶ Remove lower branches on trees and shrubs to prevent fire on the ground from moving up into the crowns. A good rule of thumb is prune to 8 feet on larger trees or 1/3 of the tree height on small trees.
- ▶ Make sure that any firewood is stacked well beyond this “inside zone,” at least 30 feet or more from your home.
- ▶ Evaluate which trees or shrubs need protection from winter elements and plan to take care of these plants before the cold weather comes.
- ▶ If your home was constructed with building materials that are not up to Firewise standards, such as wood shakes on your roof, consider updating these materials.
- ▶ Clearly post your address on your home and at all driveway junctions. Numbers should be reflective for easy view in smoke or dark.