



WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE FIRE SAFETY

Defend Your Home From Wildfire

*A Rollins homeowner's guide to protecting what matters before
the smoke ever rises.*

Rollins Volunteer Fire Department

Rollins, Montana

PREPARE · HARDEN · HAVE A PLAN



01 DEFENSIBLE SPACE

WHY THIS MATTERS IN ROLLINS

You live in the wildland-urban interface.

Homes in and around Rollins sit where the forest, grass, and lakeshore meet the neighborhood. In a Montana fire season, that beauty is also fuel. The good news: most homes lost to wildfire are not overrun by a wall of flame. They are ignited by wind-blown embers landing on something small and flammable, hours before or after the fire front passes. Embers you can plan for. And the work that protects your home is the same work that gives our firefighters a fighting chance to defend it.

THE HOME IGNITION ZONE

Defensible space, in three zones.

Think of your property in bands moving out from the house. The closer to the walls, the more it matters. Start at the house and work outward.



0–5 FT

Immediate Zone: the most important five feet

- Keep it noncombustible: gravel, pavers, or bare mineral soil against the foundation. No bark mulch beds touching the house.
- Move firewood, propane tanks, and door mats at least 30 feet away.
- Clear leaves and needles from the roof, gutters, and under the deck, where embers collect and catch.
- Nothing flammable stored under decks, stairs, or eaves.



5–30 FT

Intermediate Zone: lean, clean, and green

- Mow grass to 4 inches or less and keep it watered where you can.
- Space out shrubs and trees so fire cannot climb from one to the next.
- Limb up trees 6–10 feet from the ground to break the "ladder" from grass to canopy.
- No wood piles, and keep trailers and boats out of this band during fire season.



30–100 FT

Extended Zone: slow the fire down

- Thin trees so canopies are 10–18 feet apart; remove dead and downed wood.
- Break up continuous brush and grass so a ground fire loses momentum before it reaches the house.
- Keep this zone up on slopes especially, fire moves faster uphill.



02 HARDEN YOUR HOME

HARDEN YOUR HOME

Embers find the weak spots. Close them.

A home survives on its details, the vent, the gutter, the gap under the deck. Work through this list a weekend at a time.

Roof & Gutters

A Class A roof is your best defense. Keep the roof and gutters clear of needles and leaves; metal gutter guards help.

Windows

Dual-pane windows with at least one tempered pane resist breaking from radiant heat. Broken glass lets fire straight in.

Vents

Cover every vent (attic, crawlspace, gable) with 1/8-inch or finer noncombustible metal mesh, or install listed ember-resistant vents. Vents are the number-one way embers get inside.

Decks & Porches

Use noncombustible or ignition-resistant decking and keep the area underneath clear, with no stored wood, furniture cushions, or debris.

Eaves & Siding

Box in open eaves. Use ignition-resistant or noncombustible siding, and seal gaps where embers can lodge.

Fences & Garage

A wood fence is a wick leading to your house. Make the last 5 feet where it meets the wall noncombustible. Weather-strip the garage door so embers can't blow under it.

REMEMBER

Most homes ignite from embers, not flames.

Wind can carry embers more than a mile ahead of a fire. That is why the small stuff (a clean gutter, a screened vent, five noncombustible feet around the house) saves homes when the big stuff cannot.



03 READY, SET, GO

WHEN FIRE THREATENS

Ready, Set, Go.

The families who leave early are the ones who leave safely. Know these three stages before you ever need them.

READY

Do the work in this guide now, defensible space and a hardened home. Build a plan and a go-bag before fire season.

SET

Conditions are dangerous. Stay aware, keep the car backed in and packed, wear cotton or wool, and be prepared to leave at a moment's notice.

GO

Leave early. Do not wait for an order if you feel unsafe. Leaving before the fire arrives keeps you and the roads clear for firefighters.

YOUR GO-BAG

- ☐ Medications, glasses, and important documents (or copies)
- ☐ Water and non-perishable food for three days
- ☐ Flashlight, batteries, N95 masks, first-aid kit
- ☐ Phone chargers, cash, a spare set of clothes
- ☐ Pet food, leashes, carriers, and a photo of each pet

YOUR FAMILY PLAN

- ☐ Two ways out of your neighborhood, since roads can close fast
- ☐ A meeting point and an out-of-area contact everyone knows
- ☐ A plan for animals and livestock, decided in advance
- ☐ Sign up for county emergency alerts before you need them

LOCAL & SEASONAL

Fire season

Roughly June through September. Conditions can turn dangerous fast during hot, dry, windy stretches.

Fire restrictions

Check current burn and fire restrictions before any outdoor burning (Montana DNRC).

Emergency alerts

Sign up at: _____ (Lake County alert system)

Reach RVFD

Non-emergency: _____ | Emergencies always call 911



04 POST IT ON THE FRIDGE

POST IT ON THE FRIDGE

Your Wildfire-Ready Checklist

Ten actions that protect your home. Knock them out one at a time.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Clear the roof and gutters of needles and leaves | ☐ Mow grass short and space out shrubs and trees |
| ☐ Make the first 5 feet around the house noncombustible | ☐ Limb up trees 6–10 feet from the ground |
| ☐ Screen every vent with 1/8-inch metal mesh | ☐ Thin trees and remove dead wood out to 100 feet |
| ☐ Move firewood and propane 30+ feet from the house | ☐ Pack a go-bag and make a family evacuation plan |
| ☐ Clear everything flammable from under decks and stairs | ☐ Sign up for county emergency alerts |

A VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT

We answer the call. You can help us answer it better.

Rollins VFD is staffed by your neighbors. Your support keeps our trucks rolling, our gear current, and our training sharp for the day your family needs us. Join our mailing list to stay wildfire-ready, and consider supporting the department.



Scan to donate
rollinsfire.org/give

Every gift helps keep Rollins VFD equipped, trained, and ready to answer the call.