



Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology

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Firefighter's Group Releases "A Homeowner's Guide to Fire-Resistant Home Construction" Offers Tips to Reduce Home Ignitions From Wildfires

EUGENE, OREGON—In response to the annual threat of wildfire damage to private homes, Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology (FUSEE), a nonprofit organization of fire management experts, released "*A Homeowner's Guide to Fire-Resistant Home Construction*" on August 4, 2006, available on the FUSEE website at http://www.fusee.org/safety/docs/homeowners_guide.pdf. In contrast to most other homeowner wildfire education literature that focuses on vegetation management, FUSEE's *Homeowner's Guide* offers unique technical information written in plain language on the flammability of various construction materials, and offers advice on how to build or renovate homes to increase their chance of survival during severe wildfires.

"There is no guarantee that wildland firefighters will be available or able to protect individual homes from large-scale wildfires burning under extreme conditions," said Rich Fairbanks, a 20-year veteran firefighter and lead author of the *Homeowner's Guide*. "By using some of the fire-resistant materials presented in the *Homeowner's Guide* along with managing the vegetation on their properties, rural homeowners can become active partners with wildland firefighters to help protect their homes and communities from wildfire damage."

"People living in fire-prone environments should use fire-resistant construction materials and maintain vegetation located near their home," said Dr. Stephen Quarles, a wood durability researcher with the University of California Cooperative Extension. "While no built structure can escape fire damage under all conditions, homeowners can make sensible choices about building materials to effectively increase the survivability of their homes during wildfires."

"Global warming is creating longer fire seasons and causing more frequent, large-scale, high-severity wildfires," said Timothy Ingalsbee, executive director of FUSEE. "Making homes more fire-resistant will enable firefighters to better manage fire during wildfire emergencies and planned prescribed fires. The sooner we can protect homes from fire, the sooner we can restore forests with fire."

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In California, over 11,055 homes were burned by wildfires between 1990 and 2003. The 2003 Cedar Fire alone destroyed 4,800 structures and killed 26 people. Currently, nearly 40% of all homes nationwide are located in the Wildland/Urban Interface Zone, equating to almost 50 million homes at risk of damage or destruction from wildfire.

“*A Homeowner’s Guide to Fire-Resistant Home Construction*” is available at:
http://www.fusee.org/safety/docs/homeowners_guide.pdf

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