

PREVENTION STEPS FOR HOUSING & HOUSING ESTATE AGAINST FOREST FIRE

Quick Action Guide for PREVENTION & PROTECTION



Example of situations to avoid

LEGAL REFERENCES

According to the Law 5/99 on Prevention and Fight against Forest Fire*, every housing estate in contact with forest should have its own Self-Protection Plan that will establish the appropriate steps for prevention and fight against forest fire.

* Articles 42 to 44 (BOJA 82/1999, July 17) and Regulation, article 33 (BOJA 144/2001, December 15)

This Self-Protection Plan can be downloaded from the website of the Ministry for Environment of Andalusia. Such a Plan is mandatory; it should be made under the responsibility of the owners, submitted to the corresponding City Council for approval and included in the Local Emergency Plan for Forest Fires.

YOUR COOPERATION IS VERY IMPORTANT!

Protecting people, housing, properties as well as the natural environment, in housing estates and populated areas in contact with woodland, is a shared responsibility :

- Detect all possible sources of fire, such as debris accumulation and other flammable materials;
- Identify plots of land without building and other such locations from where fire might spread;
- Avoid reckless use of fire;
- Identify streets, paths or roads in disrepair, with poor accessibility or poorly marked;
- Report any incident to Environmental Agents, to the Provincial Office for Environment, to the Civil Guard or to local police.

PROTECTION OF ISOLATED HOUSES

Isolated dwellings in forest land are much more vulnerable, and depend much more on their own preventive measures:

- If embedded in a forest land, a self-protection plan or a fire prevention plan is required by law.
- Promoting common preventive actions among dwellers (e.g. creating and maintaining firebreaks around clusters of dwellings).
- Have a safety zone around the house, with less vegetation, free of dry grass, weeds or other flammable materials.

CALL URGENTLY IN CASE OF FIRE!



Plan INFOCA

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**FIRE FIGHTING,
LET'S ACT TOGETHER**

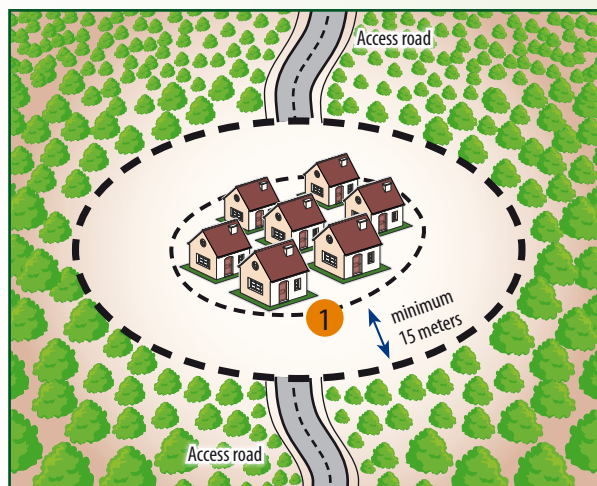


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THE FOREST-URBAN INTERFACE

A situation where forest vegetation is interspersed with houses is known as forest-urban interface. The contact or proximity of vegetation is a potential danger in case of forest fire.

Isolated houses in the woodland, scattered housing, housing estates, rural populations, as well as the edges of large cities are all examples of interface where protection and prevention against forest fires should be addressed.



FIRE BEHAVIOR IN INTERFACES

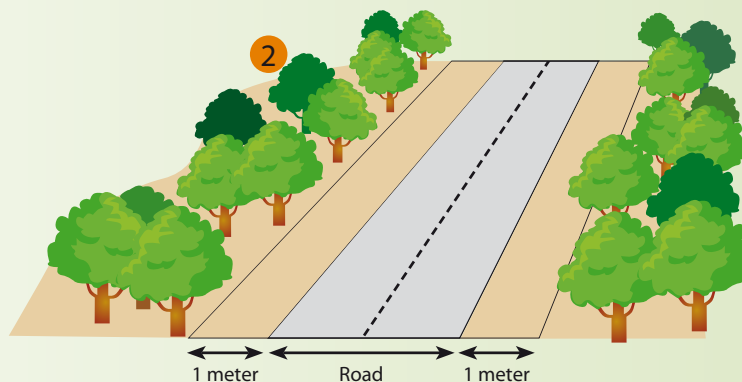
Fire, on forest vegetation, close or within an urban area, is a source of danger through:

- Smoke, which directly affects individuals by limiting their vision;
- The ashes, from which secondary fires may start in the plots with vegetation, flammable materials or even houses;
- The flames, which can spread through vegetation, gardens (hedges, plants, etc.) flammable materials and even enter and affect houses;
- The evacuation of the population, due to entrapments on the roads is the first cause of deaths in interfaces.

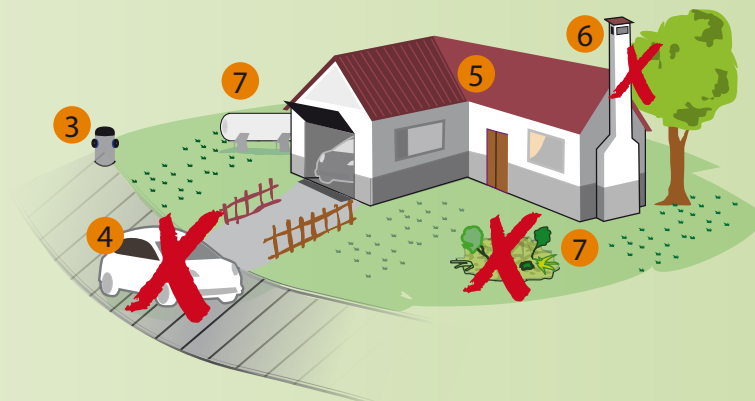
PROTECTING HOUSING ESTATE GENERAL MEASURES

Housing estates, in or near forest land, may be threatened by fire. Making them more resistant and safe is a responsibility for all residents, and for the communities of owners.

- Ensure a full knowledge of the emergency telephone numbers
- Develop a plan for self-protection and defence, which include preventive actions, in accordance with the current regulation.
- Ensure a full knowledge of all escape possibilities, signalize the evacuation routes, as well as the spots where to go in case of fire and the time needed to reach and inform residents and visitors.
- Identify activities and places from which fire may originate, around and within the housing estate. They should be removed or separated from any surrounding vegetation.
- Create a protection strip, free of vegetation, around the housing estate, of at least 15 meters wide. ①
- Signalize street name and house number.
- Keep private roads, both internal and access, and roadsides, free of dry vegetation over one meter wide. ②
- Maintain the housing estate free of dry grass and other small flammable materials.
- Avoid plant remains accumulation on plots without building, in the ravines, on the edges of the housing estates as well as in areas in contact with power plants and power lines. Keep trees pruned and free of dead branches with cups separated from ground vegetation as well as from housing.



- Create and maintain a network of hydrants and water points. ③
- Keep streets, roads and other access routes in good condition.
- Avoid obstruction of streets and access with parked vehicles, especially on days with higher-risk. ④



SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR HOUSES AND GARDENS

Plots, gardens and homes in the housing estate may be badly affected by forest fires:

- Always use fire-resistant species in the garden, especially in hedges. Do not use flammable hedges and fences at the edge of the plot close to the forest area.
- Keep roof, decks and other horizontal elements in good condition, and free of debris. ⑤
- Remove vegetation (tree branches, etc.) that is above the house. Special attention should be paid to chimneys (try to cover them with a spark arrestor cap). ⑥
- Do not pile materials, products and flammable objects. Make it clean around the house, especially close to facade, doors and windows.
- Make a fire resistant plot, limiting or eliminating flammable vegetation in the garden. Attention to pruning remains, wood and fuel tanks. ⑦
- Protect doors and windows with shutters.
- Use double-glazing windows (with air chamber).
- Avoid using plastics and other flammable materials as construction elements, in particular on the facade of the house.
- Keep a good irrigation system and water supply (tanks, swimming pools or other deposits).