

Understanding the City of Louisville Fire Hardening Code



Who is required to adhere to the code?

Anyone building new construction or additions or replacing existing building materials.

Who is exempt?

Historic homes, certain commercial structures, and temporary structures, such as tents, are exempt. For specific guidance, refer to City Ordinance No. 1891, Series 2025.



Ordinance Requirements

- ✓ Class A roof coverings, which include metal, membrane, asphalt, tile, clay, concrete, stone, and slate shingles.
- ✓ Fire-resistant siding and eaves that have a maximum flame spread index of 25.
- ✓ Fire and ignition-resistant deck surfaces, steps, and guardrails, each of which with a maximum flame spread index of 25. There must be a layer of gravel placed over a 6-millimeter plastic sheet or a concrete slab beneath decks that are 6 feet or lower to the ground to prevent vegetation growth under the deck.
- ✓ Fire and ignition resistant fencing within 5 feet of a structure with a maximum flame spread index of 25, or be constructed with an ignition-resistant material like metal, masonry, or stone.
- ✓ No planting, relocating, or replacing junipers, as they are considered a significant fire hazard.
- ✓ Roof/attic vents, crawlspace vents, and solar-panel screens must be installed on all new structures and on any structure where vents are being replaced. All vents must use 1/8-inch metal mesh.
- ✓ Metal gutters with gutter guards must be used on new structures and as replacement gutters and must have an approved ignition-resistant means to prevent debris accumulation in the gutter.

What is fire hardening?

Home hardening refers to a range of landscaping and building tactics that reduce the likelihood of home damage or destruction from a wildfire.

Homes are at risk of damage because surrounding vegetation and building materials can catch fire from:

- ▶ A wildfire's embers (burning or smoldering pieces of material carried by the wind that can land on combustible materials)
- ▶ Radiant heat (heat from the fire raises the temperature of a combustible material until it ignites)
- ▶ Conduction (the flame touches a combustible material and the material burns)
- ▶ Convection (the transfer of heat by moving hot gases ignites a combustible material).

The spread of wildfire can also occur between homes in a neighborhood. Studies have shown that managing vegetation on your property and using fire-resistant construction materials that are more able to withstand flames (e.g., concrete vs. wood) can significantly decrease the likelihood of damage to your home by removing fuels and combustible materials that can ignite.

When the whole community hardens buildings and homes against fires, it is harder for fire to quickly spread because it reduces the amount of available material that the fire can ignite from embers, direct flames, or radiant heat, making our entire community safer.

Required and Recommended Landscaping:

It's not just about how you build. Creating and maintaining as much defensible space as possible around your home is a proven step to reduce the spread of fire from building to building. This space is split into three zones: Zone 0 (0 to 5 feet from your home), Zone 1 (5 to 30 feet from your home), and Zone 2 (30 or more feet from your home).

Not all homes in Louisville will be able to perform tasks for all zones—completing any of the specific actions listed below can make a difference!

0 Zone 0 0–5 feet from your home	1 Zone 1 5–30 feet from your home	2 Zone 2 30 or more feet from your home
✓ Use hardscape like gravel, pavers, or concrete in place of combustible mulch materials. ✓ Remove all dead and dying weeds, grass, branches, and vegetative debris from your yard and home, including your roof, gutters, decks, porches, and stairways. ✓ Remove branches within 10 feet of chimneys and stovepipe outlets. ✓ Move firewood, garbage, recycling containers, vehicles, and other combustible items outside of this zone. ✓ New installations of plants and combustible materials are prohibited within the first five feet around primary structures within specific subdivisions.* Moving forward, only noncombustible, hard surface ground cover materials (rock, gravel, sand, concrete, bare earth, or stone/concrete pavers) are allowed within this zone. *Required	✓ Remove all dead vegetation, including plants, grass, weeds, leaves, and pine needles from your yard. ✓ Remove branches that hang over your roof. ✓ Trim trees to keep branches at least 10 feet from any other tree. ✓ Create a separation between trees, shrubs, and flammable items like patio furniture, wood piles, and swing sets.	✓ Regularly cut or mow your lawn. ✓ Keep a 10-foot clearance around any exposed wood piles. ✓ Create horizontal space between trees and shrubs (dependent upon the slope of the ground and height of the trees, recommended spacing can range from 10 to 30 feet). ✓ Create vertical space between trees and shrubs (remove branches beneath large trees for a 6-foot minimum clearance; trim shrubs and trees to maintain enough space between the top of the shrub and the lowest branches).

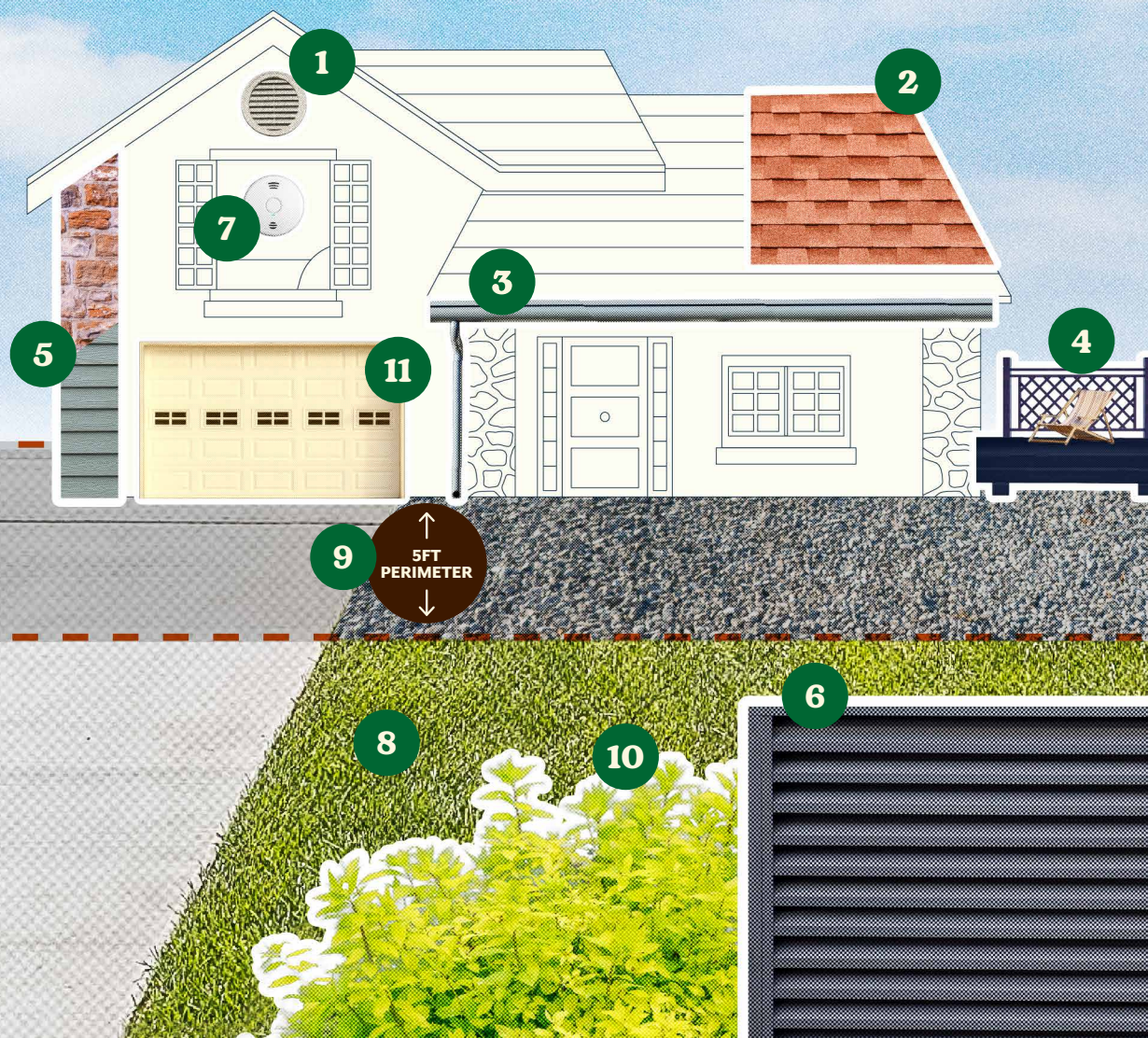
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The Fire Hardening Checklist



The new City of Louisville Fire Hardening Code helps you protect your home and property from wildfire risks. Follow these clear, step-by-step, instructions to help prevent the spread of fires and keep your community safe.



Required by City of Louisville ordinance.

- 1 Roof, Attics, and Foundation Vents**
 - ✓ Cover all vents, including under eaves vents, with maximum 1/8" metal mesh to prevent debris buildup.
- 2 Roof Coverings**
 - ✓ Use Class A covers or shingles that protect the roof deck.
- 3 Gutters**
 - ✓ Install metal gutters only. Never use vinyl.
 - ✓ Cover with gutter guards to prevent debris buildup.
- 4 Decks**
 - ✓ Use Class A decking materials and Class A or metal railings.
 - ✓ For decks 6 feet or lower, cover the ground underneath with gravel over plastic, or a concrete slab to prevent vegetation growth.
- 5 Sidings and Eaves**
 - ✓ Use Class A materials, or fire resistant materials such as stone or stucco.
- 6 Fences**
 - ✓ Use Class A materials or fire resistant materials such as metal, masonry, or stone for fencing within 5 feet of your home or property.
- 7 Smoke Alarms**
 - ✓ Install and regularly test smoke alarms. (Required by ICC general standard code).
- 8 Junipers**
 - ✓ Do not plant new juniper bushes. Their dense vegetation and trapped debris make them highly combustible.

Recommended

- 9 Protect the First Five Feet**
 - ✓ Remove all vegetation (including roots). Cover the bare soil with 3/4" crushed stone or rock to a depth of two inches, or use brick or other noncombustible materials.
- 10 Landscaping**
 - ✓ Choose fire-resistant vegetation like oak and yarrow to reduce the risk of fire hazards.
- 11 Garage Doors**
 - ✓ Know how to manually open garage doors in case of a power outage.

Learn more ways to help keep Louisville safe at:

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