

Prepare For Wildfire Season

In the wake of area wildfires from years past, homeowners are becoming more and more concerned about the safety of their home in the face of these disasters. If you're considering a home remodel, now is the perfect time to look at the overall construction of your home and find places where fire-resistant materials can help you prepare for the worst.

There are several upgrades that can be made to a home which can help to make it more fire-resistant from windows to landscaping. Here are a few suggestions to consider:



Roofing – Any home's most important defense is the roof. A Class A roof made of steel, aluminum, concrete, clay or slate will help to ward off the hot embers emitted from a nearby foliage fire.

Ceiling, Walls, and Floors – Fire-resistant gypsum wall board can be used in walls, floors and ceilings to create a stronger and longer lasting fire barrier.

Exteriors – Splurge on the stone, stucco, masonry and other exterior alternatives instead of wood. Though more expensive, they can provide up to a two-hour fire rating which could save your home and, most importantly, your life.

Windows – We've all heard about the energy efficiency of dual-glazed windows but many people don't think about the safety. During past wildfires the exterior pane of many dual-glazed windows cracked but their interior pane held. Dual or triple-glazed windows with tempered glass and Low-E coating will add fire-resistance to your home by keeping out the radiant energy that can heat up indoor combustibles such as fabrics and wood causing them to catch fire.

Doors – Just like roofing materials, doors are also fire rated. Metal doors are always best with a longer fire rating but if wood doors are a must-have, consider going with solid wood doors instead of hollow core ones. Regardless of your choice you must ensure that adequate weather stripping is installed on all exterior doors to keep out hot gasses and tiny burning embers during a fire.

Decks – While providing the perfect family gathering spot to enjoy the gorgeous California weather, decks are an easy fuel source for wildfires. Fire retardant wood should be used to build the deck and then covered with a fire-resistant polyurethane coating. You can also isolate the deck from the fuels and fire by building a noncombustible patio and wall below it. The patio prevents combustible materials from getting below the deck. The wall helps shield the deck from both the radiant and convective energy of the fire.

Venting – Vents should not be located in roof eaves or cornices or in the underside or on exposed edges of decks. Required individual venting at gable ends and on roofs should be covered with a 1 ¼" mesh screen to keep out embers.

Landscaping – What grows around your home can also be your first line of defense against wildfires. Many plants are simply fuel for a fire, however, there are those which can help save your home. Plants that should go include pines, cypresses, junipers and eucalyptus. Also get rid of shrubs near your home such as ornamental grasses, acacias, hopseed and berry vines. Vegetation that retains water such as ice plant, California lilac, Carmel creeper, ivy geranium and sedums are wonderful ground cover which can help to hold off a fire or at least slow it down.



If you'd like to find out what you can do during your home improvement project to make your home safer during the wildfire season call us at 714-558-1094 to schedule an in-home consultation with one of our highly trained and experienced staff.



Environmentally Friendly Before It Was "Cool"

Many of the products made today to increase the safety of your home can also increase energy efficiency. These environmentally friendly items can include appliances, windows, doors, and various other materials. At Burgin Construction we have never felt this was a trend that we needed to capitalize on. For us, it has always been an ongoing concern and something that we have worked to incorporate into our business.

This was a large part of our decision when looking for a line of cabinetry to provide to our clients. Throughout our research we found that DeWils Cabinetry has also kept the environment at the forefront by using products from certified sustainable forests and through their Waste Reduction Plan.

This plan, developed in the 1980's, has helped to reduce air pollutants by over 84% at their factory in Washington and scrap wood recycled by DeWils was used as an energy source for another local company. Year in and year out DeWils has exceeded the requirements for VOC and HAP emissions providing an environmentally friendly and healthy climate for both employees and the community. Last year DeWils factories replaced all of their lighting with energy saving, high efficiency fluorescent lighting. Additionally hardwood and sawdust waste are recycled for use as local livestock bedding.



DeWils' products are also no exception to their outstanding environmental policies. Their standard plywood cabinet construction has consistently provided healthier, stronger, and longer lasting cabinetry. They were the first cabinet manufacturer from the United States to pass the rigid Japan Building Standard Law's Formaldehyde emissions testing with all DeWils' products receiving the institute's highest rating. The F-4 star rating was awarded to DeWils by The Building Center of Japan in 2003.

DeWils uses Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Institute certified suppliers and products throughout all three high quality, custom cabinetry series. These products include Pure-Bond formaldehyde-free hardwood plywood veneer, low formaldehyde plywood cabinet box materials, Brookside Engineered wood veneers manufactures from material obtained from sustainable forests, and hardwood lumber from an SFI certified supplier and forests in North America. DeWils has sourced their hardwood lumber from this one supplier for more than 30 years and uses SFI certified carton packaging and other recycled packaging material for all three of their product lines.

Even the hardware used by DeWils Cabinetry adheres to environmental guidelines and strives for environmental protection. Blum Hardware is an ISO 14001 Certified Environmental System Company that puts great effort into environmental protection and resource management. According to the company's website, Blum's principle of their environmental policy is: *"We believe that responsible ecological behaviour has long-term economic benefits. That's why we are implementing environmental protection measures in as many areas that our business affects as possible."* (Blum press release, 2005). They were one of the first companies in the industry to earn an ISO 9100 certification and have received numerous awards for industrial design in the United States and Europe. Blum recently became the world's first supplier to the cabinet and furniture industry to meet Europe's Environmental Management System criteria.



At Burgin Construction we don't take the environment nor our customers' health for granted. By choosing the products and materials with this in mind, we have always offered "green" products and will continue to do so in the future; adding new product lines which adhere to environmental protection and safety as they become available and meet the high standards of quality we strive to meet..

If you'd like more information on our products or services please give us a call at 714-558-1094.





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Budgeting Questionnaire

Below are some questions that you should review and be prepared to discuss with your general contractor during your consultation meeting. These will help you to focus your selections and help to not only create but also to maintain your remodeling budget.

1. What's the main reason I'm planning to invest in a remodel? Does my remodel represent an investment in the home I plan to stay in for a while or am I just looking to spruce it up for resale?
2. How much do I want to spend on this remodel?
3. What are the most important features in my ideal home?
4. What are my favorite products and materials (countertop, cabinets, flooring, etc.) for my home and what are their costs?
5. Does the cost of my remodel exceed my practical budget? What less expensive materials could I substitute for pricier options if I need to lower my costs?
6. What time frame would I like to have my remodel completed in? Do I have time to wait for pricier custom treatments or am I in a hurry?
7. Have I set aside some cash as a cushion for unexpected costs?
8. If it is a kitchen remodel how much do I want to budget for the cabinets, which typically account for half the budget for a new kitchen?
9. Do I plan to supply any of the materials or do any of the work myself? What portions of the project does the contractor allow clients to do themselves and will it have any affect on the scheduling of my project?
10. Do I plan to work with a designer?

