

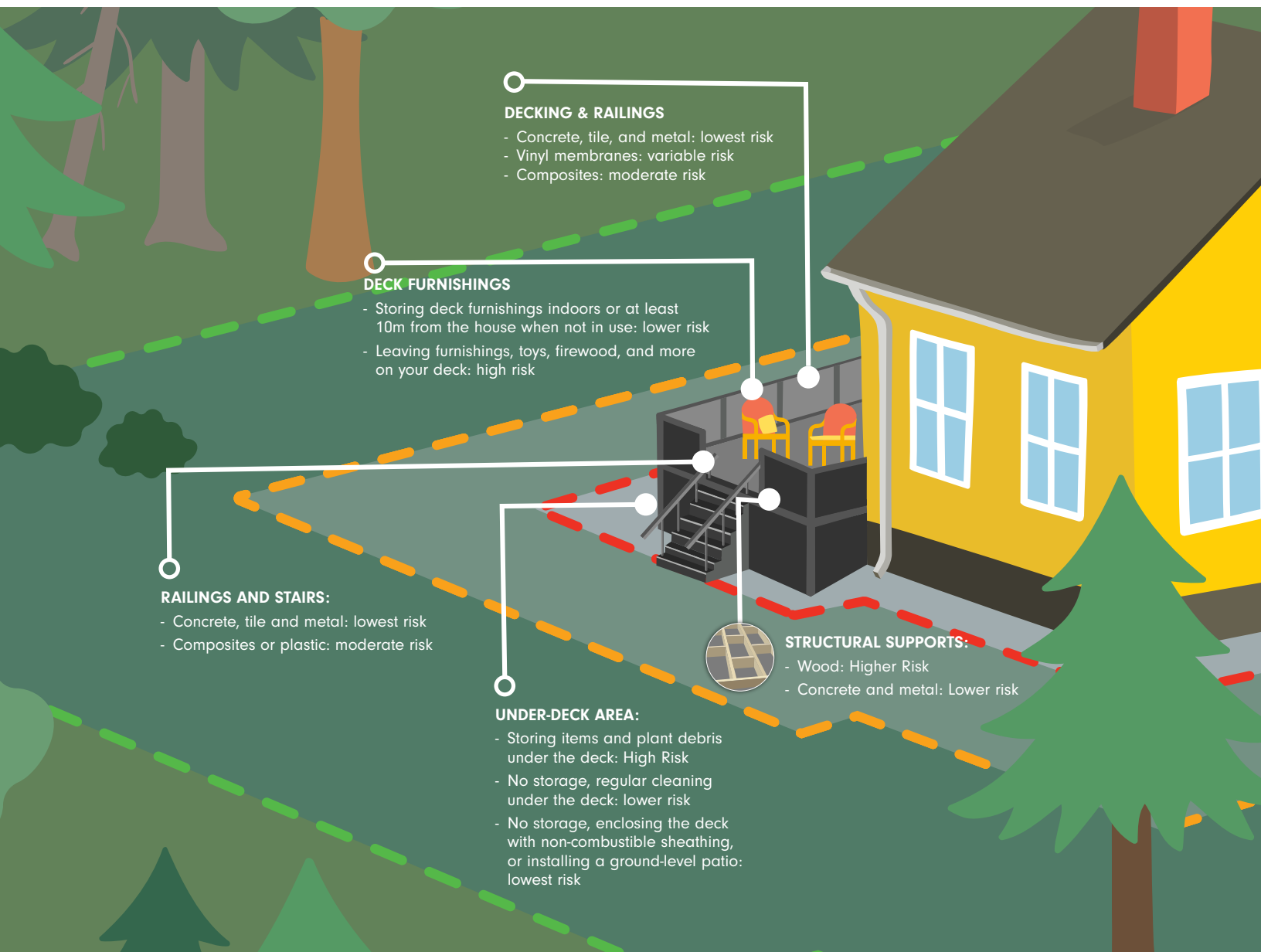
# Wildfire-Resilient Decks:

## Guidance & Best Practices for Building and Maintenance

### Build a Deck That's Ready for Wildfire Season

Decks can be one of the most vulnerable parts of your home when it comes to wildfire. Whether you're building new or maintaining an existing deck, making FireSmart choices can significantly reduce your risk.

This guide outlines practical, easy-to-follow tips to help you build and maintain a wildfire-resilient deck—from the materials you use to how you manage the space underneath. Every action makes a difference. By taking small steps now, you can help protect your home, your family, and your community.



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## How Do Decks Burn in a Wildfire?

During a wildfire, up to 90% of home ignitions are caused by embers, not direct flame contact. These embers can travel long distances and ignite spot fires when they land on or near combustible materials. Decks are especially vulnerable because they provide both fuel and airflow: two key elements that allow fire to spread quickly.

## Key Considerations for a FireSmart Deck

### 1. Consider a Patio Instead

- Ground-level stone or concrete patios are **much less flammable** than raised wooden decks.
- If you're building a structure on top of a patio—like a **shed, pergola, or gazebo**—you still need to apply the same FireSmart principles as you would for your home or deck.


### 2. Material Matters

- The materials you use for both the **deck surface** and its **supports** play a big role in fire resistance.
- Some materials burn more easily than others—**choose non-combustible or fire-resistant options** wherever possible.

### 3. Keep Empty Space Empty

- The areas **underneath, on top of, and between gaps** in your deck should be **kept clear** of debris and flammable items when not in use.
- Fine fuels like dry leaves or pine needles in deck gaps act like **kindling** for wildfires.
- Regular maintenance and cleaning are essential to reduce fire risk.

## Decking & Railings

- **Concrete, Tile, and Metal** –  **Lowest risk**
- **Composites** –  **Moderate risk**
- **Vinyl Membranes** –  **Variable risk**
- **Wood** –  **Not recommended**




Avoid wood for decking, railings, or stairs. It's highly flammable—especially when cracked or rotting—and should be replaced immediately. Vinyl membranes over wood are also not recommended due to fire vulnerability.

## Structural Supports

- **Concrete and Metal Supports** –  **Lower risk**
- **Wood Supports** –  **Higher risk**



Your deck's structural material matters. Wood supports can catch fire and intensify a fire more than the surface alone. Enclosing wooden supports or wrapping them in metal sheathing can improve fire resistance.

## Under-Deck Area

- **No storage + non-combustible enclosure or patio** –  **Lowest risk**
- **No storage + regular cleaning** –  **Lower risk**
- **Storage of items or debris** –  **High risk**

The area under your deck is part of the Immediate Zone (0–1.5m around your home)—keep it clear. Use 3 mm metal mesh or non-combustible siding to enclose open sides and block embers. Ground-level stone patios pose no fire risk from under-deck debris. Whenever possible, finish the area at grade with bare mineral soil or gravel to further reduce ignition potential.

## Gaps & Corners

- **Cleaned gaps and corners** –  **Lower risk**
- **Plant debris left in gaps/corners** –  **High risk**

Dry leaves and needles between deck boards act like kindling during a wildfire. Regular cleaning prevents these fine fuels from igniting your deck.

## Deck Furnishings

- **Stored indoors or 10m away** –  **Lower risk**
- **Left on the deck** –  **High risk**

Patio furniture, soft furnishings, toys, planters, barbecues, umbrellas, dog beds—even doormats—can ignite easily. Use non-combustible items made of metal, stone, or concrete. If you're travelling or on evacuation alert, move combustibles indoors or well away from your home.

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