Extreme fire danger may be here for several more months

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We are experiencing one of the driest summers in many years. With very low precipitation last winter, and no spring rains, the vegetation has completely dried up except where things are regularly irrigated. This has set up many of the western states for an extreme fire season. Unfortunately, unless we have a wet weather pattern in the near future, we could have this situation for several more months. Here are a few points to remember as you think about how to protect your home from fire this summer.

Location

If it is not obvious, mark the nearest water source so it can be found quickly in case of an emergency. Be aware that you may not be home when firefighters arrive and simple things such as locks on entrance gates could slow down those trying to enter your property to control a fire.

Vehicle Access

In case of emergency, there should always be more than one way out of your neighborhood. Access roads should be two lanes wide, allowing firefighters to get in and residents to leave the area at the same time. Individual homes with long narrow driveways pose a particular problem for fire trucks to enter and be able to exit quickly. Turn around areas or “T” shaped driveways are required in order for large vehicles to be able to maneuver in and out.

Roofing

Airborne embers are the main source when wildfires are spread. As a result, the choice of roofing materials is one of the most important decisions when constructing a home or cabin. Class A materials which include metal, concrete, or slate are “top rated” for fire resistance. All roof edges should be properly enclosed so that embers do not get blown under them. Fire resistant material should also be chosen if possible for siding, decks and fences as these structures will be most likely to be exposed first if a fire were to pass through.

Defensible Space

Is there enough room for fire fighters to enter your property and protect your home in case of a fire? Officials say there should be at least 30 feet between your home and any combustible landscape materials. Dry grasses and evergreens are especially flammable. Such items should not be allowed to grow up next to your home or other flammable structures.