



City of Austin Fire Department Wildfire Prevention Guide: Fencing

Wildfires cause damage by direct flame, radiant heat, and/or flying embers. Fire needs fuel to exist, so it is constantly searching for so it to continue burning. One of the most readily available forms of fuel are wooden fences that surround most residential structures; in real-world events, they provide enough flame, heat, and embers to ignite nearby houses.

One of the best ways to strengthen your home's protection against wildfire is to ensure your fence is constructed from non-combustible materials, i.e., those that will not catch fire or facilitate flames spreading to other structures.

In Austin, there are three classes of ignition-resistant construction required based on a home's proximity to wildland:

- Proximity **Class A**: 50 feet or closer to the wildland.
- Proximity **Class B**: Greater than 50 feet and up to 150 feet from the wildland.
- Proximity **Class C**: Greater than 150 feet out to 1.5 miles from the wildland.

FENCING

The [2015 Wildland-Urban Interface \(WUI\) Code](#) states: "*Fences that attach to a building projection must be constructed using at least one-hour fire-resistance-rated materials, heavy timber, or one of the following*":

- Approved non-combustible materials;
- Fire-retardant-treated wood approved for exterior use that complies with Building Code Section 2303.2; or
- Ignition-resistant building materials that comply with Section 503.2.

NOTE: Non-combustible fencing is only required when the fence is within five feet of a habitable structure.

When a fence next to a home catches on fire, the fence acts as a fuse and easily spreads the fire to the structure. However, when that fence is constructed with non-combustible materials, the connection is broken; the risk of the fire spreading to the home is dramatically decreased.

The WUI code's intent is to minimize the things around your home that can burn while strengthening the structure so it doesn't catch fire.

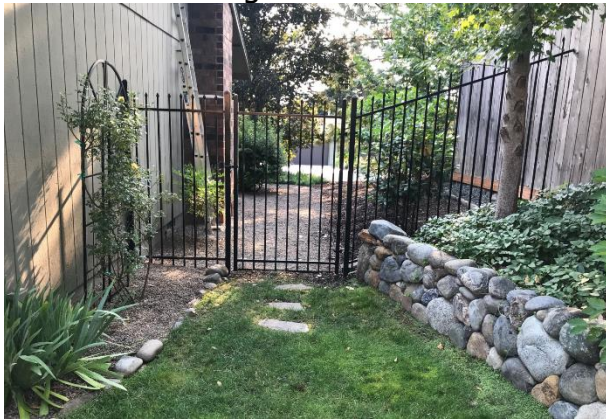
Whether you are building a new fence or replacing an existing one, there are many non-combustible options available that look great *and* help protect your home. One of the simplest ways to achieve that protection is replacing a current wooden gate with a non-combustible alternative; those options can be found at a variety of businesses (e.g., home improvement stores, online stores, fence contractors, landscaping contractors, etc.). The material and design types you choose will affect the price of the fence. Some examples include:



Corrugated Metal



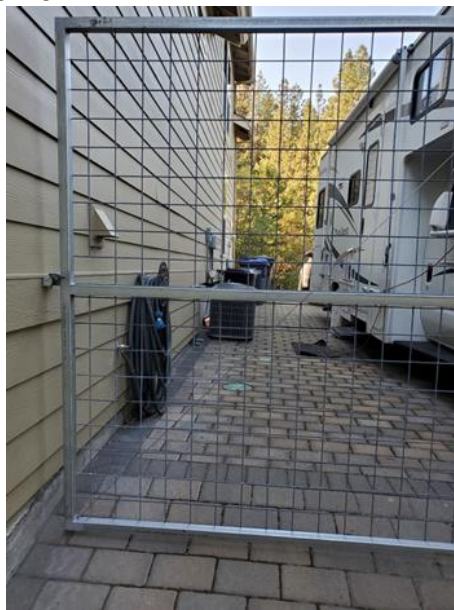
Steel Privacy Fencing



Wrought Iron



Concrete



Steel Wire