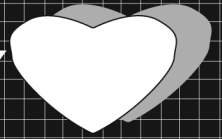


PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY



Home Siding Can Spare Families From Massive Fire Damage

(NAPSA)—Every year, there are over 400,000 house fires in the U.S., and on average, someone dies in a fire about every three hours.

Common causes of residential fires include kitchen negligence and electrical problems with appliances and heating equipment. Fortunately, installing smoke detectors in the kitchen and every bedroom can help you detect fires early on. The latest photoelectric alarms are quicker at sensing smoldering fires.

Hazards that homeowners need to address don't just exist on the inside of homes.

Many new homes are built in condensed spaces, too close to adjacent homes or on uneven plots of land, which makes the home more susceptible to exterior fire hazards.

Here are a few tips you can use to protect your home:

- In your yard, remove vines and foliage that touch the house. Mow tall, dry grass. Keep shrubbery pruned and remove dead leaves and branches. Dispose of lawn cuttings.

- Practice safe recreation. Don't operate a grill too close to your home. Every year, 7,900 home fires are attributed to operating a grill too close to a home's structure. Be careful with outdoor candles and fire pits.

- Make sure all exterior vents are covered with metal mesh so embers cannot enter your home through them. Ask the power company to remove tree branches that touch power lines. Store combustible materials at least 20 feet from the house.



Because the home's fiber cement siding did not ignite during the fire, the family will be able to repair the house rather than completely rebuild.

It's important to ensure that your home is structurally sound. The last line of defense for keeping an exterior fire from entering the home is the actual structure of the house.

For example, fiber cement siding resists flame spread and offers protection to the entire exterior of the house. The noncombustible exterior means siding will not ignite when exposed to direct flames or contribute fuel to a fire.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE) has recognized James Hardie fiber cement siding for use in fire hazard severity zones. The siding is also rated as a FEMA class V material or a material highly resistant to floodwater damage and can resist hurricane-force wind gusts of 150 mph. Many insurance companies offer discounts for homes with cement siding.

The fiber cement siding's flame-retarding qualities were recently credited with saving the lives of a family in a Carrollton,

Texas house fire.

Homeowners Kate and Kent Freeman and their three small children were unharmed following an intense blaze that started on the construction lot next door and moved so rapidly that it destroyed the house being built there within minutes before moving on to the Freemans'.

Their craftsman-style home was sided with James Hardie fiber cement products, which officials cited as a key reason why the house and the family remained safe. For nearly 15 minutes, the siding retarded the fire's ability to penetrate the Freemans' home before the flames finally entered through the home's windows and roof.

"It gave my husband time to get my young sons up and out of the house before the fire spread," said homeowner Kate Freeman.

The vertical siding limited the effects of the fire to just 30 percent of the house.

As a result, the family will be able to repair the house versus completely rebuilding. The Freemans plan to use the same siding on their next house because it supplies the charm and character of wood with the added assurance of flame resistance.

Everyone, including the fire department, the contractors and insurance companies, has told us that the house wouldn't have made it without the James Hardie siding. During the fire, the side of our house took on 700 to 800 degrees of heat without burning," says Kate Freeman.

For more information, visit www.jameshardie.com/fire.