

Don't let your deck become a hot zone

... continued from page D1



Keep areas surrounding decks free from debris.

Photo Cathy Dausman

On top: Clean your deck's nooks and crannies of leaves and twigs to prevent flying embers from alighting and igniting. Store furniture and flammable materials like brooms, doormats and chair cushions inside during red flag days. Children's toys and plastic furniture in particular may have low ignition points. Diablo Fire Safe maintains a web page advising what to do during red flag days; find it online at www.diablofiresafe.org/red_flag.html. Most importantly, pay special attention to your barbecue or fire pit. Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Capt. Lisa Martinez says owners should never leave a barbecue or outdoor fireplace unattended, and always have an extinguisher, hose or bucket of water handy. Insure your gas barbecue hoses are UL-listed and made for or sold with the barbecue. Don't assume hoses attached to a second-hand barbecue meet code. Turn off the gas feed when the barbecue is not in use. Never empty cooking coals or wood embers into a trash container, and make sure a housekeeper or maintenance worker does not do that. Discard coals into a small metal garbage can with a tight-fitting lid, Martinez says, and make sure portable fireplaces have a spark arrester. Again, keep an extinguisher handy.

Lastly, Martinez says property owners should include specific language in lease agreements for multi-unit family housing, apartments and condos about when ten-

ants or owner occupants may and may not barbecue, and that occupants should consider not using coal barbecues during high fire danger.

"Enjoy your deck knowing it can help protect your home from wildfire," says Miller, while bearing in mind Martinez' final comment: "Fire season is not over until we get a lot of rain."

Helpful online resources

California's Office of the State Fire Marshal website lists the best deck construction materials for use in wildland urban interfaces: http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/licensinglistings/licenselist-ing_bml_searchcotest.

The California edition of "Protect Your Property from Wildfire" includes details of deck construction http://disastersafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/WF_California_IBHS.pdf

Learn about Diablo Fire Safe cost-share funding to reduce wildfire vegetation hazards at www.diablofiresafe.org.

