READY, SET, GO!

PATIO COVERS

Patio covers offer many benefits, such as adding useful space for outdoor cooking and entertaining, providing extra insulation, lowering monthly cooling and heating costs, and increasing the value of your home. However, they can also add risk.

If you live in an area prone to wildfires, it's important to determine if your patio cover increases your home's risk when the next one occurs.

Patio covers can be made from different materials, but only non-combustible or ignition-resistant materials will help protect your home during the next wildfire. Burning embers can travel up to 5 miles in front of and behind the flames. If they fall on a combustible patio cover, your home's roof, eaves, and siding will be at risk to both radiant heat and direct flame. Heat and flames from a burning patio cover can also cause windows or sliding glass doors to crack and break, allowing fire to enter the home.

Types of Materials:

- *Aluminum* is non-combustible, lightweight, strong, and flexible. Aluminum patio covers are also energy efficient, durable, and able to handle even the worst weather conditions
- *Other Metal* are also non-combustible and don't crack, rot, or peel, but they're not as durable as aluminum, and will rust unless they are specially treated with a rust-free finish
- *Vinyl* is combustible and will burn or melt if exposed to embers, heat, or flames. Although vinyl patio covers are very popular, they put homes more at risk during a wildfire
- *Wood* is combustible, less expensive than aluminum or others metals, and has a natural look many homeowners prefer, but a wood patio cover increases wildfire risk. It also needs regular upkeep and must be treated to resist weather, termites, and other insects

Installing metal flashing between a wood patio cover and the outside wall it's next to is another way to reduce wildfire risk, since it's designed to protect roofs, eaves, and walls from water and fire damage.

As with all accessory structures, check with your city or county Building Department for specific requirements.

For more information, please visit the OCFA website or call **714-573-6774** to schedule a wildfire home assessment.

Orange County Fire Authority

www.ocfa.org/RSG