

## How to Protect Your Home From Mudslides

Mudslides cause millions of dollars in damage every year. Not only do they threaten unsuspecting drivers by wiping out roads, but they also destroy homes and can leave trails of destruction miles wide. If you live in an area prone to mudslides, there are a few preventative measures you can take to [protect your home and family](#) from this devastating force of nature.

Strongly rooted vegetation is perhaps the best guard against future landslides. The roots of trees and plants will help keep loose soil from running down hillsides. Avoid planting heavier vegetation, which can potentially break loose and create even more damage. You will also have to remember to keep trees and plants well-watered. Dead and dry plants will not guard against mudslides. Unfortunately, due to the fires, people in Montecito did not have this protection.

Retaining walls are a great alternative to planting vegetation. Large, sturdy walls can help stop mudslides from getting worse and can also help to divert water flow away from buildings. Be careful, however, when choosing to [install retaining walls](#) around your home. Mudslides are powerful forces and can easily sweep away a weak wall. Make sure the retaining wall is rated to handle excessive forces and will not damage structures if swept away.

For a less permanent solution, install sandbags or burlap bags around the perimeter of the home for protection against mudslides. This can stop smaller mudslides from gaining momentum, though they will not do much against a large flow of debris. You can also purchase straw wattles, which allow water to pass while stopping soil. Wattles are much longer than sandbags and are a great alternative for larger spaces.

### Warning Signs

There are many warning signs associated with areas susceptible to mudslides. This includes changes in drainage patterns, small-scale slides, and downward leaning trees. In the home, you may notice doors and windows sticking, walkways detaching from buildings, and widening cracks in the ground. Mudslides are also very loud. If you hear a slight rumbling noise that gets continuously louder, immediately take action and get to a safe location.

### Preventative Measures

There are things you can do around the house that will help prevent further damage in the event of a mudslide. Consider installing flexible fittings around water and gas lines that can better withstand ground shifts. You can also raise appliances such as water heaters, furnaces, and electric panels off the ground. This will help prevent water damage in the event that your home is compromised. Lastly, make sure you know how to shut off the gas and water in case of emergency. The more you know, the better prepared you will be in the case of disaster.