

# RESOURCES & APPENDICES



## RESOURCES

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For more information about interface fires, call or visit your local wildland fire control office or municipal office, or consider using some of the resources listed below.

### References

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### Websites

Refer to the Partners in Protection web page for the latest links to on-line resources.  
[www.partnersinprotection.ab.ca](http://www.partnersinprotection.ab.ca)

# APPENDIX I CONVERSION TABLE

## METRIC CONVERSION TABLE

	US	Metric	Imperial
<b>Volume</b>	1 gallon	3.785 litres	.833 gallon
	1.201 gallons	4.546 litres	1 gallon
	.264 gallon	1 litre	.219 gallon
<b>Weight</b>	1 pound	.4536 kilograms	1 pound
	2.2046 pounds	1 kilogram	2.2046 pounds
<b>Linear Measure</b>	1 mile	1.609 kilometres (km)	1 mile
	.621 miles	1 kilometre (km)	.621 miles
	1 yard	.9144 metres (m)	1 yard
	1.094 yards	1 metre (m)	1.094 yards
	1 foot	.3048 metres (m)	1 foot
	3.28 feet	1 metre (m)	3.28 feet
	1 inch	2.54 centimetres (cm)	1 inch
	.393 inches	1 centimetres (cm)	.393 inches
	1 inch	25.4 millimetres (mm)	1 inch
<b>Pressure</b>	1 pound per square inch (psi)	6.9 kilopascals (kPa)	1 pound per square inch (psi)
	.145 pounds per square inch (psi)	1 kilopascal (kPa)	.145 pounds per square inch (psi)
<b>Area</b>	1 acre	.4048 hectares (ha)	1 acre
	2.47 acres	1 hectare (ha)	2.47 acres

**Temperature** 1 Fahrenheit degree is smaller than a Celsius degree - 1 Fahrenheit degree is 5/9 of a Celsius degree.  
 To convert Fahrenheit degrees into Celsius: Subtract 32, multiply by 5 and divide by 9.  
 To convert Celsius degrees into Fahrenheit: Multiply by 9, divide by 5 and add 32.  
 Freezing point of water 0 deg C = 32 deg F - Boiling point of water 100 deg C = 212 deg F.

## APPENDIX 2

# FUEL REDUCTION STANDARDS FOR CROWN FIRE HAZARD

A standard for fuel reduction that exceeds the standards prescribed in the globally recognized fire protection standard: NFPA 1144 — ‘Standard for Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire’ was developed for dense coniferous forests in the Rocky Mountains (‘Fuel Reduction Plan for Banff Townsite and Surrounding Area,’ Arbor Wildland Management Services, 1991). It offers an alternative fuel reduction standard for use in interface areas with a substantive and established crown fire danger.

This standard includes fuel reduction standards selected after a review of numerous fuel modification standards unique to the steep terrain and predominantly coniferous fuels of the of the Rocky Mountains, Eastern Slopes. Recommended minimum standards (such as post thinning stem counts or fuel modification zone widths) provide a higher level of fire protection than does any other currently accepted standard. There are a variety of reasons for this.

- Target areas contain high-value facilities with high levels of public use. Risk management protocol merits increased facility fire protection measures.
- Developments or facilities often have structure densities that exceed the single structure densities that most fuel management standards address.
- Facility structures often exhibit high flammability levels due to building design and materials.

Models of crowning potential suggest that crown fire will have difficulty developing or carrying into areas where these fuel management guidelines have been met.

### *Management of fuels to reduce crown fire danger—fuel modification zone widths*

The principal intent of many of the fuel management standards proposed in the Arbor report is essentially to mitigate the development and/or negative impacts of crown fire on values at risk.

The following considerations led to recommendations for increased fuel modification zone widths:

- Large tracts of continuous forest fuels found adjacent to many interface areas increase the likelihood of crown fire development and subsequent impacts on values at risk.
- Frequent spotting is possible up to 200 metres in advance of a crown fire (some embers drop as far as 2 kilometres ahead of the fire). Increased zone width ensures that the area of the heaviest spotting is contained in a fuel modification zone.
- On a 70-percent slope, radiant heat from a crown fire can be so intense that the distance from fire front to control line is recommended to be 60 metres in order to minimize skin scorching on fire fighters. Since a strong wind has a similar effect to slope, it was felt that a width of 100 metres is a reasonable minimum distance for most situations where strong winds can be anticipated.
- The flame length of a burning mature lodge-pole stand can reach a height of approximately 100 metres. With a strong upslope wind, the hot gasses could be driven almost parallel upslope which would affect high structures within a range of some 150 metres. Therefore, a width of 200 metres is recommended on steep slopes.
- Interface community access routes typically cut through extensive tracts of continuous forest fuels. Public safety is threatened if fire cuts off a single access route—100 metre wide fuel modification zones are recommended for both sides of an access route.
- Recommended thinning patterns may not be uniform throughout the width of the work

unit. Variations are encouraged for aesthetic reasons and to minimize wind damage. This requires a corresponding increase in fuel modification zone width.

In consideration of the uniqueness of the interface fire problem in areas where a high level of crown fire danger is assessed to exist, Partners in Protection concurs with the increased standard of fire protection proposed by the Arbor report. It is reasonable and appropriate.

Partners in Protection also recommends that the fuel management recommendations of local fire control personnel be utilized in non-typical or special situations.

### **Fuel Reduction Standards for Crown Fire Hazard**

This standard recommends a general width of 100 metres for firebreaks. In situations where slopes and the possibility of adverse winds prevail, and high values at risk are present, a width of at least 200 metres is recommended.

### **Thinning Standards (Spacing of trees)**

Thinning is recommended to reduce the density of a forest stand (create a space between the tree crowns) so that the flames will not spread from crown to crown. The spacing of trees for crown fire danger reduction is given in crown diameters. Assuming an average crown diameter of 2 metres, the three basic thinning standards are:

#### **Density C = one crown width**

(4 m between stems)

#### **Density B = two crown widths**

(6 m between stems)

#### **Density A = three crown widths**

(8 m between stems)

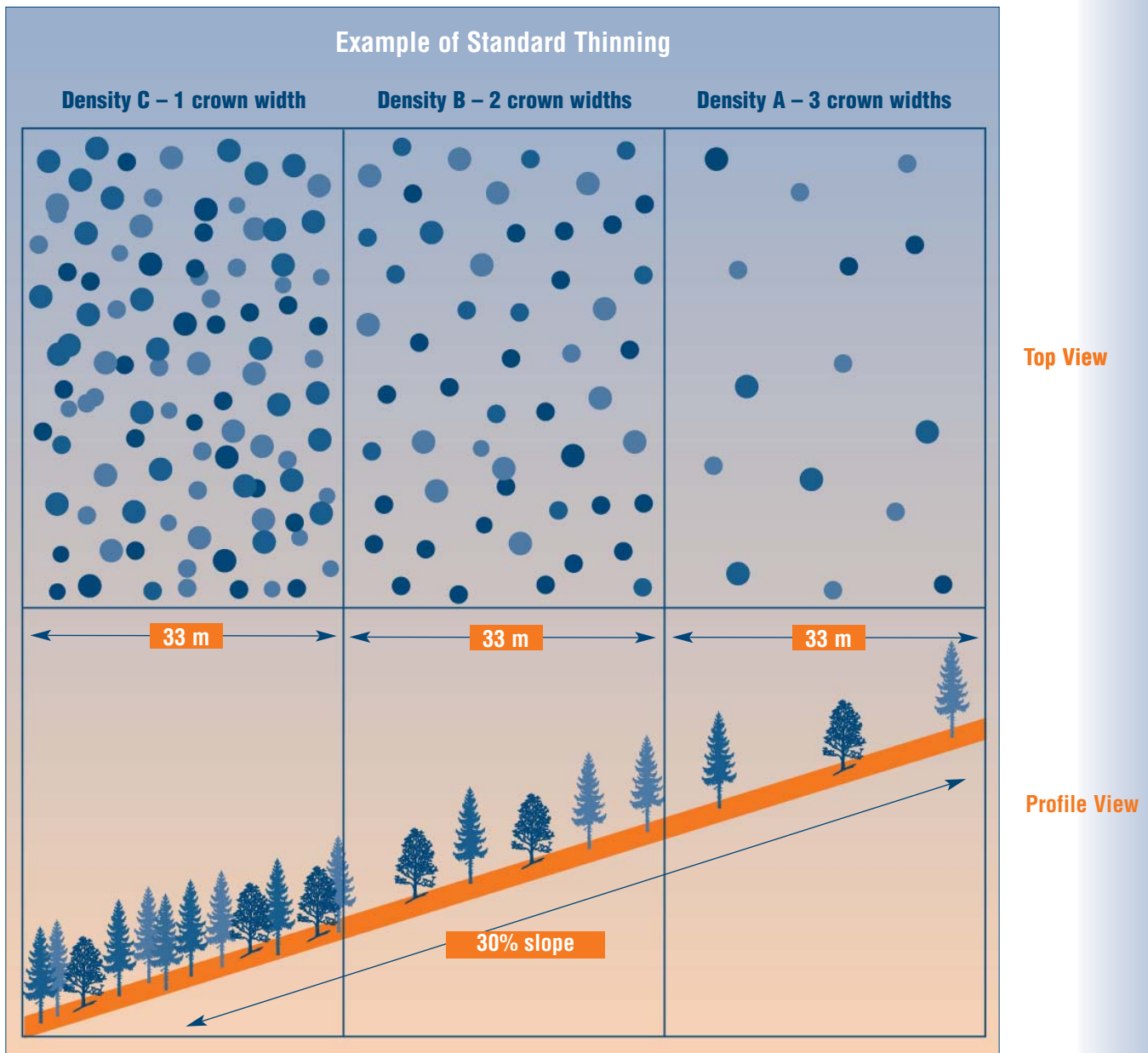
Thus, in a typical, fully stocked logpole pine stand every second tree is removed to attain density “C”, density “B” is attained by removing two stems and leaving the third and density “A” means that three trees are removed and the fourth one left standing.

- Standard “A” is to be used on slopes immediately adjacent to buildings or heavily traveled roads on the downhill side of the value at risk.
- Standards “B” and “C” are used at a distance of approximately three tree lengths from the

► *Firebreak in Banff National Park showing cluster thinning.*



PHOTO: KELVIN HIRSCH



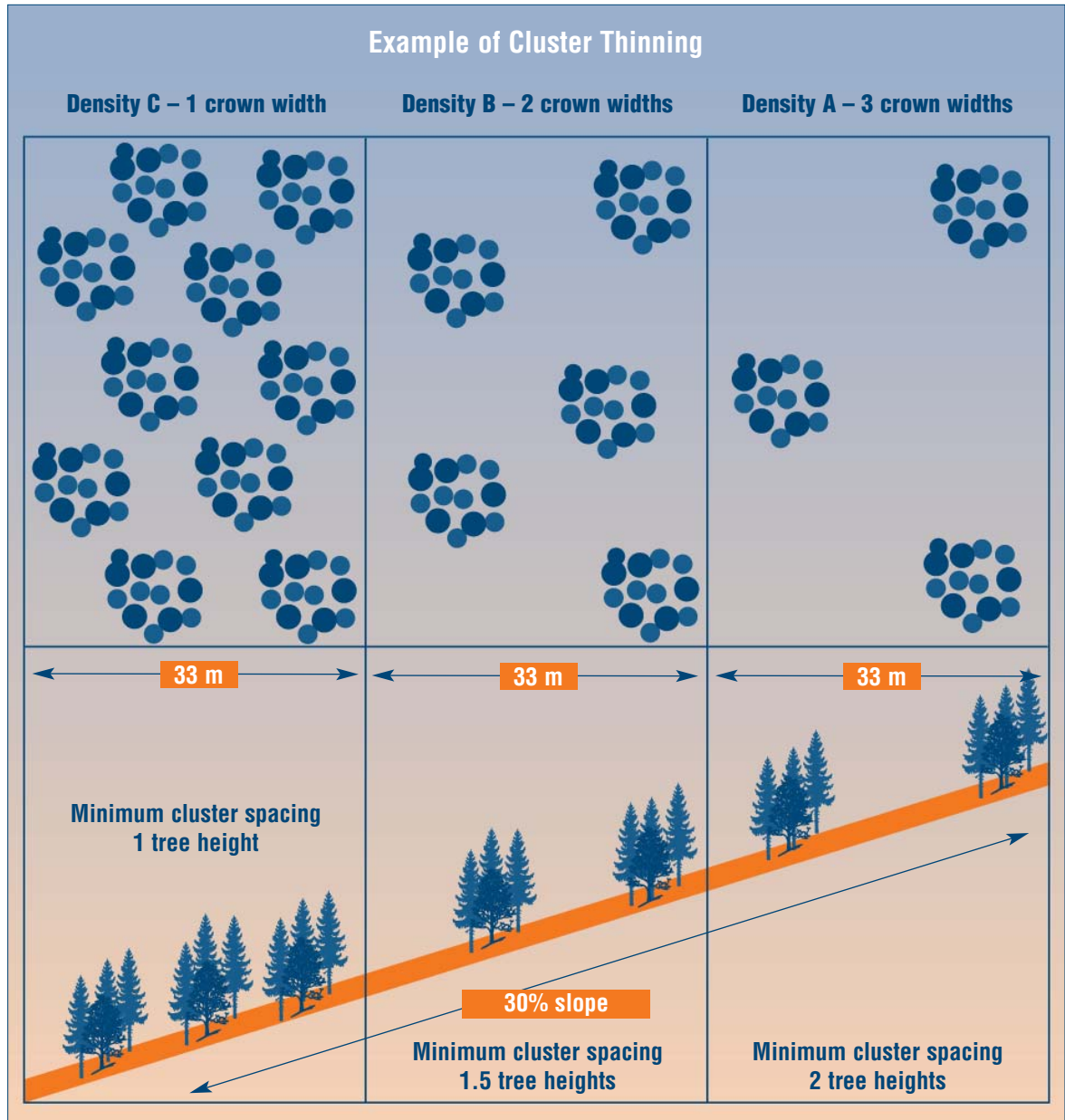
protected objects or adjacent to the protected object on sites with lesser slope.

- Increasing slopes require increased treatment distances to be effective. This fuel management standard incorporates slope/treatment distance recommendations as cited by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

The illustration above provides top and profile views of standard thinning using all three spacing levels across a 100-metre expanse of 30-percent slope below values at risk.

#### *Thinning Standards and Windfirmness*

An effort must be made to leave the most windfirm trees. Such trees include spruces, which occur in the pine stands either as smaller suppressed trees or as isolated trees or clumps in open areas or wet spots, Douglas fir, young healthy pines, individual trees in open areas or as wind-resistant clusters of trees. It is important to pattern the spaces around the “leave” trees to favour windfirmness. Trees assessed as unstable, diseased or damaged should be removed even if it changes the spacing pattern.



Top View

Profile View

**Cluster Thinning**

The illustration above provides top and profile views of fuel reduction using all three cluster thinning standards across a 100-metre expanse of 30-percent slope below values at risk.

The table on page 8 summarizes the approximate number of stems left on site after thinning to any of the three thinning standards applied to stands with different average crown diameters. Only the lightest thinning standards for the two narrowest crowns left stand densities above the spacing required to prevent crown fire development or

spread. This suggests that an alternative approach in very dense stands is to thin fuels to clusters or small groves.

Thus, in stands of trees with very narrow crowns, or trees forming a wind resistant group, residual trees can be left standing in clusters. In such cases the diameter of the cluster, which should not exceed 10 metres, is to be considered as the crown diameter and the spaces between them must reflect the cluster diameter. Clusters should have ladder and surface fuels removed.

## THINNING REGIMES

Approximate number of tree stems per ha related to crown diameter and proposed thinning regime.

Crown diameter (m)	Density C – 1 crown width		Density B – 2 crown widths		Density A – 3 crown widths	
	Distance between stems (m)	Stems per ha	Distance between stems (m)	Stems per ha	Distance between stems (m)	Stems per ha
1	2	2500	3	1100	4	625
1.5	3	1100	4.5	500	6	280
2	4	625	6	280	8	160
2.5	5	400	7.5	175	10	100
3	6	280	9	125	12	70
3.5	7	200	10.5	90	14	50
5	10	100	15	45	20	25
7.5	15	45	22.5	20	30	10
10	20	25	30	10	40	6

NOTE: Distances for “crown diameters” over 3 metres are intended as guidelines for clusters of trees.

## APPENDIX 3

### SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS DOCUMENTS

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*Good communications and public education are essential to developing FireSmart communities. This appendix provides sample fact sheets and a poster that could be used in public education in the wildland/urban interface.*

*Partners in Protection encourages agencies and organizations to copy these materials and make them available to the public.*

# Wildfire

## A Disaster Waiting to Happen!

### Living with Fire

Whether near large urban areas or in remote rural locations, every year more and more people are retreating to peaceful surroundings and building their homes in the “wildland/urban interface” (areas where the community meets grassland or trees). Living in these areas means living with fire.

Fire isn’t always bad — it’s nature’s way of recycling and rebuilding, but in high value areas, like the wildland/urban interface, wildfires are not desirable. Effective fire prevention messages, as well as the development of modern firefighting equipment and techniques, have led to strict controls that shut fire out of many forest and grassland areas. Most governments have implemented forest management programs to help combat the problem, but the fact remains that forests are becoming older, more closed in, and loaded with fuels (vegetation). If a fire ignites in an area with lots of fuel when the weather conditions are hot, dry, and windy, it can be extremely intense and difficult to control.

To tackle wildfire issues, seven disciplines have been designed to make forest or acreage living safer for homeowners. The disciplines are:

- ✓ Education - educating people living in forest or grassland areas about precautions they can take.
- ✓ Fuels Management - keeping the home safe by thinning, pruning, and removing trees, branches, and deadfall that can fuel a fire.
- ✓ Legislation - involving development (e.g. homes in forested areas should be required to have a sprinkler system).
- ✓ Development - guidelines can be set up by builders and developers to make developments fire smart.
- ✓ Planning - implementing restrictions or guidelines (e.g. roads and driveways should be wide enough to support a fire truck).
- ✓ Training - cross-training firefighters who tackle forest fires and extinguish house fires.
- ✓ Inter-agency cooperation - municipal volunteer fire departments working together with forest firefighting resources.

### The Problem

Wildfire is one of the most powerful forces in nature. Many residents in Canada have lost their homes to wildfire. Many have also been injured or evacuated from their homes and communities when fire has threatened their safety. Fortunately, the number of losses related to wildfire incidents in Canada is small in comparison to floods or other disasters. This can be attributed to good fortune and the fact that most wildfires have occurred in low or non-populated areas. Unfortunately these statistics can change at the strike of a match. It’s only a matter of time before a number a tragic wildfires plague Canada.

### The Solution

While the fury of a wildfire may be frightening, it’s a reality that every community must deal with. Wildfire is a community problem that needs a community solution. It will take the efforts of political leaders, community planners, and members of the public and private sector to solve wildfire issues.

During a wildfire there may not be as many firefighters as there are homes in need of protection. While firefighters defend one home, the fire’s perimeter may rage on, threatening many more structures and burning acres of vegetation. Residents cannot solely rely on firefighters to save their property. There are three priorities of fire suppression — life, property, and the environment. Life will always be the number 1 priority but the priority firefighters place on property and the environment will depend on whether the fire is threatening a natural resource that is vital to the economic stability of the area.

Everyone in the community must take individual responsibility to prepare and protect their home, business, family, and the community from the risk of a wildfire. By doing this, we will give firefighters the help they need to do their job when a wildfire incident occurs. Check with your local fire agency and take steps to find out how you can help prevent or lessen the effects of a wildfire. We can’t always prevent or stop wildfire, but we can be prepared for the day this uninvited guest pays a visit to our backyard!



# Wildfire

## Be Prepared!

### *Have A Plan — Know What to do Before and During a Wildfire Incident*

#### *Plan ahead*

A major wildfire in your neighborhood will have a great impact on your activities and you may find yourself without modern conveniences. You can lessen the impact by planning ahead.

When you can check each of the boxes below, your property will be FireSmart and you will be prepared for an interface fire.

- Store at least a three-day supply of drinking water and food that does not require refrigeration or cooking.
- Store a portable battery- or solar-powered radio, flashlight, emergency cooking equipment, portable lanterns, and batteries.
- Consider purchasing a portable generator to supply power for lights, and for heating and cooking.
- Maintain first-aid supplies to treat the injured until help arrives.
- Have an escape plan so that all members of the family know how to get out of the house quickly and safely.
- Have a contingency plan so family members can contact each other in case they are separated during an evacuation.
- Make sure all family members are familiar with STOP, DROP, AND ROLL, if their clothes should catch on fire.

#### *If fire is approaching your home*

If you see a fire approaching your home, report it immediately by dialing 9-1-1 or your local emergency number. If it is safe, and there is time before the fire arrives, you should take the following action:

- Close all windows and doors in the house.
- Place pre-cut plywood covers over the vents, windows, and other openings of the house.
- Park your car, unlocked, with the keys in the ignition and positioned forward out of the driveway. Keep car windows closed and have your valuables already packed in your car.
- Turn off propane or natural gas.
- Turn on the lights in the house, porch, garage and yard.
- Inside the house, move combustible materials such as light curtains and furniture away from the windows.
- Place a ladder to the roof in the front of the house.
- Put lawn sprinklers on the roof of the house and turn on the water.
- Move all combustibles away from the house including firewood, lawn furniture, etc.
- Evacuate your family and pets to a safe location.
- Stay tuned to your local radio station for up-to-date information on the fire and possible road closures.



# Wildfire

## Check It Out!

### Check - To See if Your Home and Landscape is FireSmart

#### 1. Protect the roof over your head

The roof is the most vulnerable component of your home. Untreated wooden shake roofs are the number 1 cause of structure losses during wildfires. A wildfire produces flaming debris that travels in the air in advance of the fire. Embers landing on a combustible roof can start the roof on fire, spreading quickly to the rest of the house.

- Your roof is made from fire-resistant materials such as metal, slate, tile, or asphalt shingles.
- All overhanging branches, needles, and other debris have been cleared from your roof and gutters.

#### 2. Create a FireSmart landscape

##### Maintain Priority Zones - 10 metres around your home

A priority zone is an area that will help keep flames away from your home and provide firefighters with access around your home. If you can, create a FireSmart landscape at least 10 metres around your house to reduce the chance of a wildfire spreading onto your property and burning through to your home.

- Flammable vegetation within 10 metres of your home has been removed or converted to fire resistant plants (e.g. broad-leaf deciduous trees, low shrubs, ferns, annuals, etc.).
- The plants in your yard have been spaced three metres apart.
- Dead leaves, dry brush, twigs, and needles have been removed from your roof and from around your home.

##### Break the chain of fuel - 10 to 30 metres around your home

Fire needs fuel to burn. You can sap its strength by breaking the path of continuous vegetation that can carry flames from your landscape to your house. Low tree branches allow fire to spread from the ground into the treetops.

- Trees have been removed or thinned to reduce the chance of fire spreading from tree to tree.
- Trees have been pruned at least two metres from the ground.
- Stacks of wood and piles of debris have been removed from around your home.

#### 3. Make a FireSmart exterior

During a wildfire windows may break and allow the fire to travel into your home. Although pane windows reduce the probability of fire spreading, the most effective fire protection is achieved by covering vents, windows, and other openings (e.g., attic vents) with solid plywood shutters if fire is approaching. A home with non-combustible siding is resistant to fire. Overhanging decks and balconies will trap heat under the deck igniting the deck and siding. Materials stored under the deck add to the problem. Many homes use propane for heating. If exposed to fire, propane tanks may explode with disastrous consequences.

- The exterior finish on your home is made from non-combustible materials such as stucco, metal, brick, or cement.
- You have pre-cut solid plywood shutters to fit over vents, windows, and other openings, and have them stored in an accessible location.
- Your deck is built with non-flammable sheathing and has heavy support timbers.
- All debris has been removed from under your deck.
- Your propane and natural gas tanks are located at least 10 metres from buildings and vegetation has been cleared within three metres of the tank(s).

#### Manufactured homes

Manufactured homes should be skirted with a non-combustible material to prevent flammable material and embers from blowing under the home.

- The skirting on your manufactured home has a non-combustible material finish such as stucco, metal, brick, or cement.



# Wildfire – Check It Out!

## 4. Firewood and waste burning

Careless burning indoors and out has been the cause of many wildfires. Burning wood in your fireplace can start a wildfire if sparks ignite your roof. If you must burn, do it safely.

- You have removed all vegetation within three metres of your chimney.
- An approved spark arrestor has been installed on your chimney.
- Your fire pit is located away from your structures and flammable vegetation.
- When burning in your barrel, you have ensured that:
  - Your barrel is in good condition
  - The ground is free of debris three metres around the barrel
  - You have steel rods or pipes holding the burning material up from the bottom of the barrel
  - A mesh screen (with openings no larger than 7 millimetres) has been placed on top of the barrel
- Firefighting tools (shovel, rake, water buckets, garden hose) are close at hand
- After burning, you have placed the ashes in a metal container, soaked them with water and let them sit for two or three days before disposing of them into a pit

## 5. Human-caused ignitions are no accident

Lightning ignites some wildfires but many are caused from human negligence. Check to see if you know why wildfires are started year after year.

- Homeowners using unsafe incinerators or fire pits.
- Farmers and acreage owners burning off landscape in hot, dry, windy conditions.
- Children playing with matches.
- Children or adults playing with fireworks.
- Motorists or outdoor enthusiasts throwing a burning cigarette or match into dry vegetation.
- Campers disregarding camp fire regulations.
- Heavy equipment being operated without a spark arrestor installed on the exhaust.
- Railroads (e.g., brake sparks, engine exhaust sparks).
- Blasting operations.
- Electric fences.
- Downed power lines.
- Vehicle fires.
- Burning and landfill sites that border grassland or treed areas.

A Structure and Site Hazard Assessment Form is available through your local fire agency that will help you evaluate the threat that wildfire poses to your house and landscape before or after development. As you go through the form you will better understand the steps you can take to mitigate the problem.



# Wildfire

*Not in Our Back Yard!*

**BE PREPARED!**



**WILDFIRE** is a risk in our community. Share in the solution and take responsibility to make your home part of a fire smart community. *Join us and see if you can find the 10 steps this family took to protect their home from WILDFIRE.*



## ANSWERS

1. Replaced wooden shake roof with a metal roof.
2. Managed vegetation within 30 metres of the house.
3. Pruned trees 2 metres from the ground.
4. Cleared fallen leaves from the roof and within 10 metres of the house.
5. Relocated firewood 30 metres from the house.
6. Installed a spark arrestor on the chimney.
7. Widened the driveway to accommodate fire vehicles (5 metres).
8. Located a water supply.
9. Installed visible signage.
10. Requested fire personnel to do a hazard assessment.

Contact your local fire agency for more information on how to make your home FireSmart inside and out.



Working Together for Safer Communities in the Wildland / Urban Interface