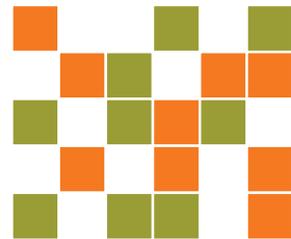
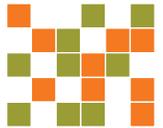


# FIREWISE TOOLKIT



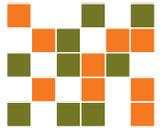


## Facts about the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Firewise Communities Program

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- The Firewise Communities Program was developed in 1986 in response to the realization that the problem of home destruction from brush, grass and forest fires was one of national scope.
- The Program teaches residents about the hazards of wildfire, and how they can put simple, smart practices into play around their homes, and encourage neighbors to work together to help prepare for and reduce the risk of home destruction due to wildfires.
- The Program's mission is to protect people and property in communities at risk from wildfire through the National Fire Protection Association's role as a visible, trusted and recognized advocate, consensus builder and authoritative leader.
- The Program is co-sponsored by the USDA Forest Service, the US Department of the Interior, and the National Association of State Foresters.
- The Firewise website, [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org), was launched in 1996 to provide the best available information on wildfire safety for homes to a national audience.
- In 1999, a series of Firewise Communities Planning Workshops sprung up throughout the country. From 1999 - 2003, more than 3,000 residents, firefighters, community leaders and business people participated in these workshops.
- In Fall 2002, the national Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program was established.
- The Firewise Communities/USA program has documented local grant funding and volunteer hours totaling more than \$100 million from 2003 to 2011.
- As of 2012, 10 out of the 12 pilot sites are still enrolled in the Program, and recognized as official Firewise communities after 10 years.
- Since its inception, more than 1.2 million people have been directly affected by the Program, and many more indirectly, have been influenced.
- As of July 2012, the program has 776 active Firewise communities in 40 states, with a goal of 1,000 by the end of 2013.
- In 2010, NFPA established the Wildland Fire Operations Division. The Firewise Communities Program is a program within the Division, and the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program is a major component of the Firewise Communities Program.





## A guide to Firewise principles

THE FIREWISE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM provides homeowners with simple and easy steps to help reduce a home's wildfire risk by preparing ahead of a wildfire. These steps are rooted in principles based on solid fire science research into how homes ignite. The research comes from the world's leading fire experts whose experiments, models and data collection are based on some of the country's worst wildland fire disasters.

Below are Firewise principles and tips that serve as a guide for residents:

**When it comes to wildfire risk, it is not a geographical location, but a set of conditions that determine the home's ignition potential in any community.**

Wildfire behavior is influenced by three main factors: topography (lie of the land), weather (wind speed, relative humidity and ambient temperature) and fuel (vegetation and man-made structures). In the event of extreme wildfire behavior, extreme weather conditions are normally

present, like extended drought, high winds, low humidity and high temperatures, coupled with excess fuel build up including the accumulation of live and dead vegetation material. Additionally, the inherent lie of the land influences the intensity and spread a fire takes. Fires tend to move upslope, and the steeper the slope the faster it moves.

Of these three factors, **fuel** is the one we can influence.

Debris like dead leaves and pine needles left on decks, in gutters and strewn across lawns can ignite from flying embers. Fire moving along the ground's surface can "ladder" into shrubs and low hanging tree limbs to create longer flames and more heat. If your home has flammable features or vulnerable openings, it can also serve as fuel for the fire, and become part of a disastrous chain of ignitions to other surrounding homes and structures.

**A home's ignition risk is determined by its immediate surroundings or its "home ignition zone" and the home's construction materials.**

According to fire science research and case studies, it's not where a home is located that necessarily determines ignition risk, but the landscape around it, often referred to as the "home ignition zone." The home ignition zone is defined as the home and its immediate surroundings up to 200 feet (60 m).

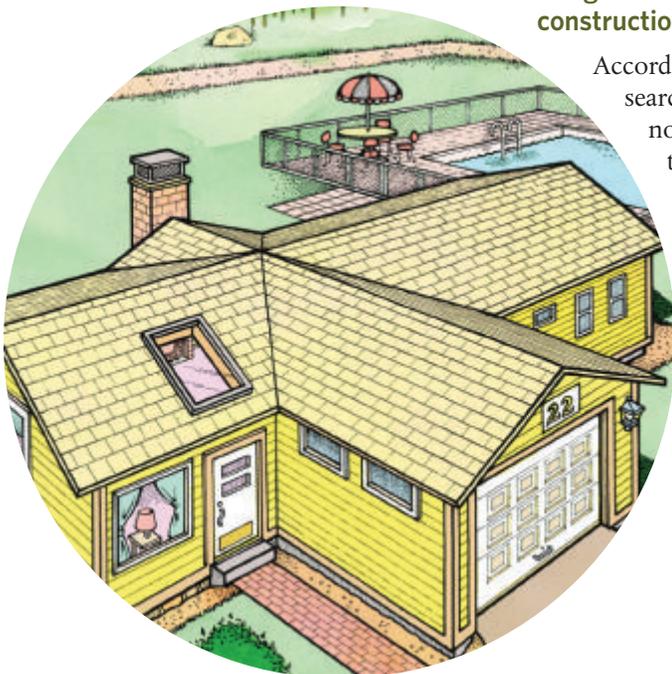
The Firewise Communities Program provides tips for reducing wildfire risk based on the home ignition zone concept:

**Home Zone:** Harden your home against wildfire. This includes fences, decks, porches and other attachments. From the point of view of a fire, if it's attached to the house it is a part of the house. Non-flammable or low flammability construction materials—especially for roofs, siding and windows—are recommended for new homes or retrofits. Keep any flammables, including plantings and mulch out of the area within 5 feet of your home's perimeter.

**Zone 1:** This well-irrigated area encircles the structure for at least 30 feet on all sides including decks and fences, and provides space for fire suppression equipment in the event of an emergency. Lawns should be well maintained and mowed. Plantings should be limited to carefully-spaced low flammability species. In particularly fire prone areas, non-flammable mulch should be considered.

**Zone 2:** This area encircles 30 - 100 feet from the home. Low flammability plant materials should be used here. Plants should be low-growing and the irrigation system should extend into this section. Shrubs and trees should be limbed up and spaced to prevent crowns of trees from touching.

**Zone 3:** This area encompasses 100 - 200 feet from the home. Place low-growing plants and well-spaced trees in this area, remembering to keep the volume of vegetation (fuel) low.



**Zone 4:** This furthest zone from the structure is a natural area. Selectively prune and thin all plants and remove highly flammable vegetation.

### Homeowners can and must take primary responsibility for wildfire safety action around the home.

There are not enough fire fighting resources to protect every house during severe wildfires, and with shrinking budgets it means we need to do more with less. Fire fighters are trained to safely and efficiently suppress wildland fires, but their effectiveness is reduced when they must sweep decks, move wood piles and patio furniture while trying to fight a fire. According to fire science research, individual efforts do make a difference even in the face of a catastrophic wildfire.

The following steps are outlined by the Firewise program to reduce home ignition risk, based on this principle:

- Prune low hanging limbs to reduce ladder fuels
  - Clean roofs and gutters of pine needles and dead leaves
  - Keep flammable plants and mulches at least 5 feet away from your home's perimeter
  - Use low-growing, well pruned and fire-resistant plants around home
  - Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire screening no larger than 1/8-inch mesh
  - Sweep decks and porches clear of fallen leaves
  - Move woodpiles away from the home during non-winter months
  - Bring doormats and furniture cushions inside when an area is threatened by a wildfire
- Close garage doors when leaving your home in the event of an evacuation

### We all have a role to play in protecting ourselves and others.

Your home ignition zone extends up to 200 feet—and it's quite common to have neighbors whose home ignition zone overlaps yours. Buildings closer than 100 feet apart can ignite one another if they are in flames. In addition, many communities have commonly owned property, including natural or wooded areas that can pose fire risks to all. This means that to be most effective, neighbors need to work together and with their local fire service to achieve greater wildfire safety.

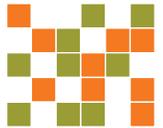
Together, community residents can work with agencies and elected officials to accomplish the following:

- Ensure that homes and neighborhoods have legible/clearly marked street names and numbers
- Create "two ways out" of the neighborhood for safe evacuation during a wildfire emergency
- Create phone trees to alert residents about an impending fire
- Review any existing community rules or regulations on vegetation management and construction materials to see if they are "Firewise-friendly"
- Use the "Ready, Set, Go!" program with the fire department to educate neighbors
- Use the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program to create and implement an ongoing action plan that will also earn the neighborhood national recognition for their efforts

**LEARN MORE** about how to keep families safe and reduce homeowners' risk for wildfire damage at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org).

**ADDITIONALLY,** complimentary brochures, booklets, pamphlets, videos and much more can be found on the information and resources page of the website and ordered online through the Firewise catalog.





## Firewise tips checklist for homeowners

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WILDFIRE DOESN'T HAVE TO BURN everything in its path. In fact, cleaning your property of debris and maintaining your landscaping are important first steps to helping minimize damage and loss.

The work you do today can make a difference. Follow these simple action steps now and throughout the year to prepare and help reduce the risk of your home and property becoming fuel for a wildfire:

- Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
- Remove dead vegetation from under your deck and within 10 feet of the house.
- Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches.
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, dry vegetation) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- Wildfire can spread to tree tops. If you have trees on your property, prune so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.
- Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire.
- Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
- Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.
- Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.
- Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screen with metal mesh to prevent ember entry.

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**Learn more** about how to keep your family safe and reduce your home's risk for wildfire damage at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org).



## Firewise Communities / USA® Recognition Program checklist

BY WORKING WITH NEIGHBORS, individual residents can make their own property – and their neighborhood – much safer from the flames and embers of a wildfire. [The Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program](#) provides a series of steps so you and your neighbors can act now ahead of a wildfire threat.

Ready to begin? Follow these steps on your way to becoming an official Firewise community.

- 1. Talk to your neighbors.**  
You may be surprised to learn that other residents are just as concerned as you are about wildfire, so make a pledge to get started ... now.
  - Schedule a time to meet with the state liaison or his/her designee to provide a community wildfire risk evaluation. Plan on at least one full day for this activity.
  - At the same time, contact your local fire official who will accompany the state liaison for the evaluation.
  
- 2. Recruit interested community members.**  
These people will form a diverse Firewise® board or committee. The group should include homeowners and fire professionals, but may also include planners, land managers, urban foresters and members of other interest groups in your community.
  - Choose a group leader/representative. (This person, often known as the “sparkplug,” will serve as the spokesperson and take the lead on Firewise initiatives.)
  - A site assessment is **not** a Community Wildland Protection Plan (CWPP). It is a wildfire risk evaluation of the potential Firewise Communities/USA site that is applying for national recognition.
  
- 3. Contact Firewise.**  
Have the community representative complete an on-line request form on the [“contact us”](#) page on the Firewise website ([www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)), or call the [Firewise Communities Program](#) office at 617-984-7486. A Firewise representative can answer your questions, and help you get started.
  
- 5. Review the site assessment and evaluation document.**  
The assessment does not have a specific format, but the program endorses an assessment style that:
  - Includes a simple document for homeowners/residents to review the potential community site.
  - Familiarizes the homeowner/resident with the way ignitions are likely to occur and how homes are likely to be lost in the event of a wildfire.
  - Explains and illustrates common strengths and vulnerabilities with respect to this site’s wildfire risk.
  
- 4. Schedule a site assessment visit.**  
This is the first step of the process of achieving Firewise Communities/USA recognition status.
  - Have the community representative contact your state’s Firewise Communities/USA liaison, a specialist in wildland/urban interface (WUI) fire, to inquire about a site assessment and evaluation of your community’s current wildfire readiness. Your [state liaison’s contact information](#) is available on the Firewise website.

Upon completion of the evaluation, the state liaison or designee will schedule a meeting with your local Firewise committee to review the findings of your community assessment. At this time, your committee will determine whether they accept the findings or reject them. If you accept the evaluation, the process continues; if you don’t, the process is terminated.



### 6. Create a plan.

Based on the evaluation and assessment, your Firewise committee develops a plan to tackle problem areas. In your plan, remember to include deadlines and a schedule to keep you on track. Record your action plan, and have all members of your committee sign it. Your plan should include:

- One day during the year that is designated as “Firewise Day.” Whether it’s a “chipper day” that gathers equipment and volunteers to chip up brush and tree limbs, a state fair exhibit or a community clean-up day, the Firewise Day helps you get the work done to make your community safer.
- Firewise mitigation activities that amount to a community investment of more than \$2/capita/year of ‘in-kind’ volunteer contribution or grants.
- Once the plan is finished, share it with your state liaison.

### 7. Implement your plan.

Tackle the items in your plan. Designate the party responsible for each action, including who will take the lead on Firewise Day. Remember, everything you do should be documented, so you can send the paperwork in with your application form.

### 8. Apply for recognition in the Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program.

You’ve completed your plan; now it’s time to receive the recognition you deserve. Not only is your community safer from wildfire, you will now be able to celebrate your official status as a nationally recognized Firewise community. Remember to:

- Fill out the [application form](#)
- Attach your completed Firewise community plan
- Attach the Firewise Day document that lists names of volunteers, the hours involved and activities you’ve accomplished
- Attach any photos that illustrate your great work

- Send your completed application and attached documents to your state liaison for review
- Your state liaison will forward the application to the NFPA Firewise program headquarters. You can expect to receive your recognition materials (sign, plaque and other items) within 2-4 weeks after NFPA receives your application.

### 9. Renew your application each year.

The work of a Firewise community is never done. To maintain active status in the program, you must continue the work throughout the year, documenting all activities, including your Firewise Day, the hours involved, and the volunteers. The information is easy [to report through the Firewise website](#).

### 10. Celebrate your success!

We want to hear from you! Share your story with the Firewise Communities Program family. We’ll include your photos and activities on the Firewise website, feature your community in our [blog](#), and promote your hard work through our [social media platforms](#).

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### Questions?

[Contact](#) the Firewise Communities Program. More information can be found on the [Firewise website](#).

## Guidelines for spelling/usage of Firewise

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Please refer to the following guide for the correct spelling and usage of the name, Firewise, for signs, banners, posters and other materials.

- **The word, “Firewise”**

The word “Firewise,” when referring to the national Firewise Communities Program, is one word, with a capital “F” and not a capital “W.” The correct spelling is: Firewise.

- **Firewise Communities Program**

The formal name of the program is: Firewise Communities Program (with a capital “P”). A lower-case “t” is always used (the Firewise Communities Program).

- In all instances, write out Firewise Communities-Program, but when shortening it, please use a lower case “p” as in: the Firewise program.

- **Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program**

The Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program is the formal name of the recognition program, and is used only when referring to a community that has fulfilled all of its obligations as required toward becoming an officially recognized site.

- **Firewise Communities**

Please use an upper case “C” when writing out the name – Firewise Communities Program. However, when referring to a recognized community, please use a lower case “c” as in: A recognized Firewise community.

- **The national Firewise Communities Program**

The word, “national” refers to the fact that our outreach touches all corners of the U.S. It is not part of the formal name. Therefore, “national” is not capitalized.

- **Trademarks:**

As a general rule, the ® is used as follows:

1. Firewise ®
2. Firewise Communities/USA ®
3. Firewise Communities/USA ® Recognition Program

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### Questions?

Please [contact](#) NFPA’s Firewise Communities Program.



## Guidelines for using the Firewise / NFPA logo

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WANT TO USE THE FIREWISE LOGO to show your affiliation with this national wildland fire safety program? Here are NFPA's guidelines to using the national program logo.

**Please read these guidelines** before using your Firewise/ NFPA logo.

- The logo may not be revised or altered in any way. The logo must be displayed in the same form as produced by NFPA and cannot be reproduced unless such reproduction is identical to the logo provided by NFPA.
- The logo may be used only on stationery, letterhead, inspection tags, signs, banners and similar documents, materials or websites on which the name and address of the organization or association is prominently displayed.
- The logo may not be used in any manner that detracts from the high ideals of Firewise/NFPA or from the values, particularly fire safety values, espoused by NFPA.
- The Firewise/NFPA logo may not be used in any manner which would tend to imply a connection between NFPA and the organization which, in fact, may not exist. This includes any use of the logo that the public might construe as an endorsement, approval, or sponsorship by Firewise/NFPA of an individual or an organization's business, or which might be taken to support or encourage a sale of product, process, or installation. An individual or organization is allowed to print the logo on an advertisement or product literature.
- No person gains any rights whatsoever in the logo(s) or their use; it remains the property of NFPA. NFPA reserves the right in its sole discretion to require the removal of the logo from any location or thing NFPA feels does not comply with these guidelines, or which could or does discredit the Association.
- The Firewise/NFPA logo may be printed in all one color or with its colors. The NFPA logo is black and PMS 199, and the Firewise logo is PMS 151 and PMS 391.

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**For more information** about the Firewise/NFPA logo and its usage, please [contact](#) us through the Firewise website. Any questions regarding the use of the NFPA logo, please call +1 617 770-3000.

