



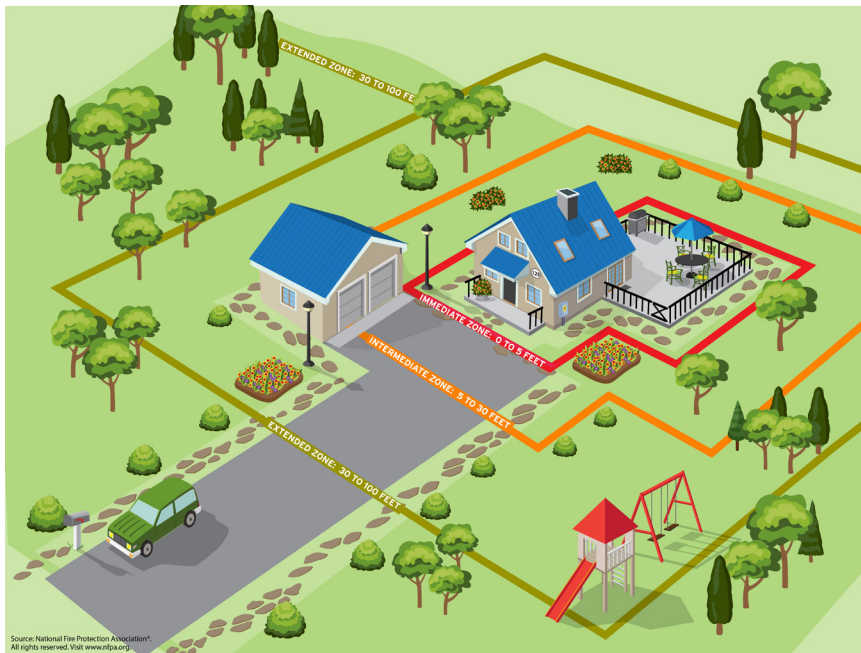
FIREWISE USA[®]
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

FIREWISE USA[®] RECOGNITION PROGRAM COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

Firewise USA[®] and the US Wildfire Problem

Every year, devastating wildfires burn across the United States. At the same time, a growing number of people are living where wildfires are a real risk. While these fires will continue to happen, there are things you can do to help protect your home and neighborhood as well as your family's safety.

The NFPA Firewise USA[®] recognition program was designed to help people learn about wildfire and how they can make their homes and neighborhoods safer. It's based on research that shows how to prepare homes to withstand embers and prevent flames or surface fire from igniting the home and its immediate surroundings, by working in an area known as the home ignition zone (HIZ). This is the home and everything around it within 100 feet.



The community risk assessment should focus on the vulnerability of homes and surrounding home ignition zones to embers.

Red Boundary = Immediate Zone
Orange Boundary = Intermediate Zone
Green Boundary = Extended Zone

In many neighborhoods, home ignition zones often overlap onto adjacent properties—meaning that homes are closer than 100 feet to one another. This makes the conditions of neighboring homes and vegetation a part of the wildfire threat. It's extremely important that neighbors work collaboratively with each other—and talk with each other—to reduce their shared risk.

Using Firewise USA[®] to create ignition-resistant communities

Firewise USA[®] is a voluntary recognition program that provides a framework to help neighbors get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance of their homes and communities from wildfire.

There are [several steps to take to become recognized](#) as a Firewise USA® site:

- Organize — Create a **board or committee** of volunteers to represent your community, including residents and partners such as local forestry agencies or the fire department. Identify a **resident leader** who will be the program point of contact.
- Plan — The board or committee defines the boundaries of the site and obtains a **community wildfire risk assessment**. From the risk assessment, the board/committee creates a multi-year action plan to identify and prioritize actions to reduce ignition risk to homes.
- Do — Each year, neighbors complete educational and risk reduction **actions** identified in the plan.
- Tell — When the above criteria have been met, the Resident Leader **applies for recognition** through the **Firewise® Portal** (portal.firewise.org), describing educational and mitigation work in the site. Each year, **sites renew their status** by reporting their activity.

The community wildfire risk assessment is one of the most important steps in the process. It's a tool to help residents understand their wildfire risk and engage in risk reduction efforts.

There are many ways to assess risk from wildfires, using many different scales. The assessment is focused on the risk of home ignition from wildfires and will help guide residents on the most effective actions to prevent home ignitions that could result in wildfire disasters.

The recommendations provided by the completed assessment will be the board/committee's primary tool in determining the action priorities within the site's boundaries. The Firewise USA® program requires risk assessments be **updated at a minimum of every five years**.

HOW TO CONDUCT THE RISK ASSESSMENT

Each state may designate its own template and special requirements for Firewise USA® participation. **Before starting this assessment, please contact your state liaison to determine your state's process. The best assessments result from a collaboration between residents and their state forestry agency, local fire department, or another designated partner.**

The community wildfire risk assessment speaks to the general conditions of the overall Firewise USA® site and does not provide details on each individual dwelling.

The assessment should focus on:

- Vulnerability of homes to ember, surface fire, and crown fire
- Condition of the structures themselves
- Immediate hazards within the home ignition zone on individual properties
- Concerns presented by common/open space areas or adjacent public lands

It should also consider factors that impact risk and influence fire behavior or structure ignitability, such as:

- Structural characteristics (roofing, siding, decks)
- Vegetation types
- Slope and aspect (the direction a community faces—north, south, east, or west)
- Housing density