



**SUMMIT FIRE & EMS**

**FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

0035 County Shops Road  
Frisco, CO 80443  
phone: (970) 262-5100  
summitfire.org

## Courtesy Wildfire Assessment Results

**Inspection Status**

Completed

**Inspected by**

Hannah Ohlson

**Completed at**

11/05/2024 10:35:00

**Address**

Mesa Cortina  
Neighborhood

**Suite**

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**City**

SILVERTHORNE

**State**

CO

**Zip**

80498

**Business Name**

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**Building Type**

Unknown

The following wildfire mitigation assessment criteria parallel current NFPA Firewise best practices. For more information on this standard, visit [NFPA.org](https://www.nfpa.org) or consult your Summit Fire & EMS inspector directly.

### Description:

#### ITEM: Notes & Summary

**RESULT:** Mesa Cortina is a ~150-acre neighborhood in Silverthorne, Colorado at the toe of Buffalo Mountain. One main road leads in and out of the neighborhood, and two additional roads serve as egress. A mix of full and part-time residents live in its 230 single family homes. Mesa Cortina is flanked by Forest Service land on two sides, and the Forest Service has performed extensive fuels reduction work adjacent to this neighborhood. Additionally, Summit County Open Space has mitigated some of their property that lies on a third side of the neighborhood. The structures within Mesa Cortina are in good condition; some have undergone improvements and others still have original external features from their construction in the 1980's. Similarly, the extent of mitigation work already done varies from property to property. The Mesa Cortina Firewise effort will be integral in unifying the entire neighborhood in mitigation efforts that aim to set a standard for the neighborhood.

Mitigation work in Mesa Cortina needs to be applied in a standard set of specifications throughout the neighborhood. Our common interest is in saving homes from wildfire, and that can be done through wildfire mitigation work around the homes themselves and in neighborhood common areas. The factors that contribute to a home burning down are factors that are immediately local to the structure- in the first

tens of feet. Homeowners can make a huge difference in the survivability of their home. This is especially important in Mesa Cortina given the proximity of homes to the wildland and to one another; there's a possibility of conflagration (house-to-house spread) if even one were to catch fire. Summit Fire recommends a strategic roll-out of these mitigations that involve treating the three Firewise zones over the course of a few years, then focusing on upkeep and especially challenging areas. For example, a plan could look something like this:

Year 1: Completion of immediate zone & home hardening (decks, patios, roofs, gutters)

Year 2: Completion of intermediate zone

Year 3: Completion of extended zone and common areas

Year 4: Maintenance/revisit of immediate zone

Year 5: Maintenance/revisit of intermediate and extended zones

Some of this work needs to be done by arborists, but much of it (particularly in the immediate zone) can be done by motivated homeowners. Mesa Cortina should consider organizing community mitigation days for its residents, and take advantage of the Summit County Chipping Program to dispose of woody materials waste from mitigation efforts. Summit County also administers a Hazardous Fuels Reduction Grant program to fund landscape-scale mitigation efforts, and Mesa Cortina's efforts would be a great candidate for that grant.

The recommendations outlined in this report are meant to be sufficiently broad as to capture all the needs of the neighborhood. The residents should feel free to reach out to Summit Fire & EMS (Hannah Ohlson, 970-262-5100 x119) to schedule a home- or HOA-scale assessment should they desire a perspective on their property specifically.

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**ITEM:** Number of dwelling units

**RESULT:** 230 single family dwellings, 249 lots.

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**ITEM:** Number of residents

**RESULT:** Approximately 500 residents, 50% of which live in the neighborhood full-time.

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**ITEM:** What type of neighborhood is this?

**RESULT:** Residential neighborhood

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**ITEM:** Residential types in neighborhood

**RESULT:** Single family

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**ITEM:** Types of ownership

**RESULT:** Private

**ITEM:** Lot sizes

**RESULT:** .10-.50 acres, .50 -1 acres, Greater than 1 acre

**ITEM:** Property & adjacent fuel type: aspen, grasses & brush, mixed conifer spruce & fir, lodgepole pine, non-burnable, etc.

**RESULT:** Recent or maintained fuels treatment area, Aspen & other deciduous species, Grass & sage, Spruce & fir, Lodgepole pine

**ITEM:** Proximity to forest, open space or other contiguous woody fuels

**RESULT:** 1/4 mile to 1 mile away

**ITEM:** Average slope of terrain in neighborhood

**RESULT:** Level or nearly level (0%-2%), Moderate slope (2%-9%), Steep slope (9% or greater)

**ITEM:** Wind exposure

**RESULT:** Regularly exposed to winds

**ITEM:** History of wildfire

**RESULT:** Area with history of fire occurrence

**ITEM:** Fire behavior concerns

**RESULT:** High concern: Contiguous high density fuels, Moderate concern: mixed fuels with natural and man-made breaks

**ITEM:** Firewise status

**RESULT:** In process of applying for certification

**General:**

**ITEM:** Water sources & access: hydrants, cisterns, lakes

**RESULT:** Hydrants present, Lakes, rivers & natural water sources

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**ITEM:** Addresses identification visible from public way, with text at least 5" tall, .5" thick, with contrasting background and made of non-combustible material

**RESULT:** All properties pass

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**REMARK:**

Mesa Cortina properties should consider standardizing address markers throughout the neighborhood. This will help first responders locate your home in the case of an emergency. Refer to Summit County code for guidance around address identification:

"Section 505.1 Address Identification.

New & Existing buildings shall have approved address numbers, building numbers or approved building identification placed in a position that is plainly visible from the street or road fronting the property. These numbers shall contrast with their background. Where required by the fire code official, address numbers shall be provided in additional approved locations to facilitate emergency response. Address numbers shall be Arabic numerals or alphabet letters. Numbers shall be a minimum of 5 inches high, unless otherwise approved, with a minimum stroke width of .5 inch. Where access is by means of a private road & the building cannot be viewed from the public way, a monument, pole or sign or means shall be used to identify the structure. Address numbers shall be maintained."

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**ITEM:** Access & evacuation: number of ingress & egress routes, roadway & driveway width & condition, amount of parking space, vehicle & fire apparatus turnaround, fuels adjacent to roadways

**RESULT:** Pass

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**ITEM:** Utility hazards: powerlines, propane tanks, electrical boxes

**RESULT:** Above ground power only

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**ITEM:** Roofing materials: composite shingles, metal, cement tile and clay

**RESULT:** Greater than 75% of homes pass

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**REMARK:**

All are asphalt single or metal. Many roofs have been replaced in the last 10 years in adherence with current Summit County code requiring Class A roofing.

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**ITEM:** Soffit vents: a screened vent on the underside component of the eaves that allows air to flow to the attic or the space below roof sheathing

**RESULT:** Greater than 75% of homes pass

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**ITEM:** Siding: stucco, masonry products, plaster and cement

**RESULT:** Fewer than 25% of homes pass

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**REMARK:**

Many homes have wood siding that meets the ground. This can be mitigated by:

1. Replacing wood siding with non-combustible siding
  2. Adding non-combustible skirting
  3. Making sure that the immediate zone is well-maintained (see Firewise zones broken down below)
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**ITEM:** Skirting: material used around the bottom of homes and sometimes decks to protect the underside from exposure

**RESULT:** Fewer than 25% of homes pass

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**ITEM:** Attachments: wood vs. non-combustible materials (Examples of non-combustible materials include decks made with wood-plastic composites, higher density tropical hardwood, or fire retardant treated decking materials, and fences that use metal or masonry where attached directly to the siding of a home)

**RESULT:** 25-50% of homes pass

**REMARK:**

1. Clear grasses and woody material from underneath decks and patios and replace with non-combustible material like stone. Diligently manage aspen leaf litter that accumulates on and under decks.
2. Ensure that residents are not storing exposed firewood on decks during the summer season. Consider storing firewood in non-combustible container or underneath a fireproof blanket. Summit Fire recommends implementing a community-wide guideline for storing firewood that prohibits its outdoor storage between Memorial Day and November 1st, and/or creating HOA-scale firewood caches that disincentivize homeowners from storing firewood on and under decks.
3. Store flammable patio furniture and cushions indoors in the case that residents are evacuated by wildfire or during long durations away from their properties. Encourage deck tidiness to keep fine fuels like leaf litter and needle-cast from accumulating.



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**ITEM:** Multi-paned windows

**RESULT:** Greater than 75% of homes pass

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**ITEM:** Homes free of roof and gutter debris

**RESULT:** 50-75% of homes pass

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## REMARK:

1. Continue to monitor for buildup of aspen leaves and needlecast in gutters and roof corners. Clean out gutters twice a summer to mitigate risk of embers landing in a fuel bed of leaves in gutters.

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**ITEM:** Non-combustible gutter material

**RESULT:** Greater than 75% of homes pass

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**ITEM:** Immediate Zone - 0-5': This space should be non-combustible with limited landscaping and no combustible material touching the building

**RESULT:** 25-50% of homes pass

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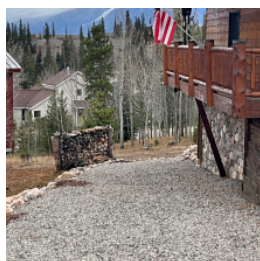
## REMARK:

1. Reduce and modify woody fuels so that the first 5 feet around the home is fully non-combustible. This can be accomplished by laying down stone in the immediate zone. Flower beds and other landscaped deciduous bushes are acceptable in the immediate zone as long as they are well-irrigated during the summer and pruned regularly of dead material; this should be the exception to the rule that is granted to full-time homeowners who are exceptionally diligent about thier gardening and landscaping and keep their yards irrigated until snowfall. The standard to aim for is nothing combustible within 5 feet of structures or their extensions (decks, fences, sheds).

2. Treat decks and their wood pylons as a part of the immediate zone by making the 5 feet around them non-combustible. Additionally, make sure that the area underneath decks is maintained free of grasses, weeds, and caches of leaf litter and needlecast.

3. Remove or limb all trees with branches that touch buildings siding and roofs so that closest branches are at least 5 feet from structures. Note that removing more than about 1/3 of branches from an individual tree may cause tree mortality, and full removal is the preferred option in this zone.

4. Remove ground junipers in the immediate zone, as they contain a highly flammable resin that increases fire intensity and spread.





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**ITEM:** Intermediate Zone - 5-30': This space should have limited vegetation and help decrease fire behavior as it approaches the building

**RESULT:** 25-50% of homes pass

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**REMARK:**

1. Selectively remove trees in intermediate zone to accomplish 10-18 feet of canopy spacing between individual conifers (trees that produce cones). Favor the removal of lodgepole pines and ailing trees over spruce and fir.
  2. Limb remaining mature conifers so that lowest branches are 5 feet from the forest floor. This specification does not apply to aspens and other deciduous (with leaves) trees, as they are relatively fire-resistant species; unless an aspen is dead/dying or its limbs are within 5 feet of a structure, it may stay as-is. Additionally, note that removing more than about 1/3 of branches from an individual tree may cause tree mortality, so it is preferable to wait until the conifers are taller to limb the lowest 5 feet of branches.
  3. Continue to remove standing dead, deadfall and dead branches from trees.
  4. Mow grasses 6 inches or shorter in intermediate zone to reduce ground fuel density and fire intensity. This is most important approaching late summer and fall, but should be maintained whenever there is not persistent snow on the ground.
  5. In juvenile lodgepole pine stands (generally identified as those with a diameter at breast height smaller than 6 inches), thin the stand by at least 50% to accomplish at least 10 feet of canopy spacing between individual lodgepoles. Prioritize the removal of smaller and mistletoe-impacted individuals. In addition to removing ladder fuels from the landscape, this thinning spec reduces competition, allows individual trees to grow wind-hardened, and increases tree vigor resulting in a more robust mature stand.
  5. Remove all ground juniper in the intermediate zone, as they contain a highly flammable resin that increases fire intensity and spread.
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**ITEM:** Extended Zone - 30-100'+: This space should be maintained in a "park like setting" with limited dead material and breaks in the natural vegetation

**RESULT:** 25-50% of homes pass

**REMARK:**

1. In the extended zone, thin conifers to accomplish 6-10 feet of canopy spacing between individual trees. As in the intermediate zone, this spec does not apply to aspens.
2. Remove any standing dead or deadfall.

See "recommendations not addressed above" for strategies to address common areas.





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**ITEM:** Common areas or adjacent public lands: is there a management plan for these fuels?

**RESULT:** Adjacent to wildlands with accumulated fuels

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**ITEM:** Recommendations not addressed above

**RESULT:** In areas of private ownership outside the home ignition zones (>100 feet from structures):

1. Remove standing dead and deadfall of all species. This receptive woody fuel contributes to wildfire spread. Consider also limbing low dead branches on conifer trees. Where logs and stumps are >50% decomposed, leave them where they are to continue decomposing. Additionally, focus efforts on larger logs and downed trees over twigs and sticks on the ground.
  2. Remove lodgepole pines where they exist in the common areas. They are adapted to high-intensity, stand-replacing fire. This will allow spruce, fir and in some places aspen to grow with less competition.
  3. Where homes are within the zones immediate, intermediate & extended, follow the specification outlined in the respective zones above to protect those structures.
  4. Thin regeneration of conifers over time to maintain a well-spaced, park-like setting that encourages mild fire behavior and stand health.
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In addition to the above recommendations regarding woody fuels management and home hardening, please consider the following:

Prepare your home, vehicle and important belongings for wildfire season. Pack a kit with essentials like medicine, family records, important documents, cash, a change of clothing, food and water for 72 hours and keep it in your vehicle. Keep sentimental items in a central location in your home so that they are easy to grab on your way out the door. Consider how you will evacuate and care for pets if you have them. Plan escape routes out of your neighborhood, and account for the need for alternative routes should roads be closed or threatened by wildfire. Consider, also, the possibility of evacuation when you are not home. See the Wildland Fire Action Guide linked below for more information about preparing yourself, your home and belongings for wildfire.

Summit Fire & EMS recommends signing up for Community Connect, a free and secure platform that allows you to share critical information about your household that will aid first responders and emergency response personnel when responding to your residence. You can sign up at [summitfire.org](https://summitfire.org), or use the QR code below.

Summit Fire & EMS also recommends registering for Summit County Alerts. The County's Office of Emergency Management uses this alert system to send emergency notifications by phone, email and text to keep community members informed of events such as evacuation notices, wildfires, utility outages, HazMat spills and other incidents. You can customize your alerts to share information of interest based on where you live in the county. Visit <https://www.summitcountyco.gov/1149/Summit-County-Alert> to register, or use the QR code below.



**Community  
Connect**



**Summit County  
Alerts**



**Wildland Fire  
Action Guide**

## Inspection Signatures

**Inspector Signature**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah Ohlson". The script is cursive and fluid.

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Hannah Ohlson  
Wildland Specialist  
Firefighter

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[hohlson@summitfire.org](mailto:hohlson@summitfire.org)