

Fire-Resilient Landscaping



As climate change intensifies, the risk of wildfires is increasing, making it essential for us to rethink how we design and modify our homes, landscapes, and communities. Rising temperatures and prolonged droughts have created conditions where fires spread rapidly, threatening lives and property. In response, we need to adapt by developing sustainable and resilient spaces that minimize fire risk. This includes integrating fire-resistant materials in construction, maintaining defensible spaces around structures, and implementing community-wide fire management practices. By taking proactive measures, we can better protect our homes and landscapes and ensure safer living environments for everyone.



Fire Resilient Landscaping



The Resource Central fire-resilient webinar series is an invaluable resource for those looking to enhance their understanding of fire-resistant landscaping. This series offers expert insights and practical strategies for creating landscapes that not only withstand fires but also thrive in their aftermath. Whether you're a novice gardener or an experienced landscaper, these sessions will empower you to make informed decisions to protect your home and community.

Reducing Fire Danger



REALFire® is a wildfire risk reduction program that provides homeowners in Eagle County with free property assessments to educate residents on how their property may be susceptible to wildfire, providing specific ways to reduce wildfire threat.

“Fire Free Five”

The most vulnerable area around a structure is within the first five feet. This area acts as a natural trap for embers. **If this area contains flammable materials, these embers are likely to cause the ignition of the structure.** In areas of high density, one burning structure may rapidly spread to others.

Within this area, recommended landscaping includes:

- Hardscaping such as on-grade patios, walkways, driveways, etc.
- Non-combustible mulch such as pea gravel, cobble, or stone
- Well maintained and irrigated lawn
- Perennial flower beds with low-growing, non-woody species
- Perennial ground covers



Within the five-foot zone from your house, AVOID:

- Trees and shrubs.
- Trees outside the five-foot zone that hang over into the zone should be limbed up to a height of six feet or one-third the total height, whichever is less, and should be trimmed to leave at least a two-foot gap between the nearest branch and the building.
- Combustible materials such as firewood, construction materials, gasolines or other fuels, or household items like brooms or combustible door mats.

Reimbursements program for “Fire Free Five” action:

This program will reimburse the property owner up to 75% of the actual costs of materials and labor. The property owner must provide a minimum 25% match. Creation of Fire Free Five around outbuildings is an eligible expense but is not eligible for a separate reimbursement.



Reimbursement limits are as follows:

- Single Family Dwelling: \$2,000
- Duplex: \$3,000



[Click here for info on Colorado statewide tax incentives for wildfire mitigation work](#)

Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)

The Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), is a geographical area where human development meets or intermingles with undeveloped wildland or vegetation. It's a zone with a high risk for wildfires because it contains both flammable vegetation and human structures, increasing the potential for fires to spread from wildland to communities.

The majority of Coloradans live in the WUI in places with at least some risk of wildfire, and that number continues to increase with development. In order to increase the likelihood that homes and infrastructure survive a wildfire, all landowners must work together to reduce fire hazards within and adjacent to communities.



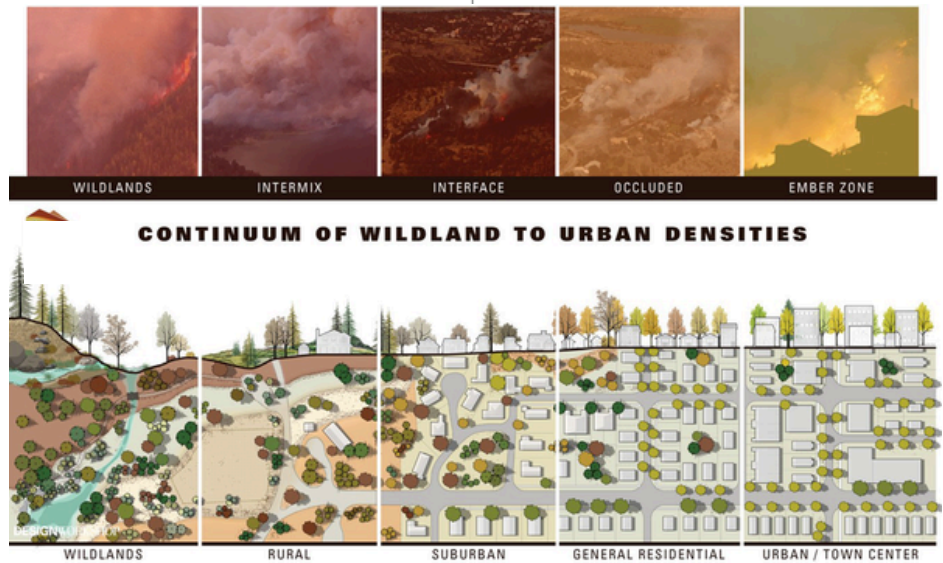
WHAT'S YOUR WUI RISK?

MORE THAN HALF of Colorado residents live in the wildland-urban interface and are at some risk of being affected by wildfire.

Source: CSFS WUI Risk Assessment 2017

This includes work on individual home sites and common areas within communities.

Every community member has a role in fire adaptation, from civic leaders, to developers, to first responders, to homeowners, HOAs, districts, and land management agencies.



What is the wildland urban interface?

The wildland urban interface (WUI) is where human development and the wildlands meet. Knowing if you're located within this area will help you better understand the risks of fire to your home.



Resource Central's Firewise Landscaping Series



Creating a Fire-Resilient Landscape: Defensible Space & Design Principles

Presented by Chris Woods of Woods Landscape Design

1:28:56

The Home Ignition Zone (HIZ)

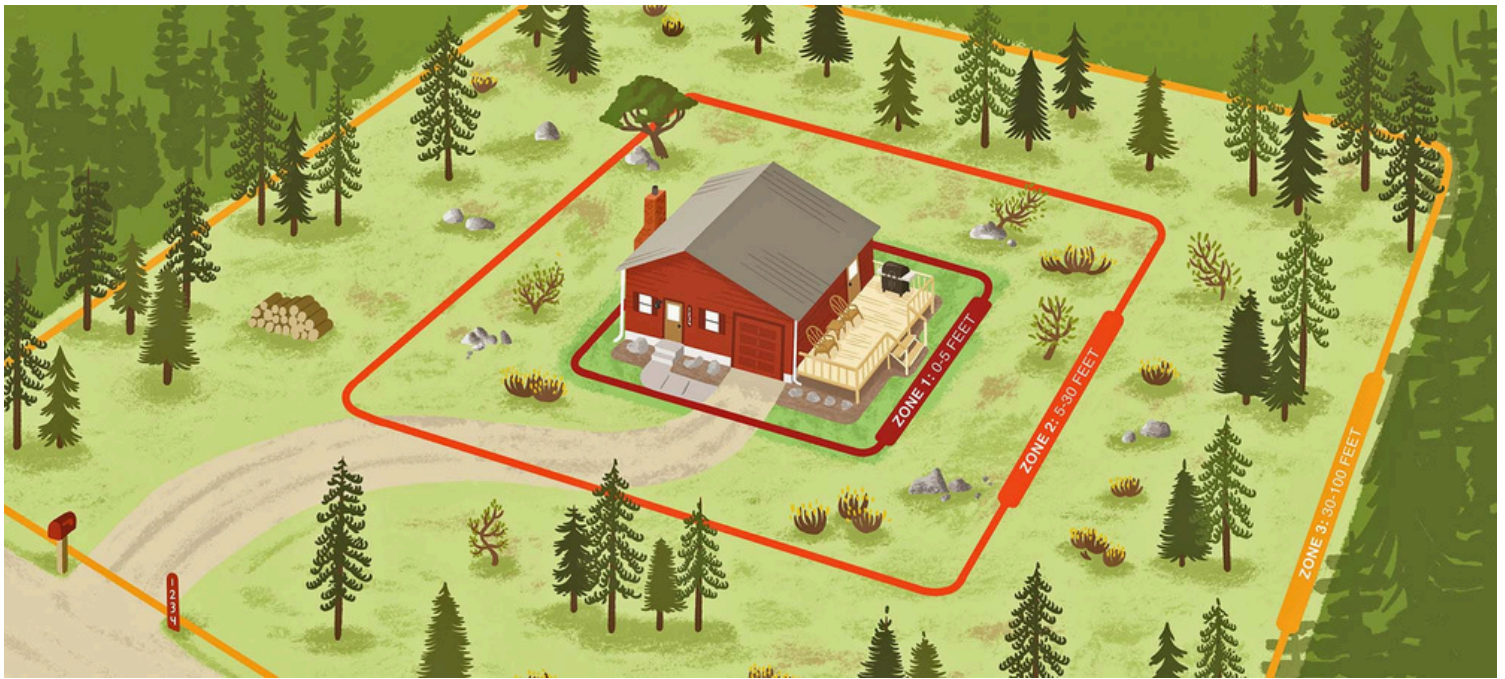


Illustration: Bonnie Palmatory, Colorado State University

HOME IGNITION ZONE (HIZ) is the home and the area around the home (or structure). The HIZ takes into account both the potential of the structure to ignite and the quality of defensible space surrounding it.

Zone 1

0-5 FEET FROM THE HOME

The area nearest the home. This zone requires the most vigilant work in order to reduce or eliminate ember ignition and direct flame contact with your home.

<5'

Zone 2

5-30 FEET FROM THE HOME

The area transitioning away from the home where fuels should be reduced. This zone is designed to minimize a fire's intensity and its ability to spread while significantly reducing the likelihood a structure ignites because of radiant heat.

<30'

Zone 3

30-100 FEET FROM THE HOME

The area farthest from the home. It extends 100 feet from the home on relatively flat ground. Efforts in this zone are focused on ways to keep fire on the ground and to get fire that may be active in tree crowns (crown fire) to move to the ground (surface fire), where it will be less intense.

<100'

Home Ignition Zone 1



GOAL: This zone is designed to prevent flames from coming in direct contact with the structure. Use nonflammable, hard surface materials in this zone, such as rock, gravel, sand, cement, bare earth or stone/concrete pavers.

CRITICAL STEPS

- Remove all flammable vegetation, including shrubs, slash, mulch, and other woody debris
- Do not store firewood or other combustible materials inside zone 1
- Prune tree branches hanging over the roof and remove all fuels within 10 feet of the chimney.
- Regularly remove all pine needles and other debris from the roof, deck, and gutters.
- Rake and dispose of pine needles, dead leaves, mulch and other organic debris within 5 feet of all decks and structures. Farther than 5 feet from structures, raking material will not significantly reduce the likelihood of ignition and can negatively affect other trees.
- Do not use space under decks for storage.

This webinar offers insight into safeguarding your home from wildfires. It covers essential strategies for creating a defensible space around your property, focusing on the crucial first five feet. Whether you're a homeowner or a community member, this webinar equips you with the knowledge needed to protect your home and improve your overall fire preparedness.

The First Five Feet



Home Ignition Zone 2



GOAL: This zone is designed to give an approaching fire less fuel, which will help reduce its intensity as it gets nearer to your home or any structures.

CRITICAL STEPS

- Mow grasses to 4 inches tall or less.
- Avoid large accumulations of surface fuels such as logs, branches, slash, and mulch.
- Remove enough trees to create at least 10 feet* of space between crowns. Measure from the outermost branch of one tree to the nearest branch on the next tree.
- Small groups of two or three trees may be left in some areas of Zone 2. Spacing of 30 feet* should be maintained between remaining tree groups to ensure fire doesn't jump from one group to another.
- Remove ladder fuels under remaining trees. This is any vegetation that can bring fire from the ground up into taller fuels.
- Prune tree branches to a height of 6-10 feet from the ground or a third of the total height of the tree, whichever is less.
- Remove stressed, diseased, dead or dying trees and shrubs. This reduces the amount of vegetation available to burn and improves forest health.
- Common ground junipers should be removed whenever possible because they are highly flammable and tend to hold a layer of flammable material beneath them.
- You can keep isolated shrubs in Zone 2, as long as they're not growing under trees. Keep shrubs at least 10 feet* away from the edge of tree branches.
- Periodically prune and maintain shrubs to prevent excessive growth. Remove dead stems annually.
- Spacing between clumps of shrubs should be at least 2 1/2 times* their mature height. Each clump should have a diameter no more than twice the mature height of the vegetation. Example: For shrubs that grow 6 feet tall, space clumps 15 feet apart or more (measured from the edge of the crowns of vegetation clumps). Each clump of these shrubs should not exceed 12 feet in diameter.
- * *Horizontal spacing recommendations are minimums and can be increased to reduce potential fire behavior, particularly on slopes. Consult a forestry, fire or natural resource professional for guidance with spacing on slopes.*

Home Ignition Zone 3



GOAL: This zone focuses on mitigation that keeps fire on the ground, but it's also a space to make choices that can improve forest health. Healthy forests include trees of multiple ages, sizes and species, where adequate growing room is maintained over time.

If the distance of 100 feet to the edge of Zone 3 stretches beyond your property lines, it's encouraged to work with adjoining property owners to complete an appropriate defensible space. If your house is on steep slopes or has certain topographic considerations, this zone may be larger.

STEPS TO CONSIDER

- Mowing grasses is not necessary in Zone 3.
- Watch for hazards associated with ladder fuels. The chance of a surface fire climbing into the trees is reduced in a forest where surface fuels are widely separated and low tree branches are removed.
- Tree crown spacing of 6-10 feet is suggested. Consider creating openings or meadows between small clumps of trees so fire must transition to the ground to keep moving.
- Any approved method of slash treatment is acceptable in this zone, including removal, piling and burning, lop and scatter, or mulching. Lop-and-scatter or mulching treatments should be minimized in favor of treatments that reduce the amount of woody material in the zone. The farther this material is from the home, the better.



EC Wildfire Collaborative



**EAGLE COUNTY
WILDFIRE
COLLABORATIVE**

! [Click here to navigate to ECWC wildfire preparedness resources.](#)



The Eagle County Wildfire Collaborative (ECWC) is a group of stakeholders within Eagle County working together to help mitigate wildfire threats through collaboration and partnerships.

The Collaborative works in all aspects of mitigation planning, grants, stakeholder engagement, recovery, project guidance, and other areas within wildfire mitigation management. Stakeholders within the ECWC include all Fire Agencies within Eagle County, Federal and State partners, Eagle County Government, watershed and sustainability partners, community leaders, wildlife experts, smoke and health experts, and leaders from various groups in ecosystem sustainability.

Hardening Your Home Against **Wildfire**: A Guide to Eagle County's Safety Codes

Hardening Your Home: Ignition-Resistant Construction

Use a Class A Fire-Rated Roof 
Wood shakes and shingles are not permitted for new construction or major replacements.

Construct Fire-Resistant Walls, Decks & Doors 
Use noncombustible materials or those with at least a 1-hour fire-resistance rating.

Secure All Vents and Openings 
Cover all vents with a noncombustible mesh (1/8-inch openings) to block embers.

Creating Defensible Space: The Home Ignition Zone

