

## Key Messages

*Referring to the key priority areas, the focus for FireSmart™ will include messaging on FireSmart and the seven disciplines, the concept of shared responsibility, the priority zones for mitigating wildfire risk, and planning and development considerations for communities and local governments. Doing so will effectively reduce the impacts of wildfires on homes and businesses and increase community and public awareness about FireSmart.*

## Overview

FireSmart BC is a provincial program, based on the FireSmart Canada model, committed to educating British Columbians on the risks of wildfires and mitigating their impact through the implementation of homeowner and community-based solutions. FireSmart BC is overseen by the BC FireSmart Committee, an organization that consists of key wildfire management agencies and partners from across the province.

The FireSmart BC website is here to give you practical information about the program and teach how individuals and communities can get started, providing Courses, Guides, Home Assessments and Information on how to become a FireSmart Recognized Neighbourhood.

## General

- Wildfire prevention is a shared responsibility between the public, business, and government but the first line of defense is often the homeowner.
- Homeowners play an important role in wildfire prevention; they are the ones that can directly reduce the risk of damage to their property by wildfire.
- Homeowners can help protect their properties from wildfire threats by using FireSmart principles.
- FireSmart is living with and managing for wildfire in your area, and on your property.
- FireSmart principles have shown that they are effective at reducing the risk to life and property in the most extreme wildfire conditions.
- Visit [FireSmartBC.ca](https://www.fire-smartbc.ca) for information about the FireSmart program.
- UBCM administers three funding streams through the Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) program and is intended to reduce the risk of wildfires and mitigate their impacts on BC communities.  
<https://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/funding/lgps/community-resiliency-investment.html>

## Promotional Headlines

- The Best Part of Being FireSmart is How Easy it is
- FireSmart Your Home and Community Today
- It's Time for [Location] to Get FireSmart
- The Homes That are Prepared are the Homes Left Standing

## Key Calls-to-Action

1. Go to [FireSmartBC.ca](https://www.fire-smartbc.ca) and to learn more about the FireSmart program and locate resources.

Homeowners: You are the first line of defense, use FireSmart principles on your home and property. Go next door and get your neighbour involved. If she or he is more resilient to wildfire, then so are you!

Officials: Do you encourage FireSmart developments in your jurisdiction? Could you engage in FireSmart education? Could you hold a cross training exercise?

Communities: Get recognized today. Look up the FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition program and take the steps necessary to FireSmart your neighbourhood, community and get recognized provincially.

## FireSmart Disciplines

- There are seven disciplines that make up FireSmart; education, vegetation management, legislation and planning, development considerations, interagency cooperation, emergency planning and cross-training.
- These disciplines make up the framework for how FireSmart works at the home, community and provincial level.

The seven disciplines that make up FireSmart include:

1. Education – When it comes to being FireSmart, education is everything. Raising awareness of wildfire risks and teaching about prevention and mitigation promotes long-term behavioural change. Learning what you can do today to protect against wildfires can save homes and lives tomorrow.
2. Vegetation Management – One of the key ways to mitigate wildfire threats is to manage vegetation on properties in fire-prone areas. Managing these fuels on the landscape by using the best available science is key to reducing community wildfire vulnerability.
3. Legislation and Planning – Wildfire prevention is a community effort, and starts with proven FireSmart practices for developing policy and legislation related to: forestry management practices; integrated land use planning; compliance and enforcement programs; and legal orders.

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4. Development Considerations – There are many ways land use planning and development standards can help protect homes and communities from wildfires. Effective local government and land use planning can support community wildfire resiliency and infrastructure survivability.
5. Interagency Cooperation – FireSmart is a shared responsibility that relies on strong and lasting partnerships. Promoting collaboration between agencies and across different levels of government will better support wildfire preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery.
6. Cross-Training – There are two kinds of firefighters: wildfire and structural. Many other local resources may also be involved in managing a wildfire incident. When firefighters are cross-trained, response capabilities are improved, and communities are safer.
7. Emergency Planning – Encouraging emergency planning by combining local knowledge with expertise in wildfire management helps communities become better prepared in responding to and recovering from wildfires.

## FireSmart Home

- There are several things that make a home a FireSmart one. The homeowner should consider;
  - the construction of the home itself,
  - the yard and landscaping,
  - the vegetation and fuels, and
  - access.
- Everyone should visit [FireSmartBC.ca](https://www.fire-smartbc.ca) and take a look at the FireSmart resources that are available.
- There are several manuals online that can walk a homeowner through how to FireSmart their home and their property, such as:
  - Remove combustible surface material in the area within 10 metres of your home
  - Make sure trees are spaced at least 3 metres apart
  - Prune all branches that are within 2 metres of the ground
  - The roof should be free of combustible materials, so embers don't have a place to collect (it should also be a fire-resistant roof made of materials that may include clay, asphalt, and metal)
  - The chimney should have a spark arrestor to reduce the chance of sparks and embers escaping
  - Gutters should be free of debris and screened if possible

- Eaves and vents should be screened with 3mm wire mesh. Soffits and fascia should be properly fitted as well
- Siding like stucco, metal siding, brick and concrete have superior fire resistance
- Windows should be tempered, thermal or double-paned
- Doors should be fire rated and have a good seal; weather strip your garage door even to prevent embers from entering

## FireSmart Zones

There are four FireSmart Zones

1. Non-Combustible Zone – 0-1.5 metres this critical, non-combustible surface area should extend around the entire home and any attachments, such as decks, to reduce the chance of wind-blown embers igniting materials near your home.
2. Zone 1 – 1.5-10 metres this should be a completely fire-resistant zone, free of all materials that could easily ignite from a wildfire.
3. Zone 2 – 10-30 metres away from your home, your outer yard. In this area trees should be thinned and pruned to reduce hazards. Fallen branches, dry grass and needles should be cleaned up to eliminate potential surface fuels.
4. Zone 3 – 30-100 metres and is your larger yard or neighborhood. Look for opportunities here to create fire breaks by removing potentially flammable vegetation to reduce the intensity of a wildfire.

## Why FireSmart Works

- Structures typically catch on fire because of embers being transported in the air. Once homes start to ignite, fire spreads from structure to structure. We need to prevent those initial ignitions.
- The science behind FireSmart is indisputable and FireSmart guidelines work. They are effective in reducing the probability of home ignition and wildfire losses. Home survival is not random or a matter of luck.
- Community fire guards, landscape fuel management and individual homeowners taking independent actions on their properties are important, but fire-resistant groups of homes at a neighbourhood scale are essential in preventing catastrophic wildfire disasters.

## Case Study - Example

Of the 2400 homes that did not survive the Horse River wildfire in Fort McMurray Alberta, over 90 per cent of those were ignited by ember transfer and the most significant difference between the homes that were destroyed and the ones that survived was that the homes that survived followed FireSmart principles.

Results from a study conducted on the Horse River wildfire, found that the most significant difference between the homes that were destroyed and the ones that survived was that the homes that survived followed FireSmart principles regarding vegetation and fuel placement. In fact, 81 per cent of the approximately 30,000 homes that survived were FireSmart and in the category of low hazard, whereas 95 per cent of the 2400 homes that were destroyed were in the FireSmart category of High to Extreme fire risk.

In all neighbourhoods studied, homes where owners had adopted FireSmart guidelines survived much more frequently than homes where they had not, despite extraordinarily harsh conditions

## Question and Answer

Question	Message	Sample Supporting Points
What?	FireSmart is the Canadian standard for wildfire risk reduction and is recognized by all provinces and territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The FireSmart program is backed by a vast amount of field, laboratory and wildfire modelling research. Its methods help reduce the risk of losses under even the most extreme fire conditions.</li> <li>•FireSmart is based on seven disciplines: Education, Vegetation Management, Legislation and Planning, Development Considerations, Interagency Cooperation, Emergency Planning, and Cross-Training.</li> <li>•FireSmart and its seven disciplines is an all-encompassing program, extending from the individual homeowner level up to a landscape land management level.</li> </ul>
Why?	Homeowners who diligently implement the recommended FireSmart guidelines greatly increase the probability that their homes will survive a wildfire event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Science-based evidence suggests that compliance with FireSmart guidelines is the logical reason for survival of many homes in the wildland/urban interface.</li> <li>•For example, the reason why some homes are more resistant to ignition by the embers and radiant heat in the Horse River wildfire was because those homeowners had adopted FireSmart measures to a greater degree than the owners of adjacent homes that were destroyed.</li> </ul>
How?	Simple measures, such as focusing of the three priority zones of FireSmart, can make a significant difference to the survivability of a home and property.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Non-Combustible Zone (0 - 1.5 metres from a structure or home): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removing combustible material down to the mineral soil in this zone</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Priority Zone 1 (1.5 metres - 10 metres from a structure or home): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid planting flammable plants in this zone, such as cedar, juniper, pine, tall grasses and spruce trees.</li> <li>• Keeping lawns well-watered and mowed and clearing needles from gutters.</li> <li>• Moving firewood piles, construction materials, storage sheds and other combustible structures into Priority Zone 2</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Priority Zone 2 (10 - 30 metres from a structure or home): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measuring the distance between the outermost branches of trees to ensure a minimum of 3 metres between trees in this zone. Small coniferous trees that act as a “ladder” to allow fire to move into the treetops should also be removed from this zone.</li> <li>• A surface fire can climb up into trees quickly. Remove branches within 2 metres from the ground in Priority Zone 2 will help stop surface fires from moving into treetops.</li> <li>• Clean up fallen branches, dry grasses and needles from the ground to eliminate the potential surface fuels in this zone as well.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Priority Zone 3 (30 - 100 metres from a structure or home): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thin and prune coniferous trees to reduce excess vegetation and branches. This will help decrease the intensity and spread of a wildfire.</li> <li>• Look for opportunities to create a fire break in this zone by creating space between trees.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

## About the BC FireSmart Committee

- The BC FireSmart Committee (BCFSC) was initiated by the BC Wildfire Service in May 2017.
- The BCFSC consists of members from:
  - BC Wildfire Service (BCWS)
  - Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC)
  - Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)
  - Fire Chiefs' Association of BC (FCABC)
  - Emergency Management BC (EMBC)
  - Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC)
  - First Nations' Emergency Services Society of BC (FNESS)
  - Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)
  - Parks Canada
  - BC Parks
  - Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC)
  - Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development – Regional Operations (FLNRORD)
- FireSmart is the Canadian standard recognized by all provinces and territories. It is based on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards that have evolved over the last 40 years. FireSmart is backed by a vast amount of field, laboratory and modeling research. Its methods have been demonstrated to reduce the risk of losses, under even the most extreme fire conditions.
- The FireSmart Neighbourhood Recognition Program is designed to encourage local, self-organized groups of neighbors to implement solutions for wildfire safety by engaging and supporting homeowners, community leaders, and others in shared efforts to protect people and property from wildfire. This program offers residents in a fire-prone area a unique opportunity to implement FireSmart practices specially tailored to individual and community needs. Upon completion of the program, neighborhoods and communities will receive “FireSmart” status from FireSmart Canada.

## Resources

### Forms and Resources

- FireSmart BC resource order form: <https://firesmartbc.ca/resource-ordering-form/>
- FireSmart Home Assessments: <https://firesmartbc.ca/resource-types/assessments/>
- Find your Local FireSmart Representative: <https://firesmartbc.ca/local-firesmart-representatives/>
- FireSmart BC Homeowners Manual: <https://homeowners-manual.firesmartbc.ca/>
- FireSmart BC Guide to Landscaping: <https://firesmartbc.ca/resource/landscaping-guide/>
- FireSmart BC Education Resources: <https://firesmartbc.ca/resource-types/education-materials/>

### Website and Social Media

- FireSmart BC Website: <https://firesmartbc.ca/>

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- FireSmart BC Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BCFireSmart>
- FireSmart BC Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/firesmartbc>
- FireSmart BC Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/firesmartbc/>