

Home Ignition Zone (HIZ)



The Home Ignition Zone is the area within 30 m (100 ft) of your home and structures. It's made up of three priority areas: The Immediate Zone, Intermediate Zone, and Extended Zone.

The HIZ shows how you can minimize your property's vulnerability to wildland fire by addressing threats in each priority zone, starting with the immediate zone and working your way outward.

Immediate Zone

0 m to 1.5 m

A minimum 1.5 metre (5 ft) non-combustible surface should extend around the entire home and any attachments, such as decks.

Intermediate Zone

1.5 m to 10 m

This should be a fire-resistant area, free of all materials that could easily ignite from a wildland fire.

Extended Zone

10 m to 30 m

Thin and prune coniferous and deciduous trees to reduce hazards in this zone. Regularly remove fallen branches, dry leaves, and pine needles to eliminate potential surface fuels.

Establish a fire break by creating space between trees and vegetation. Thinning and pruning are effective, as these actions will reduce the intensity of a wildland fire.

Tree-to-Tree Spacing

Once fire moves into treetops, it can easily move into neighbouring trees and increase the intensity of the fire. Space trees at least 3 m (10 ft) apart to reduce the risk of this happening. Clumps of appropriately separated trees are adequate in the extended zone.

Coniferous Tree Spacing

Since coniferous trees are highly flammable, it's important to measure the distance between the outermost branches of these trees. They should be at least 3 m (10 ft) apart.

Tree Pruning

A surface fire can quickly climb trees. Removing all branches within 2 m (6.5 ft) of the ground will help stop surface fires from moving into the treetops.

This pruning height may need to be increased if the trees are growing on a slope.

Pruning all trees within 30 m (100 ft) of your home is recommended. If possible, prune all trees within 100 m (330 ft) of your home.

Dead branches can be pruned at any time of year, but it's best to prune coniferous trees in late winter when they are dormant.

Maintenance

- 🔥 Include debris clean-up as part of your yard maintenance.
- 🔥 Dry leaves and branches are flammable and should be removed from your yard and gutters.
- 🔥 Older deciduous trees can be more susceptible to wildland fire. An arborist or forester can help assess the condition of mature trees.
- 🔥 Remove combustible shrubs from the drip line of trees.

Roadways and Driveways

In an emergency, you and your family may need to leave your neighbourhood while responders enter. For this to happen safely and efficiently, consider the following:

- Clearly mark your address.
- Clear vegetation from access routes to and from your home.
- If your property is large, make sure your driveway has a spot to turn around and, when possible, provide two access routes to your home.

Landscaping Within 10 Metres (30 feet)

A FireSmart yard includes making smart choices for your plants, shrubs, grass, and mulch. Choosing fire-resistant options can increase the likelihood of your home surviving a wildland fire.

Plant low-density, fire-resistant plants and shrubs. Avoid using wood products such as mulch, as it provides a potential place for fires to start. Maintain a 1.5 m (5 ft) non-combustible zone around your home and any attachments.

Characteristics of Fire-Resistant Plants

- Moist, supple leaves
- Minimal dead vegetation
- Water-like sap with little odour
- Low amount of sap or resin

Characteristics of Highly Flammable Plants

- Aromatic leaves or needles
- Accumulates fine, dry, dead material
- Contains resin or oils
- Loose, papery, or flaky bark

Plants to Avoid

- Cedar
- Juniper
- Pine
- Tall grass
- Spruce

Grass

A mowed lawn is a fire-resistant lawn. Grasses shorter than 10 cm (4 inches) tall are less likely to burn intensely.

Bark Mulch & Pine Needles

Don't use bark or pine needle mulches within 10 m (30 ft) of your home as they're highly combustible. Gravel and crushed rock mulch significantly reduce the risk of wildland fire.

Firewood Piles

Wood piled against a house is a major fire hazard. Move all firewood piles at least 10 m (30 ft) away from your home or into a FireSmart building.