

# READY >> SET >> GO!

## Your Personal Wildfire Action Plan



West Metro  
Fire Rescue

### Saving Lives and Property through Mitigation and Planning

<https://westmetrofire.colorado.gov/wildfire-safety>



# **READY, SET, GO!**

Since 2005, more than 89,000 homes have been lost in fires in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) in the U.S. More than 3,200 homes were destroyed along the Front Range of Colorado between 2005-2021.

Firefighters will make every effort to protect you and your property from a wildfire, but during a major incident, there simply will not be enough engines or firefighters to defend every home. It is YOUR responsibility to protect yourself, your family, and your property.

Recent field experiments, lab experiments, and case studies have shown how and why homes ignite and are destroyed in wildfires. These fires are inevitable, but home destruction is not.

This guide will help you navigate the process of reducing the vulnerability of your family and home to wildfire. We call this process, Ready, Set, Go! (RSG).

The **Ready, Set, Go!** Program works in concert with other wildfire mitigation and preparedness efforts, such as Firewise Communities and the Colorado State Forest Service.



**WMFR's**



**Wildfire Website**

For additional information and guidance, please visit the West Metro Fire wildfire mitigation website by scanning the QR code above or type <https://westmetrofire.colorado.gov/wildfire-safety> into your browser.

During wildland-urban interface fires, homes ignite and are destroyed by two primary mechanisms:

1. Ember intrusion: embers making their way into homes typically through eaves, windows, or vents.
2. Low-intensity fire making direct contact with the home, mulch beds, and unmitigated areas of vegetation.

Contrary to popular belief, high-intensity crown fires are NOT the primary cause of home destruction. Homes ignite and burn when the requirements for combustion are met. The mitigation practices in this brochure have been proven to reduce a home's vulnerability to ignition and destruction.

## **Ember Blizzard:**

Ember intrusion is a primary cause of home ignition and destruction. Thousands upon thousands of wind-driven embers are generated by burning vegetation and structures, and can travel *more than one mile*. The embers can and will lodge into any possible nook or cranny and ignite your home. Reducing your home's vulnerability to embers needs to be a **TOP PRIORITY**.



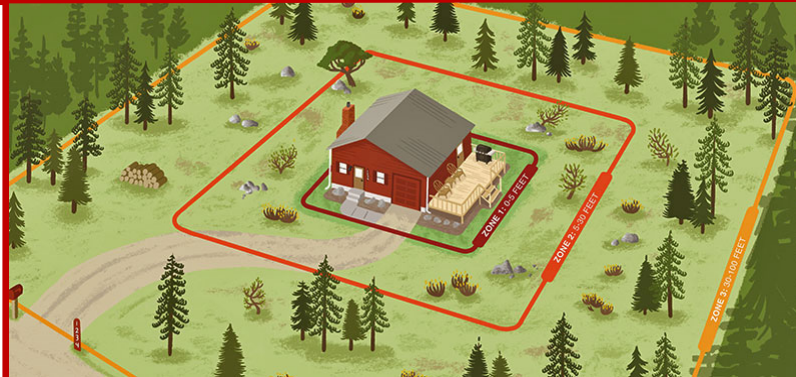




# READY, SET, GO!

prepare your home and family

- Mitigate hazards in your Home Ignition Zone (pages 5-7).
- Assemble an emergency supply kit as recommended by the Red Cross:
  - Supply of drinking water.
  - Cell phones and chargers.
  - Change of clothing for each family member.
  - Blanket or sleeping bag for each person.
  - First aid kit.
  - Prescription medications.
  - Emergency tools including a flashlight and extra batteries.
  - Extra set of car keys, credit cards, I.D. & cash.
  - Extra pairs of eyeglasses and other special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.
- Have fire extinguishers on hand and train your family how to use them.
- Follow West Metro Fire, Jefferson County and Douglas County Emergency Management on Facebook and Twitter or other social media.
- Register your mobile phones and devices with your local emergency notification system.
- Plan several different evacuation routes.
- Designate a meeting location outside the fire hazard area.
- Ensure your family knows the locations of your gas, electric, and water main shut-off controls and how to use them.





## JEFFERSON COUNTY

# Stay Informed

Sign up for LookoutAlert to receive important emergency notifications.  
Text LookoutAlert to 67283.



SEVERE WEATHER ALERTS



EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS



EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

POWERED BY:



Message and data rates may apply. Text messages are sent on an as-needed basis. Go to smart911.com for privacy and terms info.



<https://westmetrofire.colorado.gov/wildfire-safety>



## DOUGLAS COUNTY



Visit - <https://www.dcsheiff.net/codered> &

# Register for CodeRED Emergency Alerts Today



# READY, SET, GO!

create "defensible" space

The term "defensible" is misleading. During a wildfire, firefighters may not be available to actively defend your home.

Ideally, your home can survive a wildfire with no intervention from firefighters.

This space should be modified to reduce the ignition risk and fire intensity should an ignition occur, and to prevent direct flame contact with the house.

## What Is the Home Ignition Zone?

### 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.

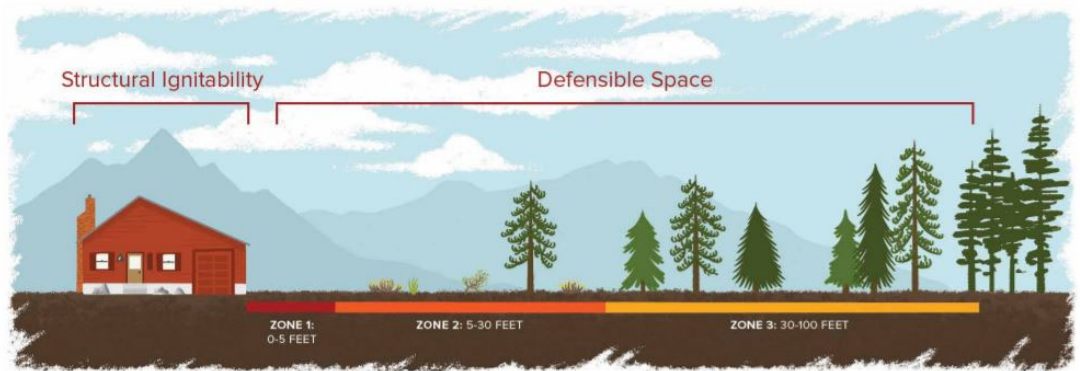


Illustration: Bonnie Palmatory, Colorado State University

### 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.

- ◆ 0-5 feet: Use noncombustible hard surfaces such as concrete or gravel to prevent direct flame contact with home.
- ◆ Remove any leaf or needle litter that has accumulated against your house.
- ◆ Limit vegetation within this Zone to species on Colorado's FireWise List.
- ◆ Prune all plants and remove all dead branches and leaves.
- ◆ Remove leaf and needle debris on the ground.
- ◆ Keep grass irrigated and mowed.
- ◆ Do not store firewood or combustible materials in this area.
- ◆ Remove any tree branches that overhang the roof.
- Increase width to 30' when home sits atop steep slope.

### 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.

- ◆ Remove stressed, diseased, dead or dying trees and shrubs.
- ◆ Thin and prune the remaining larger trees.
- ◆ Remove leaf and needle debris on the ground.
- ◆ Keep grass irrigated and mowed.
- ◆ Prune tree branches to a height of at least 10 feet above ground.
- ◆ Maintain adequate spacing between shrubs.
- ◆ Zone 2 may overlap with your neighbors' property or may not exist in areas of high-density.

### 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.

- ◆ Zone 3 has no specified width.
- ◆ Create and maintain a minimum of 10 feet between tree tops.
- ◆ Prune tree branches to a height of at least 10 feet above ground.
- ◆ Remove stressed, diseased, dead or dying trees or shrubs.
- ◆ Zone 3 may overlap with your neighbors' property or may not exist in areas of high-density.
- ◆ Consider other objectives if your property is directly adjacent to open space lands.





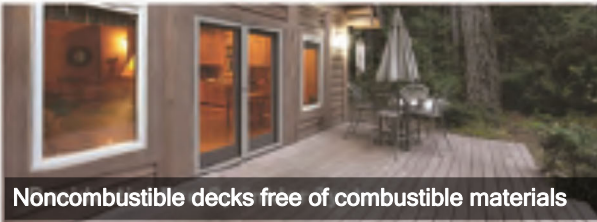
# READY, SET, GO!

identify ignition risks & make your home fire resistant

## If your home doesn't ignite, it can't burn.

Construction materials and building design play an important role in determining the vulnerability of your home to wildfire.

Here are some simple actions you can take to reduce the ignitability of your home and structures:



### BALCONIES and DECKS

Most decks are highly combustible. Embers that collect on the top or underneath decks can ignite that material, combustible furniture, and leaf and needle debris, then spread to the home.

**Actions:** Remove combustible materials from on top and under decks, including furniture and storage, extend gravel or cement under deck, screen or enclose decks.



### ROOFS

Roofs are the most vulnerable surface where embers land because they can lodge in small cracks and spaces and ignite a fire. Wood shake-shingle roofs are unacceptable because they are highly flammable. Many debris-filled gutters have ignited and led to total home destruction.

**Actions:** When your roof needs significant repairs or replacement, use only non-combustible roofing materials. Metal flashing can block embers from lodging and igniting wood roofing components and siding. Keep gutters free of combustible debris.



### EAVES

Embers can gather under open eaves, enter the attic through soffit vents, and ignite exposed wood or other combustible material.

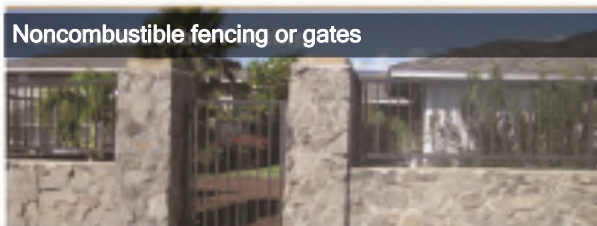
**Actions:** Box in eaves with noncombustible materials, screen all soffit vents with fine metal mesh, and remove all vegetation directly under eaves.



### VENTS

Many homes have been destroyed by wind-driven embers entering the attic or other concealed spaces. Vents in eaves and gables are particularly vulnerable.

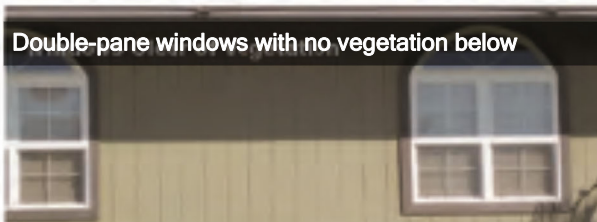
**Actions:** At a minimum, cover all vent openings with fine metal mesh.



### SIDING and FENCING

Combustible siding can ignite and destroy the home. Combustible wood fencing that is attached to the home can ignite and carry fire to the home, like a fuse.

**Actions:** Consider building or remodeling with ignition-resistant materials such as brick, cement, masonry, or stucco. If you have a wooden fence, consider a gate, a short section of noncombustible materials, or metal flashing where it attaches to the home.



### WINDOWS and DOORS

Embers can enter a home through gaps in doors, including garage doors. Plants or combustible storage near windows can be ignited from embers and generate enough heat to break windows, allowing embers to enter the home.

**Actions:** Use double-pane windows with tempered glass and weather stripping for all doors, including the garage door. Remove all combustible material and vegetation from underneath windows.



# TAKE A TOUR OF HOMES IN THE

**Chimney:** Cover your chimney and stovepipe outlets with a non-flammable screen or metal mesh to prevent embers from escaping and igniting a fire.

Make sure that your chimney is at least 10 feet away from any tree branches.

**Vents:** All vent openings should be covered with fine metal mesh. Use baffled vents for greater protection from embers.

**Eaves:** Box in eaves with noncombustible materials and screen soffit vents with fine metal mesh.



**Remove:** Trees and shrubs in close proximity to the house should be removed.

**Windows:** Single-paned and large windows are particularly vulnerable since heat can break them and allow embers to enter and ignite the house.

Install dual-paned windows with the exterior pane of tempered glass to reduce the chance of breakage during a fire.

**Gutters:** Screens or enclosed rain gutters prevent plant debris from accumulating and reduces the risk of ember intrusion.

Clean leaves and debris from gutters regularly.

**Noncombustible fencing:** Use noncombustible fencing, or at least noncombustible attachment points, to prevent fire from spreading to your structures.

**Trim trees and vegetation:** The trees located near the entrance of the home should be thinned and pruned to ensure there is a 10-foot minimum distance between tree tops.

No vegetation should be planted within 5-feet of the house, especially directly below windows.

Instead of vegetation, use hard surfaces such as concrete or gravel to a width of 5-feet when adding material next to and around your home.



**Inside:** Keep working fire extinguishers on hand in accessible locations (under the kitchen sink, in a garage, in a closet, etc.).

Consider installing residential sprinklers in your home and maintain the system as suggested by the installer.



# WILDLAND - URBAN INTERFACE



**Garage:** Install a solid door with self-closing hinges between the garage and living area. Install weather stripping around and under doors to prevent ember intrusion.

Store fuel and other flammable chemicals in a metal cabinet. Store all combustible material away from ignition sources.

**Outbuildings:** Use the same principles for all your structures, including garages, sheds, and barns.

**Vents:** Vents on homes are particularly vulnerable to ember intrusion. All vent openings should be covered with fine metal mesh. Attic vents in eaves or gables should be baffled or otherwise protected to prevent ember intrusion (mesh is not enough).

**Deck/Patio:** Use heavy timber or fire-resistive construction material for decks and do not store anything under the deck. Enclose the underside of balconies and decks with fire-resistant materials to prevent embers from blowing underneath. Remove leaves or needle debris from on top and underneath decks. Remove combustible items such as furniture (including cushions) and propane tanks from the deck if a wildfire is approaching.



**Roof:** Homes with wood-shake shingle roofs are at high risk of ignition from wind-blown embers. Build your roof or re-roof with fire-resistive materials. Use metal flashing to prevent ember intrusion. Clear pine needles, leaves and other debris from your roof and gutters. Cut any tree branches within 10 feet of your roof.

**Walls/siding:** These walls are constructed using fire-resistant building materials such as brick, cement, masonry or stucco. Be sure to extend these materials from foundation to roof. Prevent ember intrusion by installing weep screed or flashing at the bottom of walls and in gaps.

**Address:** Post your address with 4" reflective numbers that can be seen from the road in all weather conditions.

**Home Site and Yard:** Modify the vegetation in the Home Ignition Zones. Note that more intensive treatment may be needed for homes in severe hazard areas. Work with your neighbors to address common areas. Keep woodpiles, propane tanks, and combustible materials away from your home and other structures such as garages, barns and sheds. Ensure that trees are far way from overhead power lines.

# Mitigation & Tax Credits

## Have you heard of Income 65: Wildfire Mitigation Measures Subtraction?

Individuals, estates and trusts may claim a subtraction on their Colorado income tax return for certain costs incurred in performing wildfire mitigation measures on their property in a wildland-urban interface area within Colorado. The subtraction is equal to either 50% or 100% (depending on the tax year) of the qualifying costs for performing wildfire mitigation measures. The total subtraction a taxpayer can claim per tax year is limited to \$2,500.

### WHAT COSTS QUALIFY FOR THE WILDFIRE MITIGATION MEASURES SUBTRACTION?

The wildfire mitigation measures subtraction is allowed for the actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred and paid by the taxpayer primarily for wildfire mitigation measures. In order to qualify for the subtraction, the wildfire mitigation measures must be performed on real property in which the taxpayer has an ownership interest (see *Qualifying ownership interests*, above) and that is located in a wildland-urban interface area within Colorado. A wildland-urban interface area is an area where structures and other human development are built close to or within natural terrain and flammable vegetation, and where high potential for wildfire exists.

#### Wildfire mitigation measures

Wildfire mitigation measures that qualify for the subtraction are any of the following activities so long as such activities meet or exceed any applicable standards established by the Colorado State Forest Service or the Division of Fire Prevention and Control:

- creating a defensible space around structures;
- establishing fuel breaks;
- thinning of woody vegetation for the primary purpose of reducing risk to structures from wildfire; or
- secondary treatment of woody fuels by lopping and scattering, piling, chipping, removing from the site; or
- prescribed burning.

For information about standards established by the Colorado State Forest Service and the Division of Fire Prevention and Control, see:

- Wildfire Information Resource Center - [colorado.gov/pacific/dfpc/wildfire-information-resource-center](https://colorado.gov/pacific/dfpc/wildfire-information-resource-center)
- Colorado State Forest Service - [csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/](https://csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/)

#### Qualifying costs

In order to qualify for the subtraction, a cost must be an actual out-of-pocket expense incurred and paid by the taxpayer primarily for wildfire mitigation measures. A taxpayer must have a receipt documenting the cost of any wildfire mitigation measure for which the subtraction is claimed. Qualifying costs include:

- payment to a contractor to perform wildfire mitigation measures;
- the cost of a chainsaw if purchased primarily for wildfire mitigation measures; or
- the cost to rent an all-terrain vehicle, truck, tractor, or trailer if rented primarily to perform wildfire mitigation measures.

Check out Colorado statutes and regulations for additional information:

- § 39-22-104(4)(n.5), C.R.S. Wildfire mitigation measures subtraction
- 1 CCR 201-2, Reg. 39-22-104(4)(N.5). Wildfire mitigation measures subtraction





# READY, SET, GO!

a fire is burning in your area

Emergency Notification Systems will keep you informed about what's happening and what actions you should take during an emergency.



## GENERAL CHECKLIST

- Stay alert and aware** of fire status and weather conditions. Monitor social media, local news media, and emergency notification systems (Lookout Alert or CodeRED).
- Remain close to your house, drink plenty of water, and keep an eye on your family and pets until you are ready to leave.
- Evacuate** as soon as you are told or if you feel threatened.
- Alert family and neighbors that you are leaving.
- Dress in appropriate clothing (clothing made from natural fibers, such as cotton, and boots). Have eye protection and a dry bandanna or particle mask handy.
- Ensure you have your **emergency supply kit** on hand.

## INSIDE CHECKLIST, IF TIME ALLOWS

- Close all windows and doors, leaving them unlocked.
- Close all shutters, blinds or heavy noncombustible window coverings to reduce radiant heat.
- Shut off gas at the meter.
- Turn off pilot lights & air conditioning/swamp cooler.
- Leave your lights on so emergency personnel can see your house under smoky conditions.

## OUTSIDE CHECKLIST, IF TIME ALLOWS

- Bring combustible items from the exterior of the house inside (e.g. patio furniture, door mats).
- If you have a pool, place these items in the water.
- Turn off propane tanks and other gas at the meter.
- Leave exterior lights on.
- Place a ladder in an obvious location.
- Back your car into the driveway to facilitate a quick departure. Shut the doors and windows.
- If you can do so safely, patrol your property and extinguish any small fires until you leave.
- Cover attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals.

## SURVIVAL TIPS IF YOU ARE TRAPPED:

- ◆ Stay in your home until the fire passes. Shelter away from outside walls.
- ◆ Bring garden hoses inside house or garage so embers and flames do not destroy them.
- ◆ Stay hydrated.
- ◆ Place wet towels under doors to keep smoke and embers out.
- ◆ Ensure you can exit the home if it catches fire.
- ◆ Extinguish any spot fires inside house.
- ◆ Fill sinks and tubs for an emergency water supply.
- ◆ After the fire has passed, check your roof and attic and extinguish any fires, sparks, or embers.
- ◆ If there are any fires you cannot extinguish, call 9-1-1.



# READY, SET, GO!

get to a safe place

## ACT EARLY

By leaving early, you give your family the best chance of surviving a wildfire. You also help emergency personnel by keeping roads clear of congestion, enabling them to do their jobs efficiently and in a safer environment.

## WHEN TO LEAVE

If there is a threat to your home or evacuation route, do not wait to be advised to leave. Go early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke, or road congestion. If you are advised to leave by authorities, do not hesitate!

## WHERE TO GO

Evacuate to a predetermined location (it should be a low-risk area, such as a friend or relative's house, a Red Cross shelter or evacuation center, motel, etc.). Local authorities may communicate a designated evacuation center via social media and/or the emergency alert system.

## EVACUATION ROUTE

Have several travel routes in case one is blocked, but be prepared to follow the evacuation route designated by local authorities.



## WHAT TO TAKE

Take your loved ones and your emergency supply kit containing your family and pet's necessary items. Don't forget your cell phone and chargers.

**EVACUATION:** This means there is a hazard in your area and you must evacuate immediately.

If you need assistance evacuating yourself or need help evacuating animals, call 911.

You will be provided the safest escape routes known, so make sure you follow the instructions as other routes may be closed or unpassable.

You will also be told where an evacuation point has been established to provide information and a safe place if you have nowhere else to go.

Do not delay - **Evacuation** means you need to leave immediately!





# Our Wildfire Action Plan

This Wildfire Action Plan will be posted in a location where every member of my household can see it.

We will rehearse it with our household and neighbors/support contacts.

During Red Flag Warning days in our area, we will monitor local news/social media for information on wildfires and be ready to implement this plan.

**READY**

**Prepare Emergency Supply Kit** — Supply of drinking water, cell phones and chargers, change of clothing for each family member, blanket or sleeping bag for each person, first aid kit, prescription medications, flashlight and extra batteries, extra set of car keys, credit cards, I.D., cash, extra pairs of eyeglasses and other special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.

**Location of Emergency Supply Kit** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the Emergency Notification App (mobile phone)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Create a group text/message with family, neighbors, & friends who will assist during an evacuation.**

**Name of the group text/message** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact info for mitigation work** \_\_\_\_\_

**SET**

**Prepare your home:** Close all windows and doors (leave them unlocked), close all shutters, blinds or heavy noncombustible window coverings to reduce radiant heat, shut off gas at the meter, turn off pilot lights & air conditioning/swamp cooler, leave lights on (for emergency response visibility), bring combustible items from the exterior of the house inside (e.g. patio furniture, door mats) and tune into your local emergency notification app and social media.

**Establish potential evacuation routes:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Family/Household Meeting Place:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address of Meeting Place:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**GO!**

**Time to evacuate. Get out early!**

- ◇ **Grab your Emergency Supply Kit. Stay calm. You are prepared to evacuate.**
- ◇ **Ensure all household members are out of the home and in the vehicle you are using to evacuate.**
- ◇ **Open your emergency notification app and tune in/follow designated evacuation routes.**
- ◇ **Designate someone in the vehicle to contact your meeting place to let them know you are on your way. If you are alone in the vehicle, wait until you are fully out of the evacuation area and then let your meeting place contact know you are on your way.**





## Follow West Metro Fire Rescue on Social Media:



**@WestMetroFire** (breaking news and information, evacuations, etc.)



**@WestMetroFireRescue** (breaking news and information, evacuations, etc.)



**@WestMetroFire** (district news and information)



**WestMetroFire** (district news and information)



**West Metro  
Fire Rescue**

433 S. Allison Parkway  
Lakewood, CO 80226

303-989-4307

[westmetrofire.colorado.gov](http://westmetrofire.colorado.gov)