READY, SET, GO!

YOUR PERSONAL WILDLAND FIRE ACTION GUIDE

Grand County, Colorado

sponsored by the

GRAND COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

Proudly serving the communities of
Granby ~ Grand Lake ~ Hot Sulphur Springs ~ Fraser
Kremmling ~ Parshall ~ Tabernash ~ Winter Park
The fire season is now a year-round reality in many areas of Colorado, requiring firefighters and residents to be on heightened alert for the threat of wildland fire.

Each year, wildland fires consume hundreds of homes in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) despite the best efforts of firefighters. Studies have shown that many homes that survive wildland fires do so because of the proactive steps taken by the homeowner. The five fire departments in Grand County; Grand (Granby), Hot Sulphur Springs/Parshall, Grand Lake, East Grand (Fraser/Winter Park), and Kremmling take every precaution to help protect you and your property from wildland fire. However, the reality is that in a major wildland fire event, there will simply not be enough fire resources or firefighters to defend every home.

Successfully preparing for a wildland fire enables you to take personal responsibility for protecting yourself, your family and your property. In this publication, we will give you the guidance and tools you need to prepare for a wildland fire threat.

Fire is a natural occurrence in wildland areas. Our grasslands and forests burned periodically long before we built homes here. Wildland fires, fueled by a build-up of dry vegetation and driven by seasonal hot dry winds, are extremely dangerous and difficult to control. If you choose to live in a wildland area, understand that the building materials, construction and landscaping choices you make can determine how well your home may perform in a wildfire. It is equally important to understand the benefits of having an emergency plan for your household and being prepared for a quick evacuation. Most wildland fire-related deaths occur because people wait too long to leave their homes.

It’s not a question of if but when the next major wildfire will occur. Through advance planning and preparation, you can be ready for a wildfire. We hope you find the information and tools in the following pages helpful in creating heightened awareness and a more fire-safe environment for you, your family and your neighbors.

NOTE: Register your mobile phone with the CodeRED emergency notification system. You can find the link at www.gcemergency.com. Call the Grand County Office of Emergency Management (970.887.2732) or your local fire department if you have any questions or need assistance.
Living in the Wildland Urban Interface and the Ember Zone

Ready, Set, Go! begins with a house that firefighters can defend.

Defensible Space Works!

If you live in Grand County, you live next to a natural area—the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). It is critical that you create defensible space around your home. This buffer zone is created by removing weeds, brush and dead trees from your property, reducing the threat of wildfire and flying embers. It also provides firefighters with the space they need to safely defend your home.

If your home is within one mile of a natural area, it is in the Ember Zone; where wind-driven embers can threaten your home. You and your home must be prepared well before a wildfire occurs. Ember fires can destroy homes and neighborhoods far from the actual flame front of a wildland fire.
What is Defensible Space?

Defensible space is the space between a structure and the wildland area that creates a sufficient buffer to slow or halt the spread of wildfire to a structure. It protects the home from igniting due to direct flame or radiant heat. Defensible space is essential for structure survivability during wildland fire conditions. Work closely with your neighbors and HOAs; the property bordering your own must be “firewise” as well. For more information about defensible space visit the Firewise Communities website, firewise.org. There is also a wealth of information about defensible space and landscaping choices on the Colorado State Forest Service website: www.csfs.colostate.edu.

HOME

Create a noncombustible perimeter around the structure (0 to 5’)

- Install a concrete walkway or mulch up to the foundation with pebbles or stones
- Use annuals and perennials with high moisture content
- Keep the area well irrigated

ZONE 1

0 to 30’ out from the structure

- Remove all dead or dying trees, shrubs and grasses
- Trim tree canopies regularly to a minimum of 10’ from structures and other trees
- Remove leaf litter (dry leaves/pine needles) from yard, roof and rain gutters
- Relocate woodpiles or other combustible materials into Zone 2
- Remove combustible material and vegetation from around and under decks
- Remove “ladder fuels” (low-level vegetation that allows the fire to spread from the ground to the tree canopy)
- Create “islands” of vegetation with desirable trees and shrubs (no junipers)

ZONE 2

30 to 100’ out from the structure

- Make sure needle litter (duff) is less than 3” deep
- Remove all dead or dying trees, shrubs and grasses
- Trim the height of low-level vegetation and trim low tree branches at least 6’ up from the ground. Trim annual grass down to a maximum of 4”
What is a Hardened Home?

Construction materials and the quality of the defensible space surrounding it are what give a home the best chance to survive a wildland fire. Embers from a wildland fire will find the weak link in your home’s fire protection scheme and gain the upper hand because of a small, overlooked or seemingly inconsequential factor. However, there are measures you can take to safeguard your home from wildland fire. While you may not be able to accomplish all of the items on pages 6-7, each will increase your home’s ability to survive during a wildland fire.

To harden your home even further, consider installing a residential fire sprinkler system. Fires are fast; they can go from a tiny flame to total destruction in as little as three minutes. A sprinkler system can suppress a fire started by an ember that enters your home and gives you and your family time to escape.

**ROOFS**

Roofs are the most vulnerable surface because they have such a large surface area where embers can lodge and start a fire. Roof valleys, open ends of barrel tiles and rain gutters are all points of entry.

**EAVES**

Embers can gather under open eaves and ignite exposed wood or other combustible material.

**VENTS**

Embers can enter the attic or other concealed spaces and ignite combustible materials. Vents in eaves and cornices are particularly vulnerable, as are any unscreened vents.

**WALLS**

Combustible siding or other combustible or overlapping materials provide surfaces or crevices for embers to nestle and ignite.

**WINDOWS and DOORS**

Embers can enter gaps in doors, including garage doors. Plants or combustible storage near windows can be ignited from embers and generate heat that can break windows and/or melt combustible frames.

**BALCONIES and DECKS**

Embers can collect in or on combustible surfaces or the undersides of decks and balconies, ignite the material and enter the home through walls or windows.
A Wildfire-Ready Home

Home Site and Yard: Ensure you have at least a 100-foot radius of defensible space (cleared vegetation) around your home. Note that even more clearance may be needed for homes in severe hazard areas. This means looking past what you own to determine the impact a common slope or neighbor’s yard will have on your property during a wildland fire.

Cut dry weeds and grass before noon when temperatures are cooler to reduce the chance of sparking a fire.

Landscape with fire-resistant plants that have a high moisture content and are low-growing.

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 away from power lines.

Roof: Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home because it can easily catch fire from wind-blown embers. Homes with wood-shake or shingle roofs are at high risk of being destroyed during a wildland fire.

Build your roof or re-roof with fire-resistant materials such as composition, metal or tile. Block any spaces between roof decking and covering 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.

Vents: Vents on homes are particularly vulnerable to flying embers.

All vent openings should be covered with 1/8-inch or smaller metal mesh. Do not use fiberglass or plastic mesh because they can melt and burn.

Attic vents in eaves or cornices should be baffled or otherwise protected to prevent ember intrusion (mesh is not enough).

Windows: Heat from a wildland fire can cause windows to break even before the home ignites. This allows burning embers to enter and start internal fires. Single-paned and large windows are particularly vulnerable.

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

Limit the size and number of windows in your home that face large areas of vegetation.

Walls: Wood products, such as boards, panels or shingles, are common siding materials. However, they are combustible and not good choices for fire-prone areas.

Build or remodel with fire-resistant building materials, such as brick, cement, masonry or stucco.

Be sure to extend materials from foundation to roof.

Address: Make sure your address is clearly visible from the road and is constructed from noncombustible, reflective materials.

Inside: Keep working fire extinguishers on hand. Install smoke alarms on each level of your home and near bedrooms. Test them monthly and change the batteries twice a year.
**Garage:** Have a fire extinguisher and tools such as a shovel, rake, bucket and hoe available for fire emergencies.
Install a solid door with self-closing hinges between living areas and the garage. Install weather stripping around and under door to prevent ember intrusion.
Store all combustibles and flammable liquids away from ignition sources. Consider a shed located away from the home.

**Driveways and Access Roads:** Driveways should be designed to allow fire and emergency vehicles and equipment to reach your house.
Access roads should have a minimum 10-foot clearance on either side of the traveled section of the roadway and should allow for two-way traffic.
Ensure that all gates open inward and are wide enough to accommodate emergency equipment.
Trim trees and shrubs overhanging the road to a minimum of 15 feet to allow emergency vehicles to pass.

**Eaves:** Box in eaves with non-combustible materials to prevent accumulation of embers.

**Gutters:** Screen or enclose rain gutters to prevent accumulation of plant debris.

**Water Supply:** Have multiple garden hoses that are long enough to reach any area of your home and other structures on your property.
If you have a pool or well, consider a pump.

**Deck/Patio Cover:** Use heavy timber or non-flammable construction material for decks.
Enclose the underside of balconies and decks with fire-resistant materials to prevent embers from blowing underneath.
Keep your deck clear of combustible items, such as baskets, dried flower arrangements and other debris.
Use metal furniture and store cushions indoors.

**Chimney:** Cover your chimney and stovepipe outlets with a non-flammable screen of 1/4-inch wire mesh or smaller to prevent embers from escaping and igniting a fire.
Make sure that your chimney is at least 10 feet away from any tree branches.
Now that you’ve done everything you can to protect your house, it’s time to prepare your family. Your Wildfire Action Plan must be prepared with all members of your household well in advance of a fire.

Use these checklists to help you prepare your Wildfire Action Plan. Each family’s plan will be different, depending on their situation. Once your plan is complete, rehearse it regularly and keep it in a safe and accessible place for quick implementation.

- Have tools such as a shovel, rake, bucket and hoe available for fire emergencies.
- Have fire extinguishers on hand and train your family how to use them.
- Ensure that your family knows where your gas, electric and water main shut-off controls are and how to use them.
- Plan several different evacuation routes.
- Designate an emergency meeting location outside the fire hazard area.
- Assemble an emergency supply kit for you and your pets, as recommended by the American Red Cross.
- Appoint an out-of-area friend or relative as a point of contact so you can communicate with family members who have relocated.
- Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers posted near your phone and in your emergency supply kit.
- Keep an extra emergency supply kit in your car in case you can’t get to your home because of fire.
- Include in your plan the evacuation of large animals such as horses or cattle.
Set – Situational Awareness When a Fire Starts

OUTSIDE CHECKLIST
- Gather up flammable items from the exterior of the house and bring them inside (deck furniture, children’s toys, door mats, etc.)
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Don’t leave sprinklers on or water running - they can waste critical water pressure.
- Leave exterior lights on.
- Back your car into the driveway. Shut doors and roll up windows.
- Have a ladder and garden hoses available.
- Patrol your property and extinguish all small fires until you leave.
- Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals only if time permits.

IF YOU ARE TRAPPED: SURVIVAL TIPS
- Shelter away from outside walls.
- Bring garden hoses inside the house so embers don’t destroy them.
- Patrol inside your home for spot fires and extinguish them.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants made of natural fibers such as cotton.
- Stay hydrated.
- Ensure you can exit the home if it catches fire (remember if it’s hot inside the house, it is four to five times hotter outside).
- Fill sinks and tubs for an emergency water supply.
- Place wet towels under doors to keep smoke and embers out.
- After the fire has passed, check your roof and extinguish any fires, sparks or embers.
- Check inside the attic for hidden embers.
- Patrol your property and extinguish small fires.
- If there are fires that you cannot extinguish with a small amount of water or in a short period of time, call 9-1-1.

INSIDE CHECKLIST
- Shut all windows and doors, leaving them unlocked.
- Remove flammable window shades and curtains and close metal shutters.
- Move flammable furniture to the center of the room, away from windows and doors.
- Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off pilot lights.
- Leave your lights on so firefighters can see your house under smoky conditions.
- Shut off the air conditioning.
- Evacuate as soon as you are set! Don’t wait!
- Alert family and neighbors so they know you have left your home.
- Dress in appropriate clothing (i.e., clothing made from natural fibers, such as cotton, and work boots). Have goggles and a dry bandana or particle mask handy.
- Ensure that you have your emergency supply kit on hand that includes all necessary items, such as a battery-powered radio, spare batteries, emergency contact numbers, and ample drinking water.
- Stay tuned to your TV or local radio stations for updates, check www.gcemergency.com or dial 2-1-1.
- Remain close to your house, drink plenty of water and keep an eye on your family and pets until you are ready to leave.
Go – Leave Early

By leaving early, you give your family the best chance of surviving a wildland fire. You also help firefighters by keeping roads clear of congestion, enabling them to move more freely and do their job in a safer environment.

WHEN TO LEAVE

Leave early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke or road congestion. Don’t wait to be told by authorities to leave. In an intense wildland fire, they may not have time to knock on every door. If you are advised to leave, don’t hesitate! If you receive an emergency notification call, LISTEN carefully to the message and follow the directions given. You can call the number back to hear the message repeated.

WHERE TO GO

Leave to a predetermined location (it should be a low-risk area, such as a well-prepared friend or relative’s house, a Red Cross shelter or evacuation center, hotel, etc.)

HOW TO GET THERE

Have several travel routes in case one route is blocked by the fire or by emergency vehicles and equipment. Choose an escape route away from the fire.

WHAT TO TAKE

Take your emergency supply kit containing your family’s (and pet’s) necessary items.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

The American Red Cross recommends every family have an emergency supply kit assembled long before a wildland fire or other emergency occurs. Use the checklist below to help assemble yours. For more information on emergency supplies, visit the American Red Cross Web site at www.redcross.org.

- Three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day).
- Non-perishable food for all family members and pets (three-day supply).
- First aid kit.
- Flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.
- An extra set of car keys, credit cards, cash or traveler’s checks.
- Sanitation supplies.
- Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses.
- Important family documents and contact numbers.
- Map marked with evacuation routes.
- Prescriptions or special medications.
- Family photos and other irreplaceable items.
- Easily carried valuables.
- Personal computers (information on hard drives and disks).
- Chargers for cell phones, laptops, etc.

Note: Keep a pair of old shoes and a flashlight handy in case of a sudden evacuation at night.
Write up your Wildfire Action Plan and post it in a location where every member of your household can see it. Rehearse it with your family.

**My Personal Wildfire Action Plan**

During Extreme/High Fire Danger days in our area, monitor the local media for information and be ready to implement your plan. Hot, dry and windy conditions create the “perfect storm” for a wildland fire to occur. Please BE SAFE!

Important Phone Numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Out-of-State Contact</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>________________</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>______________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>______________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>______________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evacuation Routes: __________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Where to Go: __________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Location of Emergency Supply Kit: ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Notes: __________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
## Residential Safety Checklist: Tips To Improve Family and Property Survival During a Wildland Fire

### Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does your home have a metal, composition, or tile (or other non-combustible) roof with capped ends and covered fascia?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are the rain gutters and roof free of leaves, needles and branches?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are all vent openings screened with 1/8 inch (or smaller) mesh metal screen?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are approved spark arrestors on chimneys?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does the house have non-combustible siding material?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Are the eaves “boxed in” and the decks enclosed?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Are the windows made of at least double-paned or tempered glass?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are the decks, porches and other similar areas made of non-combustible material and free of easily combustible material (e.g. plastic furniture)?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Is all firewood at least 30 feet from the house?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Defensible Space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is dead vegetation cleared to the recommended defensible space area? (Consider adding distance due to slope of property.)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is there separation between shrubs?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are ladder fuels removed?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is there a clean and green area extending at least 30 feet from the house?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is there a non-combustible area within five feet of the house?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is there separation between trees and crowns?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Emergency Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is your cell phone registered to receive CodeRED emergency notifications?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is the home address visible from the street?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is the home address made of reflective, fire-resistant materials?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are street signs present at every intersection leading to the house?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are street signs made of reflective, fire-resistant materials?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is flammable vegetation within 10 feet of the driveway cleared and are overhanging obstructions removed?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If a long driveway is present, does it have a suitable turnaround area?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IAFC’s Community Wildfire Readiness initiatives and associated programs are funded in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service.

*In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). To file a complaint alleging discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call toll free voice (866) 632-9992, TDD (800)877-8339, or voice relay (866) 377-8642. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

Ready, Set, Go!

[www.wildlandfireRSG.org](http://www.wildlandfireRSG.org)