



FIREWISE INITIAL APPLICATION HANDBOOK

REV. 2025

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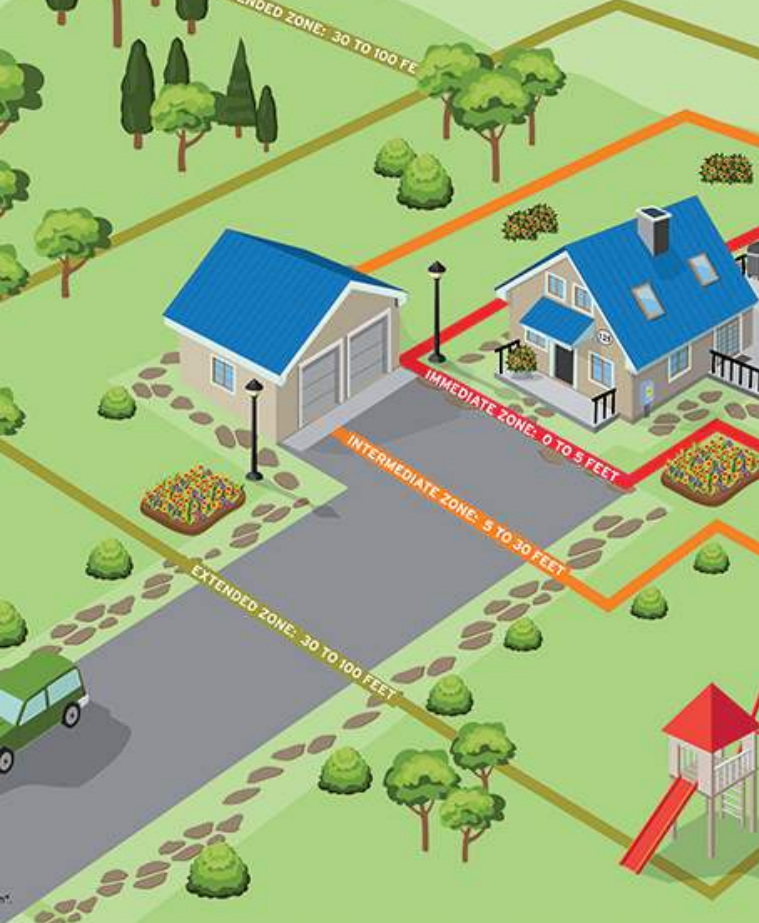
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Welcome

The Firewise USA Program is a national program designed by National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) to provide simple, effective steps to help communities reduce the risk of destruction from wildfire.

We are so pleased you are taking the first step toward enhancing your community's resilience to wildfires!

Let's begin here.

This guide serves as an instructional manual for completing the initial Firewise USA application. It includes examples and templates that communities can utilize, as well as identifying resources available for Firewise Communities in Placer County. Other materials and resources can be found at www.placer.ca.gov/Firewise.

We offer virtual office hours on the first Thursday of each month via Zoom where we are happy to workshop questions about the application or application process.

Please feel free to contact us anytime.
fireready@placer.ca.gov
530-886-FIRE (3473)



PROGRAM BENEFITS



FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Meeting the criteria for becoming a Firewise USA® site helps communities get organized and find direction for their wildfire safety efforts. Like the first rungs on a ladder, the criteria help get a community started toward annual, systematic action to reduce their risks from brush, grass and forest fires.



LEARN ABOUT WILDFIRE

As people go through the process, they learn about wildfire risks in the community and the simple things they can do to reduce them. They connect with experts – local fire fighters, state forestry professionals, and national researchers – to continue to learn about fire and find resources to accomplish fire-safe actions.



GET PEACE OF MIND

People who work with experts to learn about wildfire and take action start to see results quickly. Knowing that they are using the best information available and actually taking steps to reduce the risk of damage from fire helps people start to feel safer in their environment and in their homes. Having a plan for what to do in the event of a fire helps people become calmer and more prepared to act quickly.



COMMUNITY BUILDING

As neighbors get together to do work, often meeting one another for the first time, they build a stronger bond with each other. Activity can help rally people to a common cause for the good of the neighborhood. This strengthening of community ties can benefit residents in many ways, and is especially helpful during an emergency.



BUILD CITIZEN PRIDE

While the work can be fun, it isn't always easy. Neighbors work very hard in communities to remove brush and debris, clean up common areas, and dispose of green waste. They are rightly proud when they achieve national recognition for their efforts.



ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE

Preference is sometimes given to Firewise USA® sites over other candidates when allocations of grant money are made for wildfire safety or fuel mitigation. The reason is that there are invariably more requests than available funds when grants are available through state or federal agencies. If requests are equally worthy, some officials tend to have more confidence in communities that have demonstrated the foresight of becoming a recognized Firewise USA® site.



GET PUBLICITY

The program provides communities with metal signs, a plaque and other materials that can be presented publicly to honor their status as a Firewise USA® recognition site. These recognition ceremonies are great ways to shine the spotlight on community efforts. News media find this to be a great story to cover, and the national program features community stories regularly on the website and in its publications. All this publicity results not only in satisfaction for the residents involved, but also provides one more way to reach large numbers of people with information about wildfire safety.



ACCESS TO DISCOUNTS

The Departments of Insurance in the states of California, Colorado, Texas, Arizona, Oregon, New Mexico and Utah have approved filings by USAA to give homeowners insurance discounts to USAA members living in communities recognized by the Firewise USA® program.

RESOURCES FOR YOUR COMMUNITY



MATERIALS



Placer OES has digital and print materials to help your community

www.placer.ca.gov/Firewise

REPORTING TOOL

Communities are encouraged to track their progress throughout the year using the digital form created by UC Cooperative Extension.

SCAN HERE



MAP AND WEBPAGE



Find community boundaries and resources

www.placer.ca.gov/Firewise

NEWSLETTER

Subscribe to the Placer Fire Safe Alliance Newsletter for informational articles and county updates



EVENTS CALENDAR



Learn about upcoming webinars, classes, and community events

www.placer.ca.gov/calendar

SUPPORT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY



PLACER COUNTY REGIONAL COORDINATOR



530-886-3473



www.placer.ca.gov/Firewise



fireready@placer.ca.gov



TAHOE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT REGIONAL COORDINATOR



(530) 543-1501 extension 114



www.tahoelivingwithfire.com



www.tahoercd.org



fire@tahoercd.org



SUPPORT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY



TRUCKEE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT REGIONAL COORDINATOR



(530) 582-7888



firewise@truckeefire.org



www.truckeefire.org/firewise



NORTH TAHOE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT REGIONAL COORDINATOR



(530) 584-2322

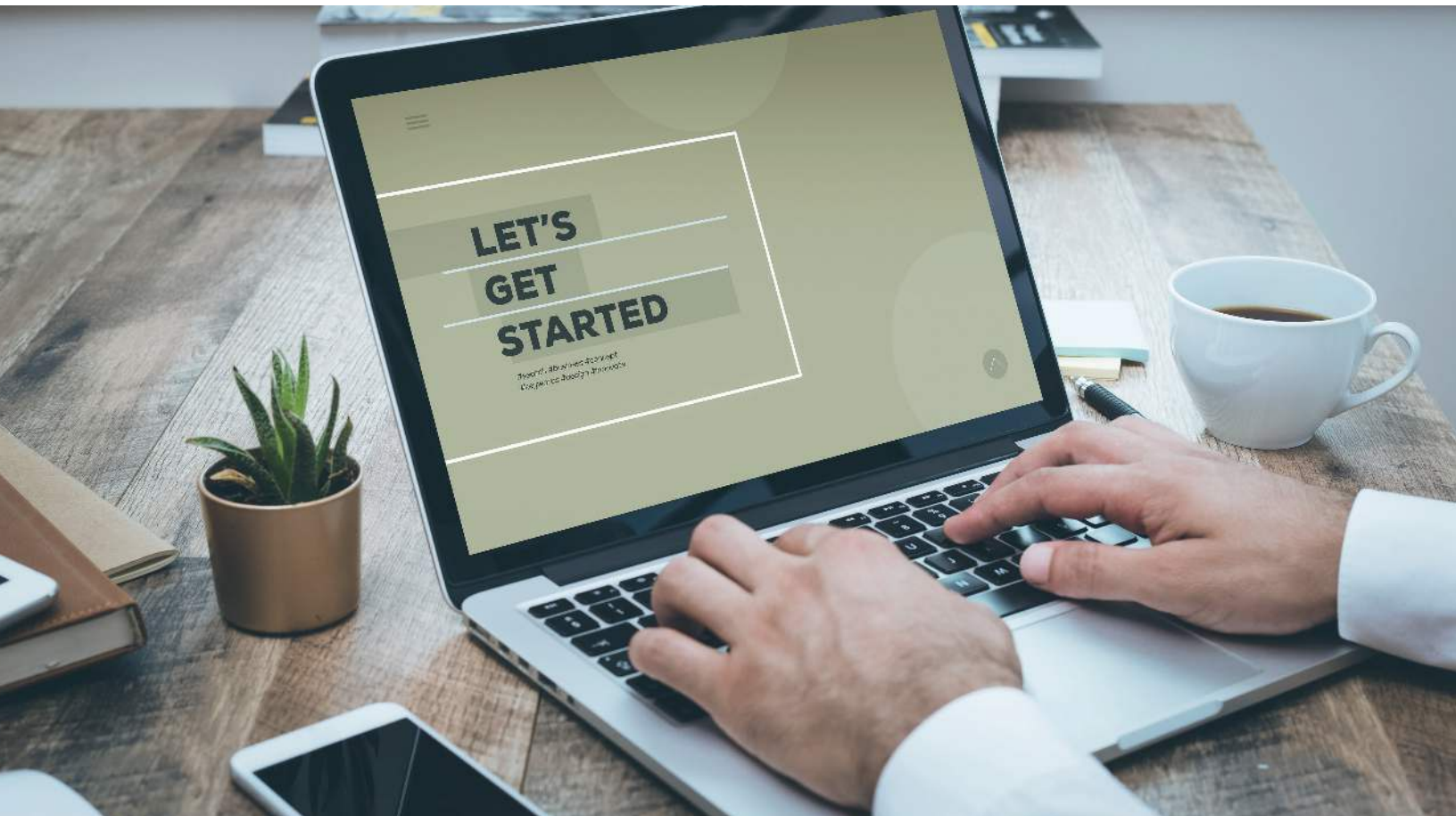


dsi@ntfire.net



www.ntfire.net

GETTING STARTED



What information is required to begin a Firewise USA Program application?

To start, you will need to create a login in the Firewise USA program portal.
Portal login: portal.firewise.org

Other information needed:

- Your Community Education Outreach Event Details (e.g., types of outreach, dates, etc.)
- Your Community Vegetation Removal Totals (e.g., total number of cubic yards removed)
- Your Community Risk Reduction information (i.e., hours worked or expenses that can be attributed to your risk reduction efforts)

PORTAL SETUP:

CREATE YOUR SITE PROFILE

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

This step has four parts. In this first part, you'll tell NFPA where your community is located.

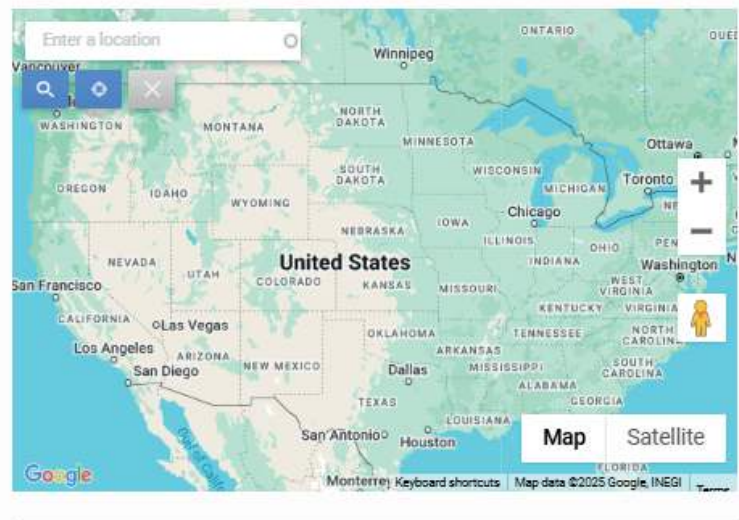
- If you let the application access your location, it will show your coordinates automatically. If you prefer not to share your location or want to enter it yourself, just type in where the community is located to get your coordinates.
- Once you enter your location, you'll see all the nearby sites. If there's already a site there, click the "request to join" link. If you want to create a new site, click the "create new site" button to move forward.

Site Profile

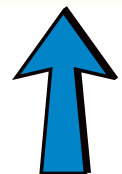
Map Your Site

Latitude and longitude data provides participants with current fire condition information and includes your site on NFPA's nationwide map.

Enter your address below to determine your latitude and longitude data. Then choose to join an existing Firewise site or continue with creating a new site for your community.



CREATE NEW SITE



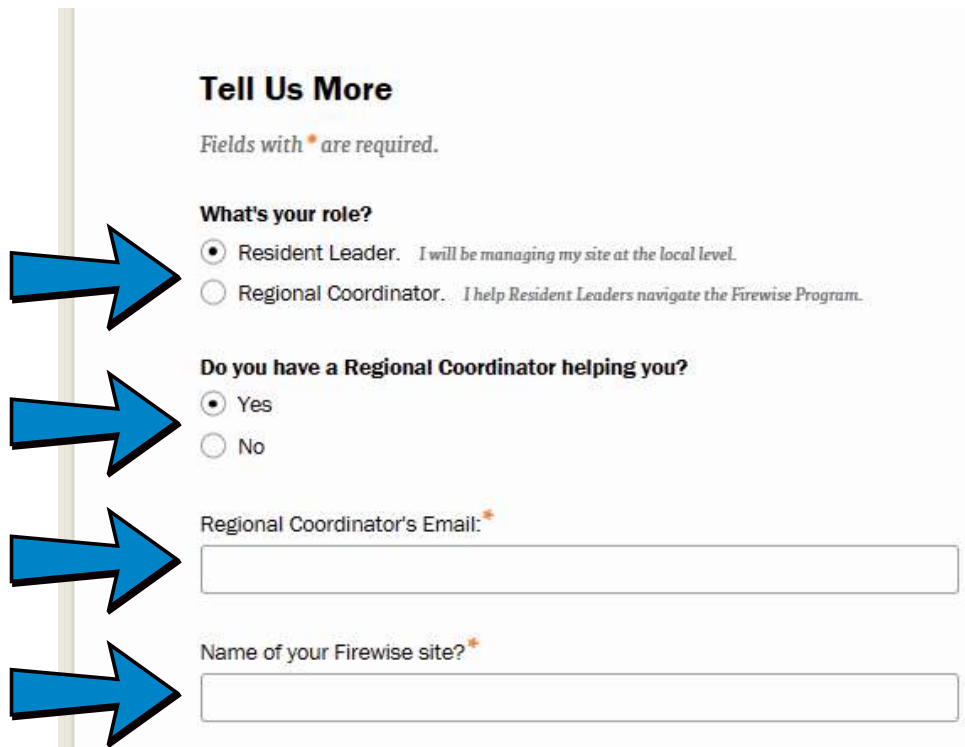
PORTAL SETUP:

CREATE YOUR SITE PROFILE

In the second part of this step, please include your regional coordinator and indicate your role.

What are the benefits of including a regional coordinator? The regional coordinator can support you with your application, provide resources for your community, and help clarify any questions you might have.

Your community will be assigned a State Representative based on your county of residence.



Tell Us More

*Fields with * are required.*

What's your role?

☒ Resident Leader. *I will be managing my site at the local level.*

☐ Regional Coordinator. *I help Resident Leaders navigate the Firewise Program.*

Do you have a Regional Coordinator helping you?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Regional Coordinator's Email: *

Name of your Firewise site? *

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

- Enter your role, this is most commonly Resident Leader.
- Add your regional coordinator. If you are in Placer County, please add the County Regional Coordinator by using the email, fireready@placer.ca.gov
- Please select a name for your community. There is no mandatory naming convention to adhere to. The community name may correspond with your HOA name, reflect your street name, or highlight an aspect that represents the region where your community is located.

PORTAL SETUP:

CREATE YOUR SITE PROFILE

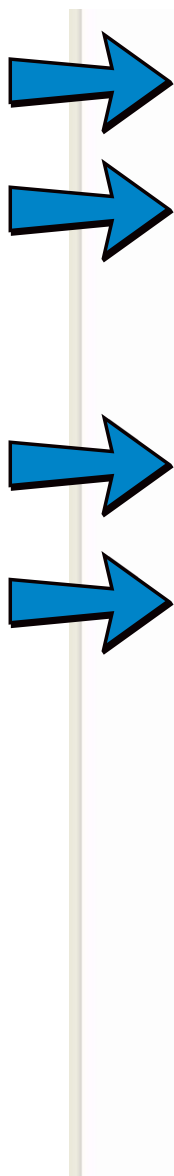
In the third part of this step, you will be asked to provide information about your community.

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

- Enter the dwelling unit count
- Enter the resident count
- Tell NFPA how you heard about the Firewise USA Program
- After you have filled in the required information, please click the continue button

OPTIONAL INFORMATION TO INCLUDE:

- A website for your community—such as a Facebook page or HOA site. If you do not have one at this time, that is ok. If you create a community website in the future, you can update this information through your community profile in the portal.
- A cover image for your community profile



How many dwelling units are in the boundary of your Firewise site?*

How many residents live within the boundaries of your site?

Share your site website:

For example, a social media page, HOA or neighborhood website such as <http://www.hoawebsite.com>

How did you hear about the Firewise Program?

- None -

Select a background for the site Dashboard:

☒ Yes

☐ No, I'll do this later

Cover Image

No file chosen

Please upload an image to represent your site. Once uploaded, you can click the thumbnail to select the point around which the image will be cropped to fit your dashboard banner. You can always change this later by selecting 'Edit Community Details' on your site Dashboard.
One file only.
256 MB limit.
Allowed types: png gif jpg jpeg.



PRO TIP:

The dwelling units and resident count provided here will need to be incorporated into your risk assessment and action plan. It is essential that the numbers are consistent across both the application and portal; otherwise, your application may be rejected and returned for revisions.

PORTAL SETUP:

CREATE YOUR SITE PROFILE

In this final part, you are confirming your address as the site contact information.

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

- Confirm the contact information for your site by clicking the appropriate checkbox. This step is to ensure NFPA has the correct mailing address for your materials. You can order brochures and community signs through your site portal.
- When you are finished, click the continue button to move to the next step.

Site Profile

Site Contact Information

This information is important so that we know who to send your Firewise Recognition materials to, which includes signage.

☒ Use my contact information as the site contact information

☐ I would also like to add my P.O. Box

BACK **CONTINUE**



PRO TIP:

This information is protected by the NFPA privacy policy. Read more about the privacy policy here:

<https://www.nfpa.org/customer-support/privacy-policy>

APPLICATION STEPS

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

To begin the application process, select Start New Application from the Site Profile in the upper left hand corner tile. There are nine steps to complete the initial Firewise USA Recognition application:

- 1.) Overview
- 2.) State Requirements
- 3.) Risk Assessment
- 4.) Board/Committee
- 5.) Action Plan
- 6.) Educational Outreach
- 7.) Vegetation Removal
- 8.) Risk Reduction Investment
- 9.) Review

The step you are working on will be in bold and as you progress through the application, you will notice your status indicated by green checks in the step review dropdown.

2025 Firewise USA Appli

Step: 9 of 9

Review

- ☒ Overview
- ☒ State Requirements
- ☒ Risk Assessment
- ☒ Board/Committee

Action Plan

Educational Outreach

Vegetation Removal

Risk Reduction Investment

Review

STEP 1: OVERVIEW

This step provides a brief overview of the program and requires you to acknowledge that your community's participation represents a commitment to reducing wildfire risks in your area.

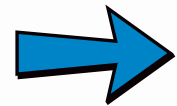
2025 Firewise USA Application

Step: 1 of 9  Overview

Welcome to the Firewise USA Program Application

Participation in the National Fire Protection Association's Firewise USA Program demonstrates a commitment by residents to reduce their wildfire risks, along with a desire to make where they live better prepared for when wildfires happen.

*Fields with * are required.*



CONTINUE

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

Please review the participation overview statement and click the Continue button to proceed to the next step.

STEP 2: STATE REQUIREMENTS

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

Read and review the state requirements for the Firewise USA Program. California has specific templates that must be used for your application.

- Download each template by click on the orange links.
- Once you have downloaded the documents, please check the "I have reviewed my state's requirements" checkbox, and then click the Continue button to proceed to the next step.

Step: 2 of 9

State Requirements

Please review the section below to see if your state has additional program requirements.

If applicable in your state - download and review the additional requirements before beginning your application.

California State Requirements

New sites are required to use the NFPA provided Wildfire Risk Assessment template and the California specific 3 Year Action Plan that clearly outlines measurable goals. Please download the documents below:

↓

Wildfire Risk Assessment

↓

3 Year Action Plan

☒

I have reviewed my state's requirements.*

BACK

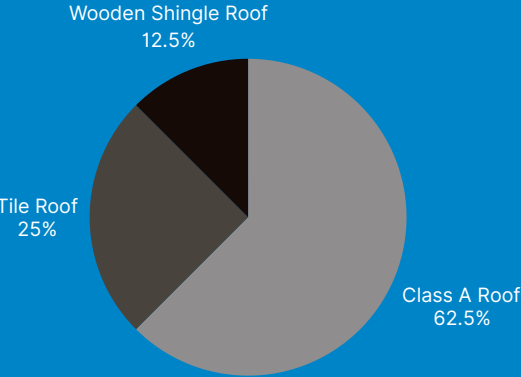
SAVE & CLOSE

CONTINUE

STEP 3: RISK ASSESSMENT

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

- Take a copy of the risk assessment and walk your neighborhood looking at the different houses while reflecting on the question. The community wildfire risk assessment speaks to the general conditions of the overall Firewise USA site and does not provide details on each dwelling. For example, when it asks about how many of the roofs in your neighborhood have Class A composite shingles, you can make a simple tally list and calculate the percentage on your own. You should be able to come up with a range of percentages that fits your neighborhood.



The risk assessment provides a high-level overview of your community. The board or committee can conduct it by walking the neighborhood and noting observations. An inspector or certified assessor is not required.

Watch the NFPA Risk Assessment Tutorial Video at <https://trainingcontent.nfpa.org/training-demos/RiskAssessment/story.html>



What Information is included in the Risk Assessment?

- Site Demographics
- Committee Information
- Roofing Materials
- Soffit Vents
- Siding
- Skirting
- Attachments
- Windows
- Roof/Gutter Debris
- Gutter Type
- Immediate Zone: 0-5 feet
- Intermediate Zone: 5-30 feet
- Extended Zone: 30-100 feet



PRO TIP:
If you are unfamiliar with different kinds of building materials, you can use the SPFE WUI Handbook to see examples at <https://www.sfpe.org/wuihandbook/home>

STEP 3: RISK ASSESSMENT

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

- Type the name of the agency, organization, or individual that conducted the risk assessment into the first field.
- Choose your completed risk assessment file and click the Upload button
- If your Site's Risk Assessment has not been completed or is in the process, you may move on to other steps in the application process. However, you will not be able to submit the application until all steps have been completed.
- Enter the date the assessment was completed. This is a required field for California communities and helps CAL FIRE determine when an updated risk assessment is due
- Click the Continue button to move to the next step

Step: 3 of 9

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment

The assessment of the area within the site's boundary is an important component of your application and is instrumental in developing the action plan's risk reduction priorities. Download the [Risk Assessment Template here](#).

Effective January 2018: All risk assessments need to be updated at a minimum of every five years. **Please Note:** Your risk assessment will need to be updated in 2030. You may elect to update it sooner than that date.

Name of agency, organization, or individual that conducted the risk assessment*

▼ Attach Completed Assessment Form

Add a new file*

Choose Files

No file chosen

UPLOAD

Unlimited number of files can be uploaded to this field.
256 MB limit.
Allowed types: pdf, doc, docx, xls,xlsx, jpg, png.

Date Assessment Completed

08/29/2024

BACK

SAVE & CLOSE

CONTINUE



PRO TIP:

Visit www.placer.ca.gov/firewise to watch the guidance video available.

TOP REASONS FOR ASSESSMENT REJECTIONS

The risk assessment is a key reason for community application rejections and may require revisions. Below are suggestions to help align your risk assessment with all guidelines.

Community Info

Risk Assessment, Action Plan, and Community Profile numbers don't match. The listed number of dwelling units and residents must be the same for each section.

Template

It is a requirement that the approved Risk Assessment template be used. The template should be completed and uploaded as one document. Please do not handwrite your assessment.



Summary

The risk assessment summary isn't in the preferred format. Please follow the guidance on page 18 to avoid rejection based on your summary section.

Map

There isn't a map uploaded on page 11 of the risk assessment. If you have trouble uploading your map, you can upload it directly into the portal as a separate document in the risk assessment section or contact the Placer County Firewise Regional Coordinator at fireready@placer.ca.gov and they are happy to help. Refer to guidance on page xx for creating your map in a recommended template.

Recommendations

The risk assessment recommendations aren't in the preferred format. Please follow the guidance on page 19 to ensure your application isn't rejected.

PRO TIP: Have the Placer County Firewise Regional Coordinator review your risk assessment before submission to NFPA. Contact us at fireready@placer.ca.gov

Firewise Risk Assessment Summary



After you have completed the assessment of your neighborhood, it's time to write your summary.

The summary is on page eight of the Firewise USA Recognition Program Community Wildfire Risk Assessment and should be a direct reflection of the answers to the questions on pages four through seven. Use the example below to create your summary using the preferred CAL FIRE format.



Use Template

Please be sure to use the Firewise USA Recognition Program Community Wildfire Risk Assessment template. Your application will be rejected if you do not use the template. If you need help downloading the template or filling it out, please contact us at fireready@placer.ca.gov.

EXAMPLE SUMMARY:

(Community Name) is a neighborhood in (City), CA. It is comprised of (Number of Dwelling Units) homes and (Number of Residents) residents. The homes are (Primary Type of Homes), private properties on parcels (Average Size of Parcels). The neighborhood is in an area with/without regular wind exposure and located in an area with/with no known history of fire occurrence. (Percentages)% of homes have metal, tile, or Class A shingles. (Percentages)% of homes have non-combustible soffit vents with mesh. (Percentages)% of homes have non-combustible siding. (Percentages)% of homes have skirting underneath raised floors/decks. (Percentages)% of homes have no wooden attachments. (Percentages)% of homes have multi-paned windows. (Percentages)% of homes have cleaned and maintained their roof and gutters. (Percentages)% of homes have metal gutters.

(Percentages)% of homes have treated vegetation and have created a combustible free area in their Immediate Zone. (Percentages)% of homes have treated vegetation and have created a combustible free area in their Intermediate Zone. (Percentages)% of homes have treated vegetation and have created a combustible free area in their Extended Zone. The area is/is not adjacent to wildlands with accumulated fuels.

Firewise Risk Assessment Recommendation



After you have completed the summary section of your Firewise USA Recognition Program Community Wildfire Risk Assessment, it's time to write your recommendations.

The recommendations section is on page nine and should be the inverse of what was written for your summary.

For example, if 50-74% of the homes in your neighborhood have multi-paned windows, then 25-50% of the homes still need to upgrade to multi-paned windows.

Use the template below to create your summary using the preferred CAL FIRE format.

Use Template



Please be sure to use the Firewise USA Recognition Program Community Wildfire Risk Assessment template. Your application will be rejected if you do not use the template. If you need help downloading the template or filling it out, please contact us at fireready@placer.ca.gov.

EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION:

(Percentages)% of homes need to upgrade to metal, tile, or Class A shingles. (Percentages)% of homes need to upgrade to non-combustible soffit vents with mesh. (Percentages)% of homes that do not have non-combustible siding. (Percentages)% of homes need to add skirting underneath raised floors/decks. (Percentages)% of homes have wooden attachments. (Percentages)% of homes do not have multi-paned windows. (Percentages)% of homes need to clean and maintain their roof and gutters. (Percentages)% of homes need to upgrade to metal or non-combustible gutters.

(Percentages)% of homes do not have treated vegetation and have not created a combustible free area in their Immediate Zone. (Percentages)% of homes do not have treated vegetation and have not created a combustible free area in their Intermediate Zone. (Percentages)% of homes do not have treated vegetation and have not created a combustible free area in their Extended Zone.

Once you have finished recapping your recommendations based on your summary, you can include any other recommendations your committee/board may have noticed for areas that need improvement, like a neighborhood park or common area.

STEP 4: BOARD/COMMITTEE

This is where you enter the information about your community's Board/Committee members. Your board/committee helps to develop the site action plan and monitor its progress. It is recommended to have at least two residents, a registered forester or fire safe council member, and the local fire department.

STEP INSTRUCTIONS

- Read and review the statement regarding Board/Committee requirements
- Check the "Yes, I have established a board/committee" check box
- If you have your board/committee contact information, enter that information into the fields that appear upon selecting the checkbox, saving each member as you go
- Once you have entered all member information, click the Continue button to move to the next step.

Step: 4 of 9 ✓ Board/Committee

Board/Committee

Each Firewise site is required to have a board/committee that develops and oversees the implementation of the action plan, educational outreach activities and annual renewal process. This can be an already existing board/committee.

☒ Yes, I have established a board/committee*

Would you like to enter your member's information?*

☒ Yes
☐ No

Email*

First Name* Last Name*

Phone Number

SAVE MEMBER

BACK SAVE & CLOSE CONTINUE



PRO TIP

At least two members of your board/committee should also be listed as a Resident Leader and have access to the community's portal.

STEP 5: ACTION PLAN

This step is for you to upload your completed action plan that your board/committee put together after completing the risk assessment.

Action Plans are a prioritized list of mitigation investments, risk reduction projects and education activities that participants will strive to complete each year. Action plans must be updated every three years.

STEP INSTRUCTIONS

- Read and review the statement regarding the Action Plan
- Choose your completed action plan file and click the Upload button
- If your Site has not yet completed the Action Plan, you may move on to other steps in the application process. However, you will not be able to submit the application until all steps have been completed
- Click the Continue button to move to the next step

Step: 5 of 9 Action Plan

Action Plan

A multi-year action plan created by the designated board/committee, using the risk assessment document as a tool to determine priorities for the area within the identified boundaries, is required for all applicants. Action Plans are a prioritized list of mitigation investments, risk reduction projects and education activities that participants will strive to complete each year.

Effective January 2018: All action plans need to be updated at a minimum of every three years. **Please Note:** Your action plan will need to be updated in 2028. You may elect to update it sooner than that date.

▼ Attach Completed Action Plan

Add a new file *

Choose Files No file chosen **UPLOAD**

Unlimited number of files can be uploaded to this field.
256 MB limit.
Allowed types: pdf doc docx xls xlsx jpg png.

BACK **SAVE & CLOSE** **CONTINUE**



PRO TIP: See Action Plan Example on page 33 and visit www.placer.ca.gov/firewise to watch the Action Plan video available.

TOP REASONS FOR ACTION PLAN REJECTIONS

The screenshot shows a 'Community Wildfire Action Plan' form for the years 2023-2025. It includes a header section for community information, a 'Year 1' header, and several goal categories: Education and Outreach Goals, Home Hardening Goals, Defensible Space / Fuel Reduction Goals, and Evacuation Planning. Arrows point from the surrounding text boxes to specific parts of the form: 'Community Info' points to the header, 'Years' points to the 'Year 1' header, 'Goals' points to the goal categories, and 'Header' points to the 'Year 1' header.

Community Info

Risk Assessment, Action Plan, and Community Profile numbers don't match. The listed number of dwelling units and residents must be the same for each section.

Years

Please update the Year header for each section. This should match the years in the header section. Year 1 should be the next calendar year.

Template

It is a requirement that the approved California Action Plan template be used. If the template isn't used, the application will be sent back. This should be uploaded as one document.

Goals

CAL FIRE prefers 3-5 goals listed per year, per category. The goals should build each year, not just repeat.

Header

When filling out the action plan header, you *must* include the name of your community and the years the plan cover. the first year of your action plan will be the year after. For example, if you are applying for recognition in 2025, the years on your action plan should be 2026-2028.

PRO TIP: Have the Placer County Firewise Regional Coordinator review your action plan before submission to NFPA. Contact us at fireready@placer.ca.gov

STEP 6: EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Each participating site is required to hold a minimum of one wildfire risk reduction educational outreach event or activity annually. You may track multiple activities and events over the year, or add them all at once.

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:


- From the list, select what educational outreach activities or events you completed.
- Describe your activity or event in the notes field.
- Select the “Save Activity or Event” button
- Click the Continue button to move to the next step

Step: 6 of 9

Educational Outreach

Educational Outreach


Each participating site is required to hold a minimum of one wildfire risk reduction educational outreach event or activity annually. Please provide details of your annual activities in the section below.



Record an Activity or Event

What educational outreach activities were completed? *


- ☐ Completed a national Wildfire Community Preparedness Day project (1st Saturday in May)
- ☐ Coordinated a community-wide awareness/educational activity that increases wildfire risk reduction actions and overall preparedness
- ☐ Delivered via door-to-door, information on the community's wildfire danger
- ☐ Distributed "Welcome packets" with wildfire literature to all new residents
- ☐ Evacuation drill in collaboration with a law enforcement agency, fire department or local emergency manager
- ☐ Held a fire-resistant plant species workshop for residents in collaboration w/the local cooperative extension office
- ☐ HOA meeting or community-wide presentation that detailed the need and importance for individual wildfire preparedness
- ☐ Local emergency manager provided a presentation on building an emergency preparedness kit
- ☐ Mentored adjacent communities on how to become a Firewise site
- ☐ Provided an insurance policy clinic for residents to ensure policies are up-to-date with local building codes and costs, and inventories of personal belongings
- ☐ Residents participated in a volunteer mitigation activity for a senior or disabled neighbor
- ☐ Wildfire related article(s) placed in the community newsletter
- ☐ Wildfire workshop for residents with speakers/demonstrations from a forestry agency, fire department, or emergency management office
- ☐ COVID-19 challenges
- ☐ Other



SAVE ACTIVITY OR EVENT

SAVE & CLOSE

CONTINUE





PRO TIP:

Use the Education Outreach list to guide future event planning efforts

STEP 7: VEGETATION REMOVAL

This step is now a requirement by CAL FIRE for California communities. Please be sure to track your community's vegetation removal prior to completing the application. Common ways to remove vegetation include:

- green waste cans
- trucks/trailers
- contractor bags
- pile burning

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

- Click the Record a Removal button
- A new section will open with space for you to enter the removal information. Fill out the quantity of vegetation removed and click the Save Vegetation removal button when you are satisfied with your entry. Remember, one cubic yard is 3 feet long, 3 feet wide and 3 feet high.
- Click the Continue button to move to the next step.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Vegetation Removal" as part of a 9-step process. The form includes an introductory paragraph about wildfire risk reduction, a question about whether vegetation was removed, and a section for recording the quantity removed. A blue arrow points to the "RECORD A REMOVAL" button. Below the question, there are "BACK", "SAVE & CLOSE", and "CONTINUE" buttons. Another blue arrow points to the "CONTINUE" button. A third blue arrow points to the "SAVE VEGETATION REMOVAL" button at the bottom of the form. The form also includes checkboxes for "Removed Vegetation", "Prescribed Burning", and "Recycled/Reused Vegetation", and a "Comments" section.

Step: 7 of 9 Vegetation Removal

Vegetation Removal

A major component of wildfire risk reduction is the removal of vegetation (shrubs, brush, limbs, trees, etc.) from individual properties and common-area property. Tracking vegetation removal provides forestry and fire agencies with information on the quantity of potential wildfire fuel that's been eliminated from the area(s).

Was vegetation within the site's boundary removed during this calendar year?

RECORD A REMOVAL +

BACK SAVE & CLOSE **CONTINUE**

Vegetation Removal

A major component of wildfire risk reduction is the removal of vegetation (shrubs, brush, limbs, trees, etc.) from individual properties and common-area property. Tracking vegetation removal provides forestry and fire agencies with information on the quantity of potential wildfire fuel that's been eliminated from the area(s).

Record the quantity of vegetation removed

If total amount of vegetation removed is known, enter it below:

0 Cubic Yards

If the total amount is unknown, select the appropriate option below for tools that will assist in calculating or reporting of vegetation removed!

☐ Removed Vegetation

Record Other Types of Vegetation Management

☐ Prescribed Burning

☐ Recycled/Reused Vegetation

Comments

Take note of anything else you did

SAVE VEGETATION REMOVAL

STEP 8: RISK REDUCTION INVESTMENT

Please use this step to record your community's risk reduction actions, activities, and expenses from this year.

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

To begin, click either the Record Hours Worked button or the Record Money Spent button and enter your community's investments for this year. See next page for information on how to record investments.

When you are finished entering your investments, click the continue button.

Step: 8 of 9 Risk Reduction Investment

Risk Reduction Investment

Investing the equivalent of one volunteer hour (valued at \$33.49), per residential dwelling unit within the site's boundary, in annual wildfire risk reduction actions is a requirement of the national recognition program's criteria for maintaining an "In Good Standing" status.

Total Investment for 2025

Investment Not Met

Total:	Required:
\$0	\$736.78
of	
Per Dwelling Unit:	Required:
\$0	\$33.49
of	

Record an Investment

The accumulated risk reduction actions, activities and expenses completed prior to submitting a new application, are eligible for use in meeting the program's requirements. Please note: Following acceptance of your initial application, all future year's actions, activities and expenses must occur within the current calendar year to be eligible for use in meeting the annual renewal investment requirement. [A list of Time and Expense Investment examples is available at Firewise.org.](#)

RECORD HOURS WORKED +

RECORD MONEY SPENT +

BACK

SAVE & CLOSE

CONTINUE

STEP 8: RISK REDUCTION INVESTMENT *CONTINUED*

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

For Recording Hours Worked

- Click on the Record Hours Worked button
- Enter Hours Worked for the Following Categories: Dwelling Unit, Landscaping (up to 100ft from Dwelling Unit), Common Areas, and Miscellaneous
- Click the Save Investment button when you are finished entering the information to save your hours.

For Recording Money Spent

- Click on the Record Money Spent button
- Enter costs spent for the following categories: Chipper, Other Equipment, Contractor, Home Improvement, Landscaping, Miscellaneous, Mileage
- Click the Save Investment button when you are finished entering the information to save your money spent.

RECORD HOURS WORKED
RECORD MONEY SPENT

Dwelling Unit

hours

Examples include: removing pine needles and leaf litter from roof and gutters, replaced vinyl gutters with metal gutters, ignition-resistant exterior improvements, installing screening on vents, flammable items removed from under decks and porches, inspect roof and replace missing shingles, etc.

Landscaping (0 - 100 ft. from base of Dwelling Unit)

hours

Examples include: installation of hardscaping, replacing combustible mulches with stone/gravel options, tree and shrub removal, raking and removal of pine needles, leaves, ground litter/debris, tree trimming/limbing, moving firewood, lawn and native grass maintenance, etc.

Common areas

hours

(HOA or other Homeowner jointly owned property within the site boundary) Activities include: Tree thinning, mastication and brush removal, grass maintenance, fire break construction, etc.

Miscellaneous

hours

Meetings, presentations, program administration, home site visits etc.

Entry Note

Total Hours
0 Hours

SAVE INVESTMENT

RECORD HOURS WORKED
RECORD MONEY SPENT

Chipper Costs: (Purchase/Rental, Fuel & Oil, Disposal Fees, etc.)

\$

Other Equipment Costs: (Chain Saw purchase/rental, Power Equip. purchase/rental, Hand Tools, Protective Equipment, etc.)

\$

Contractor Costs: (Arborists, Landscapers, Professional Forestry Services, Debris Removal, etc.)

\$

Home Improvement Costs: (Roofs, Decks, Windows, Vent Screening, Retrofits, etc.)

\$

Landscaping/DIY

\$

Miscellaneous

\$

Vehicle Mileage: (Slash Drop-off, Rental Equipment pickup, Meetings, etc.)

Entry Note

Total Spent
\$0

SAVE INVESTMENT

STEP 9: REVIEW

STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

This final step of the application is for you to review the information you entered and confirm everything is correct before it's submitted. After you complete and submit the application, it will go into the review queue. State liaisons and NFPA staff will check the applications to make sure all the criteria are met. If there are any questions or concerns, they'll send the application back with tips on what to do next. If everything checks out, it'll be approved, and you'll get an email notification with a link to your Certificate of Recognition.



PRO TIP:

You must click SUBMIT once you're satisfied with your application. If the button is grey, your community hasn't met the annual requirements—please complete any missing sections and check the agreement box to enable submission.

2025 Firewise USA Application

Step: 9 of 9 Review

Application Review

Please review each section of the application below.

PRINT APPLICATION

Site Roles

Edit

Regional Coordinators

Placer Count Wildfire Coordinat
fireready@placer.ca.gov
530-886-3473

Basic Information

Edit

Grey button

BACK

SUBMIT

☒ I understand that the submission is final and agree to submit this Application for approval.

BACK

SUBMIT

Ready to Submit



RISK ASSESSMENT SAMPLE



FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

FIREWISE USA® RECOGNITION PROGRAM COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

Firewise USA® and the US Wildfire Problem

Every year, devastating wildfires burn across the United States. At the same time, a growing number of people are living where wildfires are a real risk. While these fires will continue to happen, there are things you can do to help protect your home and neighborhood as well as your family's safety.

The NFPA Firewise USA® recognition program was designed to help people learn about wildfire and how they can make their homes and neighborhoods safer. It's based on research that shows how to prepare homes to withstand embers and prevent flames or surface fire from igniting the home and its immediate surroundings, by working in an area known as the home ignition zone (HIZ). This is the home and everything around it within 100 feet.



The community risk assessment should focus on the vulnerability of homes and surrounding home ignition zones to embers.

Red Boundary = Immediate Zone
Orange Boundary = Intermediate Zone
Green Boundary = Extended Zone

In many neighborhoods, home ignition zones often overlap onto adjacent properties—meaning that homes are closer than 100 feet to one another. This makes the conditions of neighboring homes and vegetation a part of the wildfire threat. It's extremely important that neighbors work collaboratively with each other—and talk with each other—to reduce their shared risk.

Using Firewise USA® to create ignition-resistant communities

Firewise USA® is a voluntary recognition program that provides a framework to help neighbors get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance of their homes and communities from wildfire.

There are [several steps to take to become recognized](#) as a Firewise USA® site:

- Organize — Create a **board or committee** of volunteers to represent your community, including residents and partners such as local forestry agencies or the fire department. Identify a **resident leader** who will be the program point of contact.
- Plan — The board or committee defines the boundaries of the site and obtains a **community wildfire risk assessment**. From the risk assessment, the board/committee creates a multi-year action plan to identify and prioritize actions to reduce ignition risk to homes.
- Do — Each year, neighbors complete educational and risk reduction **actions** identified in the plan.
- Tell — When the above criteria have been met, the Resident Leader **applies for recognition** through the **Firewise® Portal** (portal.firewise.org), describing educational and mitigation work in the site. Each year, **sites renew their status** by reporting their activity.

The community wildfire risk assessment is one of the most important steps in the process. It's a tool to help residents understand their wildfire risk and engage in risk reduction efforts.

There are many ways to assess risk from wildfires, using many different scales. The assessment is focused on the risk of home ignition from wildfires and will help guide residents on the most effective actions to prevent home ignitions that could result in wildfire disasters.

The recommendations provided by the completed assessment will be the board/committee's primary tool in determining the action priorities within the site's boundaries. The Firewise USA® program requires risk assessments be **updated at a minimum of every five years**.

HOW TO CONDUCT THE RISK ASSESSMENT

Each state may designate its own template and special requirements for Firewise USA® participation. **Before starting this assessment, please contact your state liaison to determine your state's process. The best assessments result from a collaboration between residents and their state forestry agency, local fire department, or another designated partner.**

The community wildfire risk assessment speaks to the general conditions of the overall Firewise USA® site and does not provide details on each individual dwelling.

The assessment should focus on:

- Vulnerability of homes to ember, surface fire, and crown fire
- Condition of the structures themselves
- Immediate hazards within the home ignition zone on individual properties
- Concerns presented by common/open space areas or adjacent public lands

It should also consider factors that impact risk and influence fire behavior or structure ignitability, such as:

- Structural characteristics (roofing, siding, decks)
- Vegetation types
- Slope and aspect (the direction a community faces—north, south, east, or west)
- Housing density

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Features of a community risk assessment include:

- It can be completed in a variety of ways, including a walkthrough or a drive by, and does not require each individual dwelling unit to have a home risk assessment completed prior to the community assessment.
- It should focus on condition of vegetation within the participating site's boundary; general landscaping characteristics; home construction (materials used for roofs, siding, decks, etc.); and relationship of ignition potential of combustible materials on adjacent properties.
- It needs a logical recognized site boundary (HOA, defined neighborhood, street, etc.).

Assessment Participants

List the principal participants who assisted in data gathering and development of this assessment (include name, role/organization, phone and email). Participants can include your district forester, or Firewise® Board members for instance.

Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				

DEFINING YOUR FIREWISE USA® SITE

If there is already a Community Wildfire Protection Plan that includes your site, it can be helpful to use in filling out this information. Ask your State Forestry representative if one exists.

General Site Description

Site name: _____

City: _____

County: _____

State: _____

Boundary description (this could be defined by your HOA, subdivision, defined neighborhood, street(s), etc.):

Area (please indicate your unit of measurement) (OPTIONAL): _____

At the end of this document, please use the section provided to insert a map of your community's defined boundary.

General Site Information

Number of dwelling units – Firewise USA® participation requires a minimum of 8 individual dwelling units not to exceed 2,500 units within the site’s identified boundary.

Contact [Firewise USA®](#) if you have questions about your area’s eligibility, [visit our contact us](#) page.

Number of dwelling units: _____

Number of residents: _____

Description of Properties within the Boundary

Residential types in your site (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single family | <input type="checkbox"/> Duplex | <input type="checkbox"/> Townhomes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apartment | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Types of ownership (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private | <input type="checkbox"/> Common | <input type="checkbox"/> Public (county, state, or federal) |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|

Lot sizes (check all that apply):

- ☐ Less than 0.10 acres or 4,356 square feet
- ☐ 0.10–0.50 acres or 4,356–21,780 square feet
- ☐ 0.51–1 acres or 22,215–43,560 square feet
- ☐ Greater than 1 acre or 43560 square feet

Other site information that you would like to provide (OPTIONAL): _____

Description of local wildland fire characteristics:

Fire intensity and rate of spread depend on the vegetation type and condition (live/dead), topography, and typical weather patterns. This information can be obtained from your state forestry agency or local fire department.

Describe the common vegetation type(s) in your site (i.e., grasses, shrubs, and trees): _____

Describe the topography within your site (include geographical features such as canyons, chimneys, steep slopes, indicate which direction slopes face, or note whether the area is flat): _____

Severe wind exposure:

- ☐ Not in an area with regular exposure to winds
- ☐ Regularly exposed to winds
- ☐ Frequent severe winds

History of wildfire:

- ☐ Area with history of fire occurrence
- ☐ Area with no history of fire occurrence
- ☐ Unknown

FIREWISE USA® SITE OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Use this section to record observations from within your site and recommendations for action that can be included in the site's action plan. Consider taking photos to keep in your site's files that illustrate successful risk reduction efforts and areas that need improvement.

Remember, this is a community-wide view and should report on the overall conditions of the entire site. Although individual home risk assessments are not required in this section, they may end up being a recommendation for the Action Plan.

Observations

The observation section is broken down by the characteristics of homes and the vegetation management within the home ignition zones and common areas. Mark the appropriate box for each category that best represents the conditions within your site.

HOME IGNITION ZONES

Home: General building construction. Are the homes made of ignition resistant building materials?

Roofing materials: composite shingles, metal, cement tile and clay

- ☐ Greater than 75% of homes have metal, tile, or Class A asphalt or fiberglass shingles
- ☐ 50–75% of homes have metal, tile, or Class A asphalt or fiberglass shingles
- ☐ 25–50% of homes have metal, tile, or Class A asphalt or fiberglass shingles
- ☐ Less than 25% of homes have metal, tile, or Class A asphalt or fiberglass shingles

Soffit vents: a screened vent on the underside component of the eaves that allows air to flow to the attic or the space below roof sheathing

- ☐ Greater than 75% of homes have non-combustible soffit vents with mesh or screening
- ☐ 50–74% of homes have non-combustible soffit vents with mesh or screening
- ☐ 25–50% of homes have non-combustible soffit vents with mesh or screening
- ☐ Less than 25% of homes have non-combustible soffit vents with mesh or screening
- ☐ Unknown

Siding: stucco, masonry products, plaster, and cement

- ☐ Greater than 75% of homes have non-combustible siding
- ☐ 50–74% of homes have non-combustible siding
- ☐ 25–50% of homes have non-combustible siding
- ☐ Less than 25% of homes have non-combustible siding

Skirting: material used around the bottom of homes and sometimes decks to protect the underside from exposure

- ☐ Greater than 75% of homes have skirting underneath raised floors/decks
- ☐ 50–74% of homes have skirting underneath
- ☐ 25–50% of homes have skirting underneath
- ☐ Less than 25% of homes have skirting underneath

Attachments: wood vs. non-combustible materials. (Examples of non-combustible materials include decks made with wood-plastic composites, higher density tropical hardwood, or fire retardant treated decking materials, and fences that use metal or masonry where attached directly to the siding of a home.)

- ☐ Greater than 75% of homes have NO wooden attachments
- ☐ 50–74% of homes have NO wooden attachments
- ☐ 25–50% of homes have NO wooden attachments
- ☐ Less than 25% of homes have NO wooden attachments

Windows

- ☐ Greater than 75% of homes have multi-paned windows
- ☐ 50–74% of homes have multi-paned windows
- ☐ 25–50% of homes have multi-paned windows
- ☐ Less than 25% of homes have multi-paned windows
- ☐ Unknown what type of window exist (single pane vs. multi-pane)

Roof/gutter debris (leaf litter, pine needles, etc.)

- ☐ Greater than 75% of homes have cleaned and maintained their roof and gutters
- ☐ 50–74% of homes have cleaned and maintained their roof and gutters
- ☐ 25–50% of homes have cleaned and maintained their roof and gutters
- ☐ Less than 25% of homes have cleaned and maintained their roof and gutters

Gutter type

- ☐ Greater than 75% of homes have metal gutters
- ☐ 50–74% of homes have non-combustible gutters
- ☐ 25–50% of homes have non-combustible gutters
- ☐ Less than 25% of homes have non-combustible gutters

Immediate Zone: 0–5 feet from the furthest attached point of homes. This area addresses the immediate vegetation and materials, creating a combustible-free area.

Items to consider:

- Is there dead vegetation, dried leaves, pine needles, and ground debris near foundations?
 - Has hardscaping been used around perimeters to keep them free of litter/debris? Are there concrete, stone, or gravel walkways?
 - Have wood mulch products been replaced with non-combustible alternatives, such as crushed stone/gravel options?
 - Are there trees/shrubs next to the home? Are there branches overhanging the roof or within 10 feet of chimneys?
-
- ☐ Greater than 75% of homes have treated vegetation and created a combustible-free area
 - ☐ 50–74% of homes have treated vegetation and created a combustible-free area
 - ☐ 25–50% of homes have treated vegetation and created a combustible-free area
 - ☐ Less than 25% of homes have treated vegetation and created a combustible-free area

Intermediate Zone: 5–30 feet from the furthest exterior point of the home. This area uses landscaping and breaks (areas of non-combustible materials such as dirt, cement, or rock) to help influence and decrease fire behavior. Items to consider:

- Are there fuel breaks such as driveways, walkways/paths, patios, and decks?
- Are lawns and native grasses maintained? General recommendation is a height of 4 inches.
- Is vegetation in this area spread out? It is recommended that trees and shrubs should be limited to small clusters of a few each to break up continuity; trees should be spaced to a minimum of 18 feet between crowns.
- Have ladder fuels (vegetation under trees) been removed so a surface fire cannot reach the crowns? Have trees been pruned? General recommendations are up to 6 to 10 feet from the ground; for shorter trees, do not exceed 1/3 of the overall tree height.
- Are plants, trees, and lawns watered to keep them from becoming dry?

- ☐ Greater than 75% of homes have treated vegetation
- ☐ 50–74% of homes have treated vegetation
- ☐ 25–50% of homes have treated vegetation
- ☐ Less than 25% of homes have treated vegetation

Extended Zone: 30–100 feet, out to 200 feet (where applicable). Generally, this area focuses on landscaping—managing the vegetation to influence fire behavior and spread. The goal here is not to eliminate fire but to interrupt fire's path and keep flames smaller and on the ground. At these distances, property lines may overlap, presenting the opportunity and need to work collaboratively with neighbors. Items to consider:

- Are there heavy accumulations of ground litter/debris?
- Is there dead plant and tree material that should be removed?
- Are storage sheds and/or other outbuildings in this zone clear of vegetation?
- Do mature trees have small conifers and brush growing between them or is the space maintained?
- Do trees 30–60 feet from the home have at least 12 feet between canopy tops? Is there at least 6 feet between canopy tops of trees located 60–100 feet from the home?

- ☐ Greater than 75% of homes have treated vegetation
- ☐ 50–74% of homes have treated vegetation
- ☐ 25–50% of homes have treated vegetation
- ☐ Less than 25% of homes have treated vegetation

Common areas or adjacent public lands: (community owned/managed)

- ☐ Not adjacent to wildlands with accumulated fuels
- ☐ Adjacent to wildlands with accumulated fuels

Is there a management plan for these fuels? If so, please describe: _____

Additional comments or observations regarding site conditions: _____

Summary

Use this section to summarize findings in observations. The percentages captured will help you briefly explain a snapshot of your community's current status and areas for successful focus. List areas where there is significant success and areas where improvements could be made, especially at low cost with sweat equity/volunteer labor. Of the three home ignition zones, emphasis should be on the immediate zone.

Example: Greater than 75% of homes observed have non-combustible roofs; however, there were several noted with wood shake shingles.

Recommendations

Using the findings from the observation phase, identify actions and steps that can be taken to reduce the site's risk from wildfire. Prioritize recommendations based on the potential fire threat to homes. It's recommended that residents address hazards at the home first and work their way out into the three home ignition zones. Remember, small things can have a huge impact on home survivability. Use these recommendations to create your site's action plan.

Examples:

- Less than 75% of homes observed had a roof free of leaf litter, pine needles, and other debris. Encourage residents to remove the debris and keep those areas clean to work towards greater than 75% compliance.
- Bark mulch is widely used within the immediate area. Recommend removing bark mulch and replacing with an ignition-resistant material, such as crushed stone or gravel.
- Work with residents to improve the number of homes that have removed flammable materials 0–5 feet from the home.

NEXT STEPS

The information you have collected during the assessment process will help you develop recommendations that can be applied to your site's action plan. Action plans are a prioritized list of risk reduction projects and the related investments needed to achieve them for the site. Action plans also highlight suggested homeowner actions and education activities that participants will strive to complete annually, or over a period of multiple years. Action plans should be **updated at a minimum of at least every three years.**

Visit, [How to Become a Firewise USA site](#), to view the full list of required criteria needed to complete the Firewise USA® recognition program's application process. Or [visit the Program Management portal](#) to start your application.

Although not required, you may also consider adding addenda that cover the following community/fire safety issues:

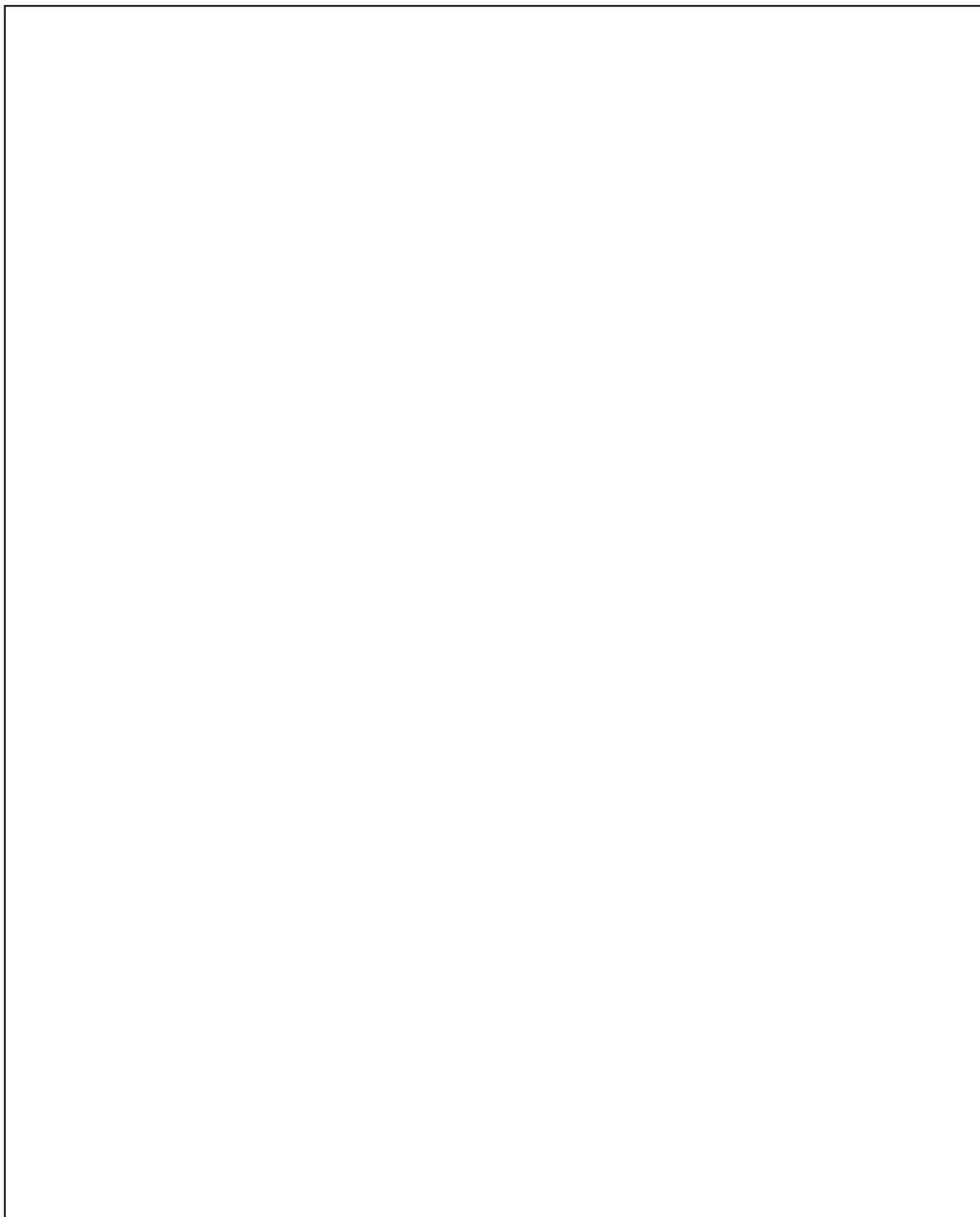
- Hydrant locations
- Ingress/egress routes for the community
- Location of fire district and its capabilities
- Street signs and address numbers
- Water supply for fire response

We recommend reaching out to your local fire department for assistance in determining what other safety issues to address.

See next page to insert a map of your community's defined boundary.

MAP OF YOUR COMMUNITY'S DEFINED BOUNDARY

Click in the box to insert your image.



Appendix/Definitions

These resources will additionally provide aid in understanding the interaction between wildfire behavior and the home ignition zone:

- E-learning: Understanding the Wildfire Threat to Homes, [visit our online courses.](#)
- Preparing Homes for Wildfire: Actions that reduce risk – tips and resources, [visit our page Preparing Homes for Wildfire.](#)

Dwelling Unit: Household/residence built for occupancy by one person, a family, or roommates, including mobile homes and cabins, and for multi-family residential occupancies (i.e. duplexes, and other types of attached housing). An apartment building with 10 units would be considered 10 dwelling units.

Home Ignition Zone: The home and everything around it out to 100 feet. The condition of the home and surrounding landscape within 100 feet will influence the ignitability of the structure.

Firewise USA® Action Plan: A prioritized list of risk reduction projects/investments for the participating site, along with suggested homeowner actions and education activities that participants will strive to complete annually, or over a period of multiple years. The submitted action plan should be broken down by year and reflect those goals (with examples attached). This document is required to be updated at least **every three years**. As circumstances change (e.g., completing activities, experiencing a fire or a natural disaster, new construction in community, etc.), the action plan may need to be updated more frequently.

Firewise USA® Community Wildfire Risk Assessment: An assessment that focuses on the risk of home ignition from wildfires by looking at the conditions of the homes and surrounding home ignition zones. It is used to help guide residents on the most effective actions to prevent home ignitions and wildfire disasters. This document is required to be updated at least **every five years**.

Firewise® Board or Committee: A group comprised of residents and other applicable stakeholders. Consider inviting the local fire department, state forestry agency, elected officials, emergency manager, and, if applicable, the property management company to participate. The board/committee will guide the efforts of the Firewise USA® site, using the risk assessment to identify and prioritize activities in the action plan.

Firewise® Resident Leader: A member of the community that is designated as the lead for a Firewise USA® site and is a part of the Firewise® board or committee. They are the primary contact between the community and the program, responsible for completing the initial recognition application and annual renewal application via the online management portal (Firewise® Portal). A site may have more than one designated resident leader assigned in the Firewise® Portal.

State Liaison: Typically, the employee of the organization that hosts the official state forester. This person is designated by the state forester, is responsible for setting the direction of Firewise USA® implementation in the state, and is the state's main contact to the national program. They are also responsible for reviewing and approving new site applications and may choose to review annual renewal applications. A list of state liaisons can be found on NFPA's website so, you can [contact your state liaison.](#)

Voluntary Recognition Program: Firewise USA® is a volunteer program that provides a set of criteria that residents choose to work towards. It is not required for individuals in wildfire prone areas to participate in or be a part of in order to take risk reduction actions.

Firewise USA® was loosely modeled after the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA program, enabling residents to come together voluntarily to meet a set of criteria that qualify them for national recognition. This means that residents choose to be involved and determine their site's boundaries. When they meet the Firewise USA® criteria, they earn national recognition for doing so. Each year, when verifying they are continuing to reduce wildfire risks in the community, they continue to enjoy national recognition and remain in good standing by continuing to meet the criteria. Recognition comes in the form of signage and publicity on the Firewise.org website, at a minimum.

Firewise® Portal: Online community/Firewise USA® site management system. All new and renewal applications for recognition are completed via the portal.

Application for Recognition: In order to be a recognized participant in the Firewise USA® program, a site must meet program criteria and the online application found in the Firewise® portal must be filled out. There are eight steps to the application:

- Step 1: Overview — This includes the basic community information (contacts, size, location).
- Step 2: Risk Assessment — The wildfire community risk assessment must be uploaded into the application. It carries over each year until the five-year update cycle is reached.
- Step 3: Board/Committee — A site must acknowledge that they have a board/committee and may choose to share committee member names and email addresses. This provides NFPA with backup contacts in case the resident leader is unreachable.
- Step 4: Action Plan — The developed action plan must be uploaded to the application; it carries over each year until the three-year update cycle is reached.
- Step 5: Educational Outreach — Each participating site is required to hold a minimum of one wildfire risk reduction educational outreach event or activity annually. Examples of acceptable events can be found in that section of the application.
- Step 6: Vegetation Removal — A major component of wildfire risk reduction is the removal of vegetation (shrubs, brush, limbs, trees, etc.) from individual properties and common-area property. Tracking vegetation removal provides forestry and fire agencies with information on the quantity of potential wildfire fuel that's been eliminated from the area(s). This section provides tools to help a community estimate its vegetation removal in cubic yards.
- Step 7: Investment — Investing the equivalent of one volunteer hour (valued at \$25.43) per residential dwelling unit within the site's boundary in annual wildfire risk reduction actions is a requirement of the national recognition program's criteria for maintaining an "In Good Standing" status. Annual investment information can be reported in hours worked or money spent.
- Step 8: Review — Verify that each component of the application has been filled out correctly before submitting the application.

Annual Renewal: In order to remain "In Good Standing" in the program participating sites will need to complete an annual renewal application. This application is typically due mid-November. Requirements are similar to the initial application for recognition. More information can be found online, by visiting our [Annual Renewal Information](#) page.

Certificate of Recognition: Sites that successfully meet the participation requirements are provided a “Certificate of Recognition.” This is provided upon approval of the initial application for recognition and on an annual basis upon approval of the renewal application. The certificate can be accessed from the community’s dashboard on the Firewise® Portal.

Certified vs. Recognized: As described in the definition of Voluntary Recognition Program, Firewise USA® sites meet a set of criteria to earn national recognition, and continue to meet specific criteria annually to remain in good standing with the program. The words “certified” and “certification” are not affiliated with the Firewise USA® program. To be “certified” implies that an individual has demonstrated specific competency in a job role or skill set. An example would be a certified electrical safety technician. Organizations can also be certified, generally meaning they meet qualifications that give them access to specific benefits or resources. An example would be the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) certification that validates that a business is 51 percent owned, controlled, operated, and managed by a woman or women. Firewise USA® sites are not certified, and neither do individuals nor their properties within site boundaries receive certification.



ACTION PLAN SAMPLE



FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

The California Required 3-Year Action Plan

Thank you for your efforts in protecting your community against wildfires. Whenever possible, seek guidance from your local fire official or your Firewise USA Regional Coordinator when completing this document. This collaboration can provide peace of mind, knowing that experienced recommendations are guiding your community's time and efforts.

Important Reminders:

- The goals for this plan **must** include the 'Recommendations' found on page 9 of the Firewise USA Risk Assessment document.
- As part of the annual renewal process, communities are required to host one outreach event per year and collaborate with neighbors to address items within the action plan, as mandated by NFPA Firewise USA.
- Defensible space is a legal requirement for all buildings and structures within California's State Responsibility Area, as mandated by Public Resource Code 4291, and for Local Governments located in designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, as outlined in Government Code 51182. For communities outside these classifications, please consult your local fire authority to determine applicable defensible space regulations.

Completion Process:

1. **Document Header:** Enter the name of your Firewise Community.
2. **Document Header:** Select the appropriate 3-year span for this action plan. For new applications, the 3-Year Action Plan starts the year after recognition, as current year actions are part of your application.
3. **Community Description:** Enter a brief description of your community. An example has been provided, but please replace it with your own community description. Please only use the space provided.
4. **Goals:** Review the example goals provided on page 1. In the spaces provided, please list 3-5 goals per section. Goals should be obtainable, measurable, and build from the previous year.
5. **Completion Checklist:** Please be sure to complete the completion checklist on page 8.
6. **Submission:** Once the document is completed it can be uploaded and submitted through the [NFPA Firewise USA Portal](#).

Helpful Links:

[NFPA Firewise USA](#), "Find examples of activities that count towards your investment"
[CAL FIRE Defensible Space](#)
[Ready for Wildfire](#)
[California Department of Insurance](#), Safer from Wildfire Information.

Community Name:

Community Wildfire Action Plan: 2026-2028



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RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

Date Completed:

Action Plan Goals

Education and Outreach Goals:

- Goals should empower residents with wildfire preparedness knowledge and resources through educational campaigns, brochures, and community events. These efforts will foster shared responsibility and collaboration to safeguard properties from wildfires.

Goal: Organize a community outreach event to engage residents and provide learning experiences related to wildfire.

Home Hardening Goals:

- Goals should encourage residents to adopt wildfire-resistant home measures, such as using fire-resistant materials, replacing vent screens with smaller openings, and adding non-combustible fences and double-paned windows.

Goal: Encourage residents to use fire resistant materials and provide low-cost alternatives.

Defensible Space | Fuel Reduction Goals:

- Goals should create and maintain defensible space to reduce wildfire risks by clearing combustible vegetation, maintaining a well-watered landscape, and regularly cleaning roofs and gutters. Community events like chipper days encourage yard waste disposal, while fuel treatment and educating about Zone Zero enhance fire prevention and proactive property protection.

Goal: Work on fuel treatment and maintenance efforts to strategically reduce hazardous fuels from the community.

Evacuation Planning and Wildfire Preparedness Goals:

- The goal is to enhance community-wide strategies for safety during wildfire emergencies by creating accessible evacuation maps, conducting evacuation drills with local agencies, and encouraging residents to join communication plans and sign up for emergency alerts. These efforts will familiarize residents with evacuation routes, reduce confusion, and improve efficiency during emergencies.

Goal: Partner with local stakeholders to conduct yearly community-wide evacuation drills to ensure familiarization.

Acknowledgement

☐ I fully understand the instructions outlined on the "How to utilize the California Required 3-Year Action Plan" Page.

Start Your Action Plan Here

Please enter a brief description of your community. Review and replace the example shown below

Example: "Our local community is located within the wildland urban interface and intermix in the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. This proposed Firewise USA™ Site Community Wildfire Action Plan was developed through input received during the Summer 2020 Firewise Assessment and an after-action review of the Fire that affected the community. The goal of the Plan is to develop a strategy to incrementally outreach, educate, and implement efforts to make our neighborhood and the surrounding area more fire resilient."

Community Name:

Community Wildfire Action Plan:

2026-2028



Action Plan Year 1

Education and Outreach Goals
1.
2.
3.

Home Hardening Goals
1.
2.
3.

Community Name:

Community Wildfire Action Plan:

2026-2028



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Action Plan Year 1

Defensible Space / Fuel Reduction Goals
1.
2.
3.

Evacuation Planning (Ex. Preparedness & Routing) and Wildfire Preparedness
1.
2.
3.

Community Name:

Community Wildfire Action Plan:

2026-2028



Action Plan Year 2

Education and Outreach Goals
1.
2.
3.

Home Hardening Goals
1.
2.
3.

Community Name:

Community Wildfire Action Plan: 2026-2028



Action Plan Year 2

Defensible Space / Fuel Reduction Goals
<div>1.</div> <div>2.</div> <div>3.</div>

Evacuation Planning (Ex. Preparedness & Routing) and Wildfire Preparedness
<div>1.</div> <div>2.</div> <div>3.</div>

Community Name:

Community Wildfire Action Plan:

2026-2028



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Action Plan Year 3

Education and Outreach Goals

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Home Hardening Goals

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Community Name:

Community Wildfire Action Plan: 2026-2028



Action Plan Year 3

Defensible Space / Fuel Reduction Goals
1.
2.
3.

Evacuation Planning (Ex. Preparedness & Routing) and Wildfire Preparedness
1.
2.
3.

Community Name:

Community Wildfire Action Plan: 2026-2028



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Action Plan Completion Check List

- ☐ Has this plan been completed according to the instructions outlined in the introduction page.
- ☐ Has the Community Name in the document header been updated?
- ☐ Has the appropriate year span been selected in the document header?
- ☐ Has the "Date Completed" been filled out in the document header?
- ☐ Has the Community Description, on page one(1), been updated?
- ☐ For each section, have 3-5 obtainable and measurable goals been identified?
- ☐ Are the goals progressive, building upon those completed in previous years?
- ☐ Has a phased approach to Defensible Space been avoided to maintain compliance?
- ☐ Does this plan include 'Recommendations' found on page 9 of the Firewise USA Risk Assessment document.



ACTION PLAN EXAMPLES

ACTION PLAN EXAMPLES

Education and Outreach Goals	Home Hardening Goals	Defensible Space/Fuels Reduction Goals	Evacuation Planning Goals
Connect with local fire safe council and attend monthly meetings	Replace wood decks with noncombustible materials, as possible	Maintain emergency pull outs in the neighborhood	Discuss emergency ingress and egress with community
Host an annual outreach event	Replace wood siding with noncombustible siding, as possible	Maintain roadside clearance and overgrowth	Discuss go bags and family communication plans
Hand out Firewise materials to new neighbors	Replace wooden attachments on the home with metal attachments	Replace flammable shrubs with fire resistant foliage	Participate in the red flag warning sign program for the neighborhood
Develop an email and mailing list for the community	Perform home site visits as requested	Host a community work day to work on fuel reduction	Review evacuation warnings and what they mean with the community
Inform community of red flag days	Inspect siding for dry rot or warping and fix damaged areas	Hire Placer County chipper to chip branches limbed/collected	Encourage neighbors to sign up for Placer Alerts
Create a website or Facebook page to facilitate communication	Maintain clean gutters and litter free roofs	Trim large trees and remove ladder fuels	Hand out evacuation preparedness checklists
Provide links to information about fire preparedness	Inspect weather stripping and gaps in the home. Replace as needed.	Identify and remove risks in the 0-5 foot zone	Discuss go bags for pets with the community

ACTION PLAN EXAMPLES

Education and Outreach Goals	Home Hardening Goals	Defensible Space/Fuels Reduction Goals	Evacuation Planning Goals
Create a community newsletter to highlight successes	Inspect roof and repair loose or missing tiles/shingles	Explore community green waste options	Host an event with Placer County Animal Services to educate residents about livestock and animal evacuations
Hand out CAL FIRE's low cost retrofit flyer	Emphasize the importance of skirting under stairs and decks	Conduct defensible space assessments	Plan a work day to clear evacuation routes of vegetation
Host an annual neighborhood walk through	Conduct home hazard assessments	Limb up low hanging branches	Encourage residents to know their evacuation routes and do dry runs
Coordinate with local fire safe council to prioritize projects	Remove debris and combustible materials from under decks	Thin out trees and shrubs in Zones 1 and 2	invite local fire department out to talk about evacuation preparedness
Send emails in spring and fall with clean up tips	Remind residents to store firewood away from structures	Mow fields, abate weeds, and disc fields	Ensure emergency access points and fire access roads are accessible
Have residents utilize tracking form to report vegetation removal	Encourage replacement of bark within 5 feet	Create vertical clearance over roadways	Suggest residents complete a 15 min drill with their families
Develop signage/posters to promote Firewise at neighborhood common areas like mailboxes	Encourage homeowners to consider replacing windows with double paned/tempered glass	Review NFPA zones checklist and apply as needed	Create a list of neighbors who may need assistance during evacuations

ACTION PLAN EXAMPLES

Education and Outreach Goals

Host a home hardening or defensible space workshop

Create welcome packets/baskets for new neighbors with Firewise information

Invite Placer RCD out to speak about their chipper and prescribed fire programs

Host an event on Wildfire Preparedness Day (the first weekend in May)

Partner with local companies for demonstrations on home retrofitting

Partner with local companies for demonstrations on fire-smart landscaping

Home Hardening Goals

Provide information about having a least a five foot metal buffer from the house to the fence

Share materials about soffits and mesh vents

Hand out Tahoe RCD Home Hardening guide

Remove combustible items from outside the home when not in use or on vacation.

Store garbage cans away from the home

Replace attic vents with intumescent vents

Defensible Space/Fuels Reduction Goals

Assist elderly or disable neighbors with maintaining their defensible space

Hand out Firewise zone map and checklist

Keep immediate area around the home free of dead or excess vegetation

Remove pyrophytic plants from all zones

Thin out dense vegetation including the greenway

Host a UC Master Gardener presentation on landscaping

Evacuation Planning Goals

Provide community with evacuation guides

Ensure home address numbers are visible for first responders

Create a shared list of needs and assets for the neighborhood. (e.g. trailers, hoses, saws)

Invite local law enforcement to present on evacuation procedures

Assist new neighbors with preparing go bags and creating plans

Encourage residents with locked gates to install a Knox box



TIME INVESTMENT DOCUMENT

TIME AND EXPENSE INVESTMENT EXAMPLES

Investing the equivalent of one volunteer hour per residential dwelling unit within the site's boundary in annual wildfire risk reduction efforts is a requirement of the national recognition program's criteria for maintaining an "In Good Standing" status. Examples of potential actions, activities, and expenses that can be used in meeting the total investment are listed below. These are only examples, it is not a comprehensive list.

COLLABORATION WITH FORESTRY, FIRE, AND RELATED EXPERTS:

- Consultation time with forestry/fire professionals on areas at risk
- Coordination of arborist, landscaping, etc. estimates for vegetation maintenance in common areas
- Regional coordinator's time mentoring/working with residents
- Time spent performing fire risk overviews at individual homes

COORDINATION OF PROJECTS, MEETINGS, ETC.:

- Coordination of wildfire related outreach events
- Coordination of wildfire educational presentations with subject matter experts
- Resident leader's program administration time
- Travel time to risk reduction meetings, orientations, trainings, and workshops

EDUCATION/TRAINING EVENTS AND MEETINGS FOR RESIDENTS:

- Attendance at evacuation/preparedness trainings
- Attendance at wildfire-related education/informational meetings and events
- Home improvements/modifications training
- Fire-resistant plant species workshop
- Safety and personal protective equipment training
- Vegetation management training

IMPROVEMENTS/MAINTENANCE ON THE HOME AND OUTBUILDINGS:

- Chimney spark arrestor installation
- Repairs to retrofit open-eaves style construction to soffited-eaves
- Modifications of deck to increase the gap between boards from $\frac{1}{8}$ inch to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch
- Inspection of roof; replacement of shingles as needed
- Inspection/repairs of eaves and soffits to ensure construction materials are in good condition
- Removal all flammable materials from under decks and porches
- Removal of debris between deck board gaps/joints
- Removal of debris on the roof and in the gutters as needed
- Replacement of missing deck boards to reduce ember entry to area under decks
- Replacement of vinyl gutters with metal gutters
- Replacement of wood fencing sections where attached to the house with a noncombustible product
- Resident or contractor labor to perform ignition-resistant exterior improvements (e.g., new Class A roofs, mesh screening added to attic and crawl space vents, siding repairs, replacement of wood fencing attached to siding, etc.)
- Installation of weatherstripping along the perimeter of garage doors to help keep embers out
- Use of a sealant (such as caulking) to cover gaps in open-eave areas

TIME AND EXPENSE INVESTMENT EXAMPLES (continued)

IMPROVEMENTS/MAINTENANCE WITHIN THE HOME IGNITION ZONES:

- Clearing of debris at the base of combustible fences
- Clearing of vegetation beneath and around large stationary propane tanks
- Creation of a permanent non-flammable footprint under large stationary propane tanks
- Creation of a non-flammable footprint under decks with gravel, stone or concrete
- Creation of small fuel breaks by adding hardscaping (e.g., driveways, walkways/paths, patios, stone walls, etc.)
- Delimbing and removal of lower tree branches
- Relocation of firewood piles to at least 30 feet from the home and other structures
- Mowing lawns and trimming native grasses and weeds as needed
- Raking and removal of pine needles, leaves, and ground debris
- Replacement of combustible mulch material with stone/gravel
- Replacement of highly-flammable vegetation with fire-resistant species
- Reduction of ladder fuels
- Stacking/piling of slash and other debris for chipping or curbside pickup
- Thinning or removal of trees

NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY FOCUSED PROJECTS:

- Debris removal and maintenance of commonly owned areas
- Coordination of rental equipment and contractors for community-wide wildfire risk reduction projects
- Door-to-door canvassing to get new neighbors involved in reducing wildfire risks

- Grant writing/oversight for wildfire risk reduction projects
- Mentoring adjacent neighborhoods on the importance of reducing wildfire risks
- Organizing, coordinating, planning, and implementation of the annual education/outreach events/activities
- Participation and attendance at Firewise board meetings, including development and updating of action plans
- Participation in group risk reduction activities for residents physically unable to do the work themselves
- Participation in national Wildfire Community Preparedness Day projects
- Reduction of vegetation/fuels from adjacent ingress and egress routes
- Resident's time attending/participating in annual wildfire education/outreach events
- Participation in risk reduction orientation to new residents
- Writing wildfire educational articles for the neighborhood newsletter or community website

EXPENSE EXAMPLES:

- Chipper/power equipment rental/purchases, fuel, oil, and repair costs
- Chipper/power equipment associated costs: fuel and oil
- Chipper/power equipment maintenance/repair costs
- Contractor/labor expenses to perform risk reduction work (e.g., arborists, landscapers, professional forester services, roofers, etc.)
- Costs for community-wide clean up days (e.g., dumpster rental, compostable leaf/lawn bags, etc.)
- Costs to replace flammable mulch materials with stone/gravel

TIME AND EXPENSE INVESTMENT EXAMPLES (continued)

- Costs to replace flammable plant species with fire-resistant options
- Costs to replace wood fencing sections where attached to the house with a noncombustible product
- Food/beverages for risk reduction group/volunteer projects
- Ground litter and debris disposal/hauling fees
- Hardscaping materials and related costs to create fuel separation
- Home improvement expenses to reduce impacts from heat and embers (e.g., roof, deck, fencing, gutters, siding, vents, windows, etc.)
- Mileage at the current IRS rate for attendance at wildfire related meetings, dropping off slash, securing rental equipment, etc.
- Portable toilet rental for volunteers working on clean-up projects
- Production costs for risk reduction flyers, signs, and related mailing expenses
- Spark arrestor installation costs
- Tool purchase/rental (e.g., loppers, pole saws, weed trimmers, rakes, etc.)
- Tree removal and separation/spacing expenses
- Safety equipment for neighborhood workdays (e.g., ear and eye protection, gloves, etc.)
- Value of hourly volunteer labor (e.g., residents, scout groups, CERT members, students, etc.) and the associated services and materials required for them to participate in risk reduction projects



HOURLY WORKSHEET DOCUMENT



Name: _____ Date: _____

Community Name: _____

Preferred Method of Contact: _____

Hours Worked

Dwelling Unit/Home

Examples include: Removing pine needles and leaf litter from roof and gutters, replaced vinyl gutters with metal gutters, ignition-resistant exterior improvements, installing screening on vents, flammable items removed from under decks and porches, inspect roof and replace missing shingles, etc.

Landscaping (0–100 ft from base of dwelling unit)

Examples include: Installation of hardscaping, replacing combustible mulches with stone/gravel options, tree and shrub removal, raking and removal of pine needles, leaves, ground litter/debris, tree trimming/limbing, moving firewood, lawn and native grass maintenance, etc.

Common Area

(HOA or other Homeowner jointly owned property within the site boundary) Activities include: Tree thinning, mastication and brush removal, grass maintenance, fire break construction, etc.

Miscellaneous

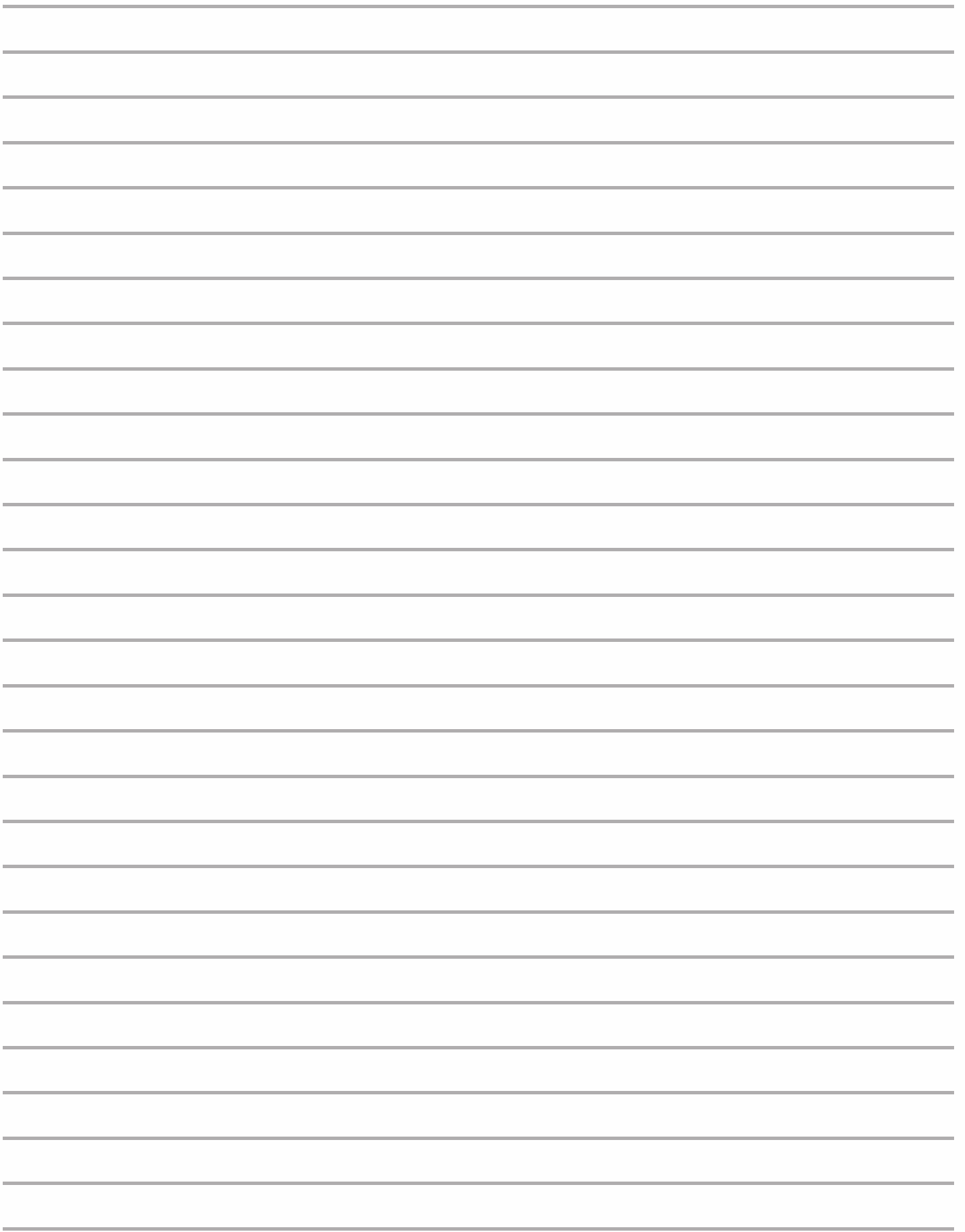
Meetings, presentations, program administration, home site visits, etc.

Money Spent

\$	Chipper Costs: Purchase/rental, fuel & oil, disposal fees, etc.
\$	Other Equipment Costs: Chain saw purchase/rental, power equip. purchase/rental, hand tools, protective equipment, etc.
\$	Contractor Costs: Arborists, landscapers, professional forestry services, debris removal, etc.
\$	Home Improvement Costs: Roofs, decks, windows, vent screening, retrofits, etc.
\$	Landscaping/DIY
\$	Miscellaneous
	Vehicle mileage

Additional Notes: _____

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.



LET'S WORK
TOGETHER



FIREWISE USA[®]
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS