

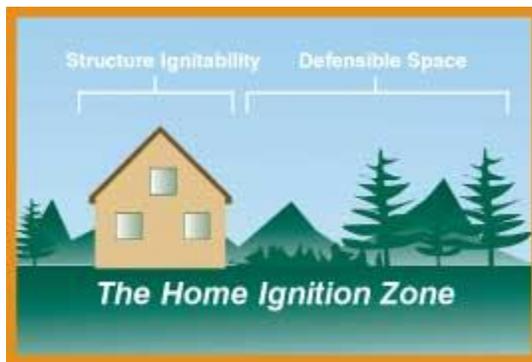
## How You Can Protect Your Home, Property and Forest

Homeowners can take steps to protect their property and help alleviate the spread of wildland fires. Many Coloradans living in the foothills in ponderosa and lodgepole forests need to consider the fire-prone nature of these ecosystems.

Due to Colorado's arid climate and fire-dependent forests, many homeowners and landowners may be particularly vulnerable to wildfires. It is important to keep this threat in mind when buying or building a home.

Fire is unpredictable. If there are weaknesses in your home's fire protection scheme, fire can gain the upper hand because of some overlooked or seemingly inconsequential factor. By [creating wildfire-defensible zones](#) (738 KB PDF), homes are less vulnerable from this naturally occurring phenomenon and the chance of spreading wildfires is greatly reduced.

### The Home Ignition Zone



Two factors have emerged as the primary determinants of a home's ability to survive a wildfire – quality of the **defensible space** around the home and the home's **structural ignitability**.

Together, **these two factors create a concept called the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ)**, which includes the structure and the space immediately surrounding the structure. To protect a home from wildfire, the primary goal is to reduce or eliminate fuels and ignition sources within the HIZ.

### Defensible Space

Defensible space is the area around a home or other structure that has been modified to reduce fire hazard. In this area, natural and manmade fuels are treated, cleared or reduced to slow the spread of wildfire. Creating defensible space also works in the reverse, and reduces the chance of a structure fire spreading to neighboring homes or the surrounding forest. Defensible space gives your home a fighting chance against an approaching wildfire.

Creating an effective defensible space involves a series of management zones in which different treatment techniques are used. Develop these zones around each building on your property, including detached garages, storage buildings, barns and other structures.

The actual design and development of your defensible space depends on several factors.

- Size and shape of building(s)

- Construction materials
- Slope of the ground
- Surrounding topography
- Sizes and types of vegetation on your property

### [Defensible Space Checklists](#)

#### Defensible Space Management Zones



Three zones need to be addressed when creating defensible space:

- **Zone 1** is the area nearest the home and other structures – This zone requires maximum hazard reduction.
- **Zone 2** is a transitional area of fuels reduction between Zones 1 and 3.
- **Zone 3** is the area farthest from the home. It extends from the edge of Zone 2 to your property boundaries.

For more information on how to create wildfire-defensible space around your home, including the three defensible space zones, refer to the CSFS publication:

- [Creating Wildfire-Defensible Zones](#) (738 KB PDF)

You may want to request additional guidance from a forester at [your local CSFS district or field office](#), fire department or a consulting forester as you plan defensible space for your property.

#### Structural Ignitability

The ideal time to address home ignition risk is when the structure is in the design phase. However, you can still take steps to reduce ignitability to an existing home.

For instance, it is important to choose a fire-resistant roofing material that is rated class C or higher when building a house in, or near, forests or grasslands. Avoid flammable materials such as wood or shake shingles.

For more information on appropriate roofing materials and other fire-resistant building designs and materials, refer to the CSFS publication:

- [FireWise Construction: Site Design & Building Materials](#) (1.3 MB PDF)

## Are You FireWise?

Many people don't realize that they face serious wildfire danger. But if you live in the foothills, grasslands or mountains of Colorado, you are at risk!

Compounding the problem is the exploding population in once-rural areas surrounding municipalities. The result is that more homes and more lives are potentially threatened by wildfire every year.

To be FireWise, you must carry out certain fire-protection measures before a fire even starts. By following the fire-safety guidelines listed here, your home will have a chance to survive while firefighters work to bring the wildfire under control. Remember, a fire department's effectiveness in battling a wildfire starts with YOU!

The CSFS, in partnership with Larimer County and Poudre Fire Authority, developed Colorado's Are You FireWise? guidelines. Subsequently, these guidelines were adapted for homeowners and landowners living on Colorado's plains.

If you are a homeowner and you are interested in protecting your home from wildfires, follow the CSFS FireWise guidelines below.

While you may not be able to accomplish all of these measures, each will increase your home's safety and survival during a wildfire. Start with the easiest and least expensive actions. Begin your work closest to the house and move outward. Keep working on the more difficult items until you have completed your entire project.