



## 10 Reasons to Become a Firewise Community!

Devastating wildfires burn across the United States each year, while a growing number of people are living where wildfires are a real risk. Although these fires will continue to happen, there are things you can do to help enhance the safety of your home and neighborhood.

The National Fire Protection Association (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 Firewise program empowers communities to reduce their vulnerability to wildfires and enhance their ability to protect homes and properties. Here are 10 compelling reasons why a community should consider becoming Firewise:

1. **Wildfire Preparedness:** By becoming Firewise, a community takes proactive steps to prepare for the possibility of a wildfire. This includes creating and implementing a wildfire risk assessment, developing evacuation plans, and establishing a community-wide understanding of wildfire safety.
2. **Property Protection:** Firewise practices focus on creating defensible spaces around homes and structures, reducing the risk of property damage during a wildfire. This can involve thinning vegetation, maintaining fire-resistant landscaping, and using fire-resistant building materials.
3. **Community Resilience:** A Firewise community is better equipped to withstand and recover from wildfires. When residents work together to implement wildfire mitigation measures, it fosters a sense of community resilience and preparedness in the face of potential threats.

4. **Insurance Benefits:** Some insurance companies offer incentives or discounts to homeowners who live in recognized Firewise communities. Implementing Firewise practices can lead to reduced insurance premiums for residents.
5. **Environmental Stewardship:** Firewise principles encourage responsible land management practices that not only protect against wildfires but also promote overall environmental health. Proper forest thinning and management can prevent catastrophic wildfires and promote healthy ecosystems.
6. **Emergency Response Coordination:** Being Firewise involves coordinating with local fire departments and emergency services to enhance communication and coordination during wildfire events. This improves the effectiveness and efficiency of wildfire response efforts.
7. **Government Support:** In many regions, Firewise communities receive support and resources from local, state, and federal agencies. This assistance can include funding for wildfire prevention projects, educational materials, and technical expertise.
8. **Reduced Firefighting Costs:** Implementing Firewise practices can decrease the risk of large-scale wildfires, which are expensive to combat and can strain firefighting resources. By reducing the intensity and size of wildfires, firefighting costs can be significantly lowered.
9. **Peace of Mind:** Residents living in a Firewise community gain peace of mind, knowing that they have taken proactive measures to protect their homes and families from the threat of wildfires.
10. **Community Engagement:** Participating in Firewise activities fosters a sense of community engagement and shared responsibility for wildfire prevention. It brings residents together to collaborate on a common goal, creating a stronger and more connected community.

Overall, becoming a Firewise community is a collective effort to minimize the risk of wildfires and their potential impacts. It empowers residents to take charge of their safety, protect their properties, and contribute to the preservation of their environment.

The Firewise USA program is a part of California's efforts to ensure communities are prepared against wildfire, and CAL FIRE Office of the State Fire Marshal's Community Wildfire Preparedness & Mitigation Division works to assist local communities in receiving this designation.

To learn the steps and begin the process of becoming a California Firewise community, visit [here](#).