



Firewise Toolkit

Firewise Recognition Programme

By working with neighbours, individual residents can make their own property – and their community – much safer from the flames and embers of a wildfire. The Firewise Communities Recognition Program provides a series of steps so you and your neighbours can act now ahead of any wildfire threat.

- Talk to **your neighbours**. You may be surprised to learn that other residents are just as concerned as you are about wildfire, so make a pledge to get started ... now.
- These people will form a diverse Firewise board or committee. The group should include homeowners and fire professionals, but may also include planners, land managers, urban foresters and members of other interest groups in your community.
- Choose a group leader / representative. (This person, often known as the “sparkplug,” will serve as the spokesperson and take the lead on Firewise initiatives.)
- Contact your local Fire and Rescue Service about rolling out **Firewise in your** community. Seek advice on what assistance will be available to initiate the scheme.
- Schedule **a site assessment visit**. This is the first step of the process of achieving Firewise recognition status and you should allow at least a day for this process. It should also be completed in conjunction with your local Fire and Rescue Service and any relevant land managers.
- Please note that this risk assessment does not constitute a Community Protection Plan (CPP or Community Wildland Protection Plan in the USA - CWPP). It is a wildfire risk evaluation of the community looking to join the Firewise Programme.

The assessment does not have a specific format, but the program endorses an assessment style that:

- Includes a simple document for homeowners / residents to review the potential Firewise site.
- Familiarises the homeowner / resident with the way ignitions are likely to occur and how homes are likely to be lost in the event of a wildfire.
- Explains and illustrates common strengths and vulnerabilities with respect to this site's wildfire risk.



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Upon completion of the evaluation, in the USA, an appointed Firewise liaison officer will schedule a meeting with the Firewise committee to review the findings. The UK scheme is not yet nationally supported and such assistance / liaison will be down to each local Fire and Rescue Service to determine, following the guidance provided by CFOA.

At this time, the Firewise committee will determine whether they accept the Findings. If they are accepted then the next steps are as follows:

- Create a plan based on the evaluation and assessment to tackle the problem areas. Remember to include the deadlines and a schedule to keep the plan on track. Record the action plan, and have all members of your committee sign it. Your plan should include:
 - One day during the year should be designated as a Firewise day. This could be a clean-up day or a Firewise fun / education day
 - Firewise mitigation activities that amount to a community 'investment' of £1.50 per capita through 'in kind' contributions or grants
 - Once the plan is finished, share it with the local Fire and Rescue Service
- Implement the plan and tackle the actions within it. Designate actions to individuals or groups and nominate a lead for the Firewise Day. Remember to document your work / actions.
- Work with your local Fire and Rescue Service to verify the plan as appropriate. This may lead, as the Firewise programme gathers pace nationally in the UK to being registered as part of a national recognition programme.
- Now you have completed your plan and had it verified gather all your documentation together and keep it safe. At the present time you will use it to confirm with your local Fire and Rescue Service that you meet the requirements of the plan but it will be used as part of any national accreditation programme instigated in the UK.
- You should have:
 - A completed Firewise community plan
 - Records of your Firewise Day including the volunteers involved, activities undertaken and hours dedicated to the project



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- Keep a visual record of the work that you have done
- Review the documentation and add to it each year as further work is completed
- Celebrate your success – you have helped make your homes and your community as a whole safer from Wildfire!
- Tell your friends in neighbouring communities about Firewise – spread the word!

