



Coffee Break Training - Community Risk Reduction

Know Your Role (Part 1 of 2)

No. CR-2014-12 June 4, 2014

Learning Objective: The student will understand the role that community members have in mitigating the potential damage a wildfire can cause.

Residents and Homeowners

Firefighters can't always protect every home from wildfire — especially if property owners haven't done their part to prepare. Property owners can take important steps around the home to make it safer for them, their family and their neighbors. Start now by setting an example and helping to create Fire-Adapted Communities (FACs) before the next fire approaches!

- Talk to the local fire department about how to prepare for a wildfire, situational awareness before a fire, when to evacuate, and what you and your community should expect during a response.
- Use the **Wildfire Home Assessment and Checklist** to conduct a risk assessment on your property.
- Create a plan to address issues in your property's home ignition zone/defensible space, including:
 - Maintaining a "fire-free" area around the perimeter of your home.
 - Managing vegetation along fences.
 - Clearing debris from decks, patios, eaves and porches.
 - Selecting proper landscaping and plants.
 - Knowing the local ecology and fire history.
 - Moving radiant heat sources away from the home (i.e., wood piles, fuel tanks, sheds).
 - Thinning trees and ladder fuels around the home.
- Develop a personal and family preparedness plan.
- Support land management agencies by learning about wildfire risk-reduction efforts, such as using prescribed fire to manage local landscapes.
- Contact the local planning/zoning office to find out if your home is in a high wildfire risk area and if there are specific local or county ordinances you should be following.
- If you have a homeowners' association, work with them to identify regulations that incorporate proven preparedness landscaping, home design, and building materials use, such as Firewise.



Publication provides tips for homeowners on what to do before and when wildfire threatens.

Fire and Emergency Responders

Fire departments and emergency responders engage and educate residents about properly preparing for wildfire and building situational awareness. Studies show that you are uniquely qualified to prepare residents for wildfire because you are respected in your community and seen as a trusted source of information by the public. Use your role to help create FACs and do the following:

- Sign up for and participate in the Ready, Set, Go! Program.
- Do a local wildfire risk assessment for your community to identify high fuel loads, vulnerable building stock, and vulnerable populations.
- Provide input to the local Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
- Ensure fire department's proficiency in wildland fires, fuels, operational techniques, safety procedures, qualifications, equipment and response.
- Review construction developments in the Wildland Urban Interface.
- Know availability of fire suppression resources and the public's expectation of response.
- Discuss current level of preparedness/response collaboration with local emergency management and public safety agencies.
- Promote role of secondary assets like Fire Corps or Community Emergency Response Teams.
- Build relationships with planning, zoning, and building code development and enforcement staff.

Additional Resources

- U.S. Fire Administration's Wildfire ... Are You Prepared? at www.usfa.fema.gov.
- Be Red Cross Ready: www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster-safety-library.
- Ready.gov: www.ready.gov/wildfires.

For archived downloads, go to:

www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/