

Key Strategies to Reduce Home Wildfire Risk

This year, wildfires have spread across many parts of Colorado, endangering many homes in their paths. While no technology or building practice can guarantee survivability for a home, some considerations can help make your home more fire-resistant.

There are two main types of strategies builders, remodelers and home owners can employ to minimize potential impact from wildfires:

1. Maintaining a defensible space around the home to keep a fire, and
2. Selecting building envelope materials and using construction techniques that can make it harder for the home to catch fire.

Defensible space encompasses three zones around the home. The goal of this strategy is to reduce the chance that embers will “jump” to a home and limit the opportunity for a fire to ignite close to the home. Strategically spacing vegetation and maintaining it regularly lessens the chance of exposure to direct flames.

- **Zone 1:** 0-5 feet from the building (and under the deck)
Goal: Create a noncombustible zone by using hardscapes and not planting vegetation directly next to the home
- **Zone 2:** 5-30 feet from the building or to the property line
Goal: Locate and maintain vegetation to keep fire from climbing up and reaching the home
- **Zone 3:** 30-100 feet from the building or to the property line
Goal: Strategically locate vegetation to slow down and reduce the energy of the fire.

Building envelope construction strategies and the material choices for the envelope can help to minimize fire risk from flying embers and flames. Examples of both include:

- Using noncombustible roofing and gutter materials
- Covering walls with fire-resistant materials such as brick, stone or stucco
- Screening attic and underfloor vents to keep embers out but still allow airflow•
- Installing dual- or multi-pane tempered windows with screens
- Boxing in open eaves to create a soffited eave
- Encasing stilts so there is no opening below the floor, balcony, or deck
- Sealing the garage door with weather stripping to help reduce ember entry

After disasters, builders build more than just homes. Builders stand together with survivors to rebuild communities. To learn more and to connect with local builders and contractors, visit the Housing & Building Association of Colorado Springs at www.cshba.com.



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