

WUI =

The wildland urban interface is any area where human development meets or intermixes with wildland vegetation



Aerial view of a rural community built in a wooded area and next to a pine plantation.

RECOGNIZING WILDFIRE RISK

A unique wildfire danger is growing where homes and other buildings are built in areas of highly flammable vegetation, creating a condition called the wildland urban interface. Homes and cabins in the middle of forests, housing developments on the edge of pine plantations, lake communities surrounded by oak and pine forests or even homes next to grasslands all exemplify this condition. Buildings on sandy soils with an abundance of pine, oak and grass are especially concerning. Having undeveloped woodlands and fields in and around a neighborhood indicates that you, as the property owner, should prepare your home for wildfire.



Wildfire risk factors around this home include sandy soils and dense vegetation, especially the pine trees and their fallen needles.



IS YOUR HOME AT RISK?

Think about your home or vacation property as you go through this checklist. The more times you check YES, the more likely you have a property at-risk to wildfire and should take action to become Firewise.

Wildfire Risk Indicators	Yes	No
I own a home in a rural area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My home is in a wooded area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outside, I see tall grass, oaks or pine trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outside, I see more pine needles and leaves than lawn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The soil around my property is sandy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burning takes place on my property or my neighbor's property (campfires, leaf or brush burning, burn barrel use)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I, or my neighbor, dump wood ash outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have heard about wildfires having occurred in the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a Smokey Bear fire danger sign in my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Surviving wildfire by adapting to it

Taking steps to live, work and recreate responsibly in places at risk to wildfire is necessary to protect lives, property and the beauty of our natural surroundings. We can adapt to living in Wisconsin's fire prone areas by preventing, preparing and planning for wildfires.

- Preventing wildfires** - understanding why and when wildfires occur and taking proactive measures to prevent human-caused wildfire disasters
- Preparing for wildfires** - before a wildfire occurs, learning what actions can be taken by homeowners, to help homes survive
- Planning for wildfires** - working together to develop a plan and take actions on the community level to reduce the impacts of a destructive wildfire

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Preparing for WILDFIRES

Wildfires are inevitable and they can threaten homes, property, communities and even lives.



As people who live, work and play in Wisconsin, we all have an important role in preventing, preparing and planning for wildfire.



Preparing for WILDFIRES

BUILDINGS ARE DESTROYED

Wisconsin has a long history of large-scale wildfires that burn many homes. These fires are infrequent and unpredictable, but will certainly continue to occur. What we can count on is that every year in Wisconsin, hundreds of buildings will be threatened by wildfires and dozens of buildings will be destroyed.

Most of the buildings will be burned by fires that started on the same property or that of a neighbor. Half of all buildings destroyed are due to wildfires caused by debris burning. And with spring being the time of year when most wildfires occur, we can predict that 80 percent of the buildings that will be destroyed will be lost between March and June.



5 ACRES

Most buildings are lost to wildfires that burn less than 5 acres

WHY HOMES BURN

Homes and other buildings ignite when combustible material is left on, under, or near them. Rain gutters full of pine needles provide fuel for an airborne ember. Leaves under decks or next to siding provide fuel for a fire moving along the surface of the ground. Tall grass and pine trees in your yard can 'torch' when ignited and result in tall flames against siding and eaves. A shed or detached garage tucked into a wooded area can easily ignite. If it is close to a home, the flames and radiant heat from the burning building can then cause the home to ignite. Narrow driveways and gates may delay emergency response and keep firefighters from providing assistance.



When buildings are too close together the ignition of one can cause neighboring buildings to be damaged or destroyed.



Homes too close to the surrounding vegetation are vulnerable during a wildfire.

SIMPLE THINGS

The good news is that simple things can make a big difference when improving your home's chance of surviving a wildfire. Small changes can keep fire from reaching your home.

- Keep rain gutters free of debris
- Rake fallen leaves and pine needles from areas around buildings and under decks
- Remove all flammable materials 3 to 5 feet around buildings
- Move firewood stacks 30 feet away from buildings
- Minimize the number of evergreens within 30 feet of buildings



MAKE YOUR HOME FIREWISE

With a little effort, you can improve your home's chance of surviving a wildfire. A "Firewise" home can survive a wildfire even without help from firefighters. A Firewise home has fire-resistant construction materials, thoughtful landscaping and regular maintenance to make the home and outbuildings less likely to catch on fire even if a wildfire burns through the property.

The goal of a Firewise approach is to improve a home's chance of surviving a wildfire with little or no damage. When it comes to protecting your home from wildfires, **the most important firefighter is you!**



Ample separation from the surrounding vegetation helped this central Wisconsin home survive a 3,400-acre wildfire.



Fire-resistant building materials and defensible space helped this northwest Wisconsin home survive a 7,500-acre wildfire.