Fire-resilient communities and an empowered public

Protecting Canadian homeowners and communities from wildfire in a changing climate

Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction
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**What does wildland/urban interface mean?**

The term *wildland/urban interface* describes any area where combustible wildland fuels are found adjacent to homes and other buildings. This may occur at the *interface*, where development and wildland fuels (vegetation) meet at a well-defined boundary, or in the *internix*, where development and wildland fuels intermingle with no clearly defined boundary.

1. The interface area is the first wave of buildings adjacent to dense wildland vegetation.
   - **Brush and trees (wildland)**
   - **Internix**
   - **Interface**

2. The internix areas show as individual homes or pockets of buildings surrounded by wildland fuels.
A Shared Responsibility

Who is responsible?

Governments
Fire Agencies
Emer-Services
Legislators
Planners
Developers
Home Owners
Insurers
Education & Communication
Partners in Protection
Who are we?

Mandate: To increase the level of inter-agency cooperation, and to promote public awareness and education aimed at reducing the risk of loss of life and property from fire in the wildland/urban interface

- Shared Responsibility
- Non Profit Association
- Equal Partnership
- Awareness
- Seven Disciplines
  - Planning & Development
  - Legislation
  - Vegetation Management
  - Emergency Planning
  - Interagency Co-operation
  - Cross Training
  - Public Education
Major Accomplishments

A User Reference Guide to the FireSmart Canada Community Recognition Program

Adapted from FireWise Communities/USA material with the assistance of the National Fire Protection Association
Today

- Membership in 8 provinces and US
- Recognition and support by Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC)
- Memorandum of Agreement with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- Recognition and support of Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR)
- Sustained funding remains the major stumbling block
MOU signed between the National Fire protection Association (NFPA) and Partners in Protection (PiP) in February of 2011.

Purpose: to provide a general framework of cooperation between NFPA and PiP concerning the delivery of wildland/urban interface (WUI) education and wildland fire risk mitigation programs in Canada

Permission to PiP to adapt select Firewise Communities/USA materials and other NFPA proprietary materials relating to the Wildland Fire Operations Division’s Firewise program for use in Canada.
Into the Future

- National Registration as PiP Canada
- National FireSmart Strategy
- Development of a new and improved website FireSmart Canada.ca
- Launch of FireSmart Canada Communities Recognition Program
FireSmart Communities Recognition Program

- Core component of FireSmart Canada Initiative
- Adapted from FireWise Communities USA
- Designed to overcome some of the jurisdictional barriers by providing community based solutions that enhance government efforts
- Goal is to deliver three Operational Training and FireSmart Workshops this year
- First will be held in Kamloops, BC
FireSmart Communities Recognition Program

- Designed to encourage local self-organized groups of neighbours to implement solutions for wildfire safety by engaging and supporting homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters and government agencies in shared efforts to protect people and property from wildfire
- Community Assessment/Plan
- FireSmart Committee
- FireSmart Day Event
- Invest min $2/capita
- Submit Application
FireSmart – Agency Evolution
FireSmart Zones

- Landscape Zone
- Community Zone
- WUI Zone
Build the FireSmart Community Plan

FireSmart Guidebook for Community Protection

Wildfire Preparedness Guide

Wildfire Mitigation Strategy
Wildfire Preparedness Guide

- Operational strategies during a wildfire event
- First priority is safety and evacuation protocols
Wildfire Mitigation Strategy

- Education
- Vegetation management
- Legislation and planning
- Development considerations
Public Awareness

FireSmart Action Items

1. Engage stakeholders to identify opportunities for distributing FireSmart information.

2. Inform residents about the FireSmart program and let them know how they can reduce the risk on their property.

- Locally meaningful messaging
- Call to action
- Open houses
- Work bees
Vegetation Management
Review and revise Municipal planning and development legislation:

- Recognize wildfire as a development constraint
- FireSmart exterior building materials in hazard areas
- Manage hazardous forest and wildland conditions
Development Options

FireSmart action items

1. Integrate FireSmart principles into the approval process for all developments located in the wildland/urban interface.

2. Align development standards with the FireSmart – Protecting Your Community from Wildfire publication and the CAPP- FireSmart Guidebook for the Oil and Gas Industry.

- Structural options
- Infrastructure options
Development Considerations
Structural Options

1. 
2. 
3. 
4.

FireSmart
Protect your home from wildfire

Government of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Recommended FireSmart Practices

PHASE 1

- Store firewood a minimum of 10 metres from any structures
- Contact your utility company if trees or branches are not clear of power lines.
- Have your address, municipal fire number or lot clearly visible for quick identification by fire services
- Ensure your roof is free of litter (twigs, needles, leaves, etc.)
- FireSmart your fire pit or burning barrel and never leave it unattended while burning.
- Have on hand basic fire fighting equipment (shovels, rakes, axes, garden hoses, sprinklers and ladders).
Recommended FireSmart Practices

PHASE 2

- Remove flammable vegetation within 10 metres of structure.
- Thin and prune (to a minimum height of 2m) all coniferous trees that fall within Zone 2 (10 -30 m).
- Clear vegetation from power lines, propane tanks and other fuel supplies.
- Ensure your chimney is up to code and has spark arrestor screens installed.
- Close in eaves, vents and soffits if exposed.
- Have a nearby pond or tank that serves as an adequate water supply.
PHASE 3

- Make sure your driveway is wide enough to support emergency vehicles.
- Provide an alternate emergency access route to and from your property.
- Clear your driveway of trees to a distance of at least 3 metres on either side.
- Enclose decks, patios and crawl spaces with fire resistant material.
- Locate propane tanks at least 10 metres from any building and clear vegetation to a distance of 3 metres around propane tank.
- Use Class A, B or C rated fire resistant roofing material and fire resistant exterior siding materials.
Wildfire Mitigation Strategy

- Emergency planning
- Interagency cooperation
- Cross-training
FireSmart action items

1. Review municipal emergency management bylaws to ensure the appropriate authorities and procedures are in place to effectively respond to wildfire.

2. Review the risk management matrix in your municipal emergency plan or municipal emergency management program to ensure wildfire is a recognized risk, and that responders are aware of their roles and responsibilities during a wildfire.

3. Develop a wildfire preparedness guide for your community.

4. Develop resource-sharing agreements with neighboring jurisdictions.

- Municipal Emergency Plan
- Wildfire Preparedness Guide
- Mutual-aid Fire Control Agreement
- Incident Command System
- Cross-training Exercises
Interagency Cooperation

FireSmart Action Items

1. Identify stakeholders in your area and develop a FireSmart committee.

2. Test your wildfire preparedness guide through a mock wildfire response exercise.

3. Work with your mutual-aid partners to deliver the following cross-training courses:
   - Fire operations in the wildland-urban interface (S-215)
   - Sprinkler deployment workshop
   - Wildfire orientation/Wildland firefighter NFPA 1051 level I
   - Incident command system 100 and 200

- Mutual-Aid & Fire Control Agreements
- Hazard and resource information exchange
- Equipment sharing
- Regular meetings
- Mock-disaster exercises
Cross-training
Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy

A Vision for an Innovative and Integrated Approach to Managing the Risks, 2005

Figure 4: Strategic objectives to facilitate the transition from the current state to the desired future state. S&T = science and technology.
National FireSmart Efforts

- Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre – Wildfire Prevention Community of Practice (CIFFC WPCoP)
  - Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR)
  - Partners in Protection Association (PIPA)
  - National Fire Protection Association / Firewise
  - Wildfire Management Agencies
Vision

Building excellence into the wildfire prevention practices of Canada’s wildfire management community through collaboration and knowledge sharing.

FireSmart Deliverables

- FireSmart Communities Workshop
- FireSmart Expansion Strategy
- Wildland Fire Canada 2012
A FireSmart Canada
The ‘Solution’

How can the Canadian home building & insurance industry be involved

- Become a FireSmart partner and help promote, educate and empower others to act FireSmart
- Invest in models and other tools to get an accurate wildfire risk assessment.
- Adopt FireSmart principles in the Fire Underwriters Survey
- Building codes that include FireSmart principles
- Provide incentives to policyholders that have taken the necessary steps to better prepare their homes and property to withstand fire.
- Support the continued partnership between the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction and the Wildland Fire Community
Questions...
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