

# HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION

**WILDFIRE MITIGATION** is the reduction of natural vegetation in the area immediately around the home to protect structures from an approaching wildfire. Wildfire mitigation can also reduce the potential of a structure fire spreading to surrounding vegetation. The Colorado Springs Fire Department recommends mitigating ten (10) feet immediately around the home and suggests thirty (30) feet, but not to extend beyond the property line.



## WILDFIRE MITIGATION SUGGESTIONS

### IMPROVE YOUR HOME'S SURVIVABILITY IN THE EVENT OF A WILDFIRE

- Remove dead, diseased and weakened trees
- Prune lower tree branches to a height no more than 1/3 the tree's height
- Remove pine needles, leaves and debris from the ground
- Keep grass and weeds mowed to a maximum height of 4 inches
- Do not use the area under decks for storage
- Store firewood at least 15' away from the house and decks
- Plan and rehearse an escape plan
- Vegetation within 10' of the structure may be removed if necessary to comply with the Fuels Management Ordinance
- No vegetation is to be removed within Preservation Areas except to comply with the Fuels Management Ordinance
- Ensure your address is clearly marked and visible from the street

## HIRING A CONTRACTOR TO MITIGATE YOUR PROPERTY

### BEFORE HIRING A CONTRACTOR

- Schedule a free, on-site consultation from the FireWise office by calling (719) 385-7281
- Become knowledgeable about wildfire mitigation. Free materials are available from the FireWise office
- View examples of healthy vegetation management on the FireWise website: <http://csfd.springsgov.com>
- Visit the FireWise Demonstration sites - call (719) 385-7281 for locations
- Refer to the City Forester's web site listing of licensed tree service providers: <http://www.springsgov.com/Page.asp?NavID=340>
- Request references

### MITIGATING WILDFIRE RISK

- Follow the wildfire mitigation suggestions listed above
- Homeowner can mitigate their risk, or hire a contractor to complete the work
- The FireWise program offers assistance to groups of homeowners in removing tree limbs and brush - call (719) 385-7281 for more information
- Site layout and walk-thru should include flagging of trees and brush to be treated to help the homeowner and/or the contractor visualize the work to be done

### AFTER WORK IS COMPLETED

- Call the FireWise office to have your home's wildfire risk reassessed
- Maintain your FireWise landscape annually

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The City of Colorado Springs Fire Department's FireWise program wants homeowners living in areas that abut natural vegetation to *Share the Responsibility* of reducing their wildfire risk. The following list includes references to wildfire mitigation and living in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). These materials can help homeowners understand what it means to share the responsibility of living in areas at risk from wildfire.

Research the information in these documents. Under each heading you will find the source of the information; contact the listed agency or the FireWise office at (719) 385-7281 with questions.

## **CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT**

FireWise - <http://csfd.springsgov.com>

## **CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Hillside Development Design Manual - <http://www.springsgov.com/Page.asp?NavID=1177>

- 📖 Wildfire Risk Management
- 📖 Removal of Native Vegetation

## **CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Code Enforcement - <http://www.springsgov.com/Page.asp?NavID=304>

- 📖 Code Definitions

## **CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES**

Forestry - <http://www.springsgov.com/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=43>

## **CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO**

City Code - <http://66.113.195.234/CO/Colorado%20Springs/index.htm>

- 📖 Chapter 7 Planning, Development and Building

## **SOME COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **WHAT CAN I DO TO MAINTAIN THE VEGETATION AROUND MY HOME? DO I NEED APPROVAL TO REMOVE VEGETATION?**

- Normal maintenance and treatment of a yard's landscape can be done without any city approvals. Vegetation within 10' of the home may be removed without city review if necessary to comply with wildfire risk management.

### **WHEN SHOULD I PRUNE MY TREES? HOW DO I DO IT?**

- The best time to prune deciduous (or hardwood) trees is when they are dormant. Certain flowering trees can be pruned right after flowering. Conifers may be pruned any time of year, but pruning during the dormant season may minimize sap and resin flow from cut branches. One important pruning rule to remember is *Don't Top Trees!*
- For large pruning jobs, hire a Certified Arborist. And, if a tree is growing in the area between the sidewalk and the street, check with the City of Colorado Springs Forestry office (385-5942) to see what regulations govern pruning in this right-of-way area.