

# FIREWISE USA®



The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Firewise USA® program teaches people how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together and take action to help make their community more firesafe.

The Oakland Firesafe Council/OCP&R is encouraging Oakland neighborhood groups to join the growing network of more than 1,500 Firewise USA® sites from across the nation by taking ownership in preparing and protecting their homes and communities against the threat of wildfire.

## Why become an NFPA Firewise USA® Site?

The number of homes destroyed and lives lost from wildfire has soared in California during the last 10 years.

The Firewise USA® program promotes steps to better protect your residence and your property and to create defensible spaces to help reduce wildfire risk and minimize the danger to you, your family and your community.

Additionally, a growing number of insurance companies are requiring that homes be better protected to maintain homeowners insurance, **and some will provide a discount if you are part of a Firewise USA® community.**

## How does our Neighborhood become a Firewise USA® Site?

**Becoming a Firewise USA® site is a straightforward process for a neighborhood group:**

1. Form a small committee or team of neighbors who will spearhead the effort. Then create a wildfire risk assessment of your area followed by an Action Plan of possible risk reduction projects.
2. Inform and educate your neighborhood group on the Firewise USA® program, its benefits to everyone, and the proposed Action Plan. Prioritize the Action Plan measures with your neighbors.
3. Over the next year (or sooner), work on the items in the Action Plan to reduce wildfire threat by investing the equivalent of one volunteer hour of effort per household, on average, per year.
4. Report your neighborhood group's efforts back to the Firewise USA® program and make plans for which items in the Action Plan to address during the following year.

**The Oakland Firesafe Council/OCP&R and a Firewise USA® representative will help you as needed during this process.**



**FIREWISE USA®**  
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

## COMPLETING THE WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

The wildfire risk assessment is a **survey that identifies areas of wildfire risk and where improvements could be made.** A fire professional will be available to help create and/or review the risk assessment document. The assessment can be completed in a variety of ways, including by walking or driving through the neighborhood. Document the conditions of homes and nearby ignition zones such as empty lots and unmaintained areas. Note specific concerns such as inadequate vent screening and debris on roofs and in gutters.

The assessment speaks to the wildfire risk of the overall neighborhood, focusing on:



- vulnerability of homes to embers, surface fire, and tree crown fire
- how well vegetation, especially near structures, is being maintained
- obvious fire hazards on individual properties
- structural characteristics such as roofing, gutters, siding, and decks
- concerns presented by common/open space areas or adjacent public lands

**The issues noted in the completed risk assessment document will be the primary tool in determining action priorities to be documented in the Action Plan, below.**

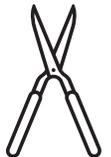
More information can be found on the NFPA Web site at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)

## CREATING THE ACTION PLAN

**There are numerous measures that homeowners and neighborhoods can then take that are documented in the Action Plan, including:**



- removing debris on roofs and in gutters
- adding 1/8" wire mesh over attic and crawl space vents
- clearing flammable debris from around homes
- reducing ladder fuels and performing general vegetation management
- maintaining common areas such as empty lots
- establishing neighborhood emergency preparedness and response plans
- helping other neighbors who may not be able to reduce their wildfire risks



Neighbors can work individually or as a group on these actions. The team then reports their efforts back to Firewise USA® and makes plans for which items to address next year. **These efforts will benefit both the individual neighbors and the entire neighborhood by helping to reduce, as much as possible, the destructive effects of a wildfire.**

Many example Action Plan measures can be found on the NFPA Web site at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)