

Arkansas Firewise Ready, Set, Go!

Your Personal Wildfire Action Guide



Arkansas Firewise Ready, Set, Go! Wildfire Action Guide

Saving Lives and Property
through Advance Planning



We are pleased to bring you this combined Arkansas Firewise and Ready, Set, Go! guide.

The Arkansas Forestry Commission Firewise program works to educate homeowners about the importance of defensible space and train and educate fire departments about how to prevent wildfires and reduce wildfire damage. As part of the NFPA's Firewise Communities Program, Arkansas Firewise encourages local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters and others in creating fire-adapted communities – places where people and property are safer from the risk of brush, grass, and forest fires.

The Ready, Set, Go! Program seeks to develop and improve the dialogue between fire departments and the residents they serve. The program helps fire departments teach individuals who live in high risk wildfire areas – and the wildland-urban interface (WUI) – how to best prepare themselves and their properties against wildfire threats. The program's tenets help residents to be Ready with preparedness understanding, to be Set with situational awareness when fire threatens, and to Go early when necessary. The RSG! Program works with existing wildfire public education efforts, like Firewise, and amplifies their wildfire safety messages to individuals.

Firewise principles can help individuals and communities accomplish the "Ready" tenet of RSG by providing the proven steps which empower individual homeowners to lower property wildfire risk and to work with their neighbors to make their communities safer.

In Arkansas many homes are built in the WUI which makes them a higher risk for fire damage and loss. Studies show that as many as 80 percent of the homes lost to wildfires could have been saved if homeowners had only followed a few simple fire-safe practices. In addition, wildfire related civilian deaths often occur because people wait too long to evacuate.



Used together, the Ready, Set, Go! and Firewise Communities programs can save lives and property.

The Arkansas Firewise Team can be reached at 501-580-9607 or

501-603-3545, or on Facebook at Arkansas Firewise.

Kevin Kilcrease, Arkansas Firewise Coordinator

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To report a wildfire, call the AFC Dispatch Center at 1-800-468-8834. To report an emergency, dial 911.

Living in the Wildland Urban Interface

Ready, Set, Go! begins with a Firewise home that firefighters can defend

Defensible Space Works!

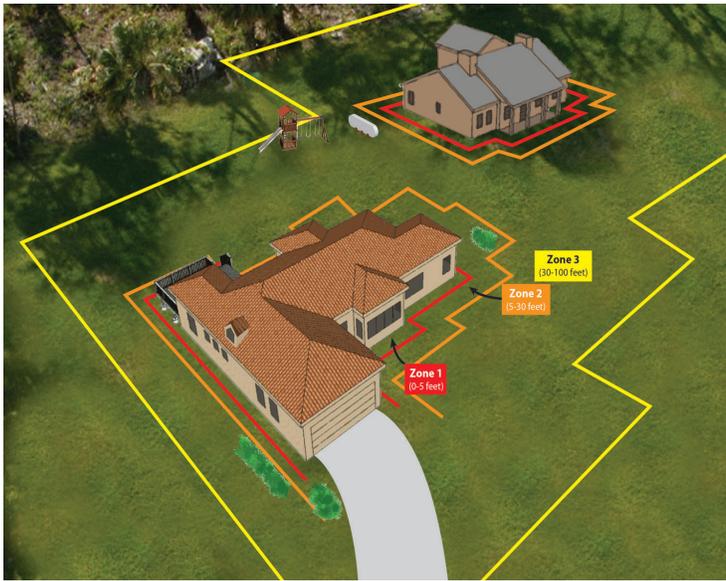
Homes near the forest or other natural areas, are in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), and need defensible space which gives firefighters space to defend them from wildfire. Defensible space is created by removing weeds and brush and managing other vegetation on the property. This reduces fuel and reduces risk from flying embers. The Arkansas Firewise education program provides guidance on how to improve defensible space around your home.



A home within one mile of a forested area, or other wildland vegetation, is in the Ember Zone and will be subjected to wind-blown embers. Wind-driven embers, also called firebrands, can threaten homes far from the actual flaming fire front. You and your home must be prepared long before a wildfire occurs.



What is Defensible Space?



Defensible space is created by managing the space between a structure and the wildland area. This creates a buffer to slow or halt the spread of wildfire to a structure. It protects the home from igniting due to direct flame or radiant heat. During a major wildfire event, firefighting resources are spread thin. By creating defensible space around your home in advance, you increase the odds of it surviving a wildfire.

ZONE ONE

The area 0-5 feet from structures, buildings and decks.

- Use hard surfaces such as concrete or noncombustible rock mulch.
- Use non-woody, low growing herbaceous vegetation.
- Do not store firewood or other combustible materials next to your home or under your attached deck. (Relocate to Zone Three)
- Remove vegetation from gutters and roofs.

ZONE TWO

The area 5-30 feet from the structure. (or to the property line)

- Create “islands” of vegetation groupings.
- Remove ladder fuels. Create separation between low level vegetation and tree branches.
- Remove leaf and needle debris and any dead and dying vegetation from the yard.
- Trim trees to 10 feet from structures and other trees.

ZONE THREE

The area 30 – 100 feet from the structure. (or to the property line)

- Create and maintain a minimum of 10 feet between the crowns of trees.
- Remove ladder fuels. Create separation between low level vegetation and tree branches.
- Remove dead trees and shrubs.
- Mow grass to four inches and water vegetation in all zones.

What is a Hardened Home?

What gives a home the best chance to survive a wildfire? Construction materials and the quality of the defensible space surrounding it. Embers from a wildfire will find the weak link in your home's fire protection scheme and gain the upper hand because of a small, overlooked or seemingly inconsequential factor. There are measures you can take to safeguard your home from wildfire. While you may not be able to accomplish all the measures listed below, each will increase your home's, and possibly your family's, safety and survival during a fire.



A hardened home is one that is prepared to withstand a wildfire. Flying embers from a wildfire can destroy homes up to a mile away. Firewise principles of lean, clean and green space make homes safer from wildfires.



ROOF

The roof is the most vulnerable part of your home because embers can land and ignite combustible materials and debris. Roof valleys, open ends of barrel tiles, rain gutters and locations where the roof intersects a wall can all be vulnerable. Remove debris from roof and gutters on a regular basis.

EAVES

Open eave construction is more vulnerable to embers and flames. "Boxed-in" or soffited eaves will provide better protection.

VENTS

Embers can enter the attic and other enclosed spaces through vents and ignite combustible materials. Vents in open-eave construction and gable end vents, are particularly vulnerable to embers. Be sure to screen all vents.

WALLS

Combustible siding and trim will be vulnerable to flames from ignited vegetation or debris. This fire can then spread vertically to the windows and eave area. A Firewise zone close to your home is particularly important if you have combustible siding.

If you live in a mobile home, install skirting made from a noncombustible material (e.g., metal or fiber-cement) around the perimeter. Provide adequate venting per the building code.

WINDOWS and DOORS

Embers can enter through open windows and through gaps at the edge doors. Plants or combustible materials stored under windows can be ignited by embers. The resulting flames can break window glass and ignite the interior contents of your home.

BALCONIES and DECKS

Embers can collect under balconies and decks, or under homes that do not have underpinning. This can ignite leaves, firewood, and other combustible materials, including the deck or home itself. Do not store combustible items under your home or deck. Shade coverings for decks should be made from noncombustible materials. Carpeted decks should be avoided.

What is a Wildfire Ready Home?

Inside: Keep working fire extinguishers on hand. Install smoke alarms on each level of your home and near bedrooms. Test them monthly and change the batteries twice a year.

Deck/Patio Cover: Use heavy timber or non-flammable construction material for decks. Enclose the underside of decks with 1/8 inch mesh to prevent embers from blowing underneath. Keep deck clear of combustible items, such as toys, baskets, and dried flower arrangements.

Address: Make sure your address is clearly visible from the road.

Roof: Clear pine needles, leaves and other debris from your roof and gutters. Prune tree branches within 10 feet of your roof. Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home because it can easily catch fire from wind-blown embers. Use a Class A fire-rated roof covering, such as composition shingles, metal or tile, when roofing or re-roofing. Block any spaces between roof decking and covering to minimize ember intrusion.

Vents: Vents on homes can be vulnerable to flying embers. Vent openings should be covered with 1/8-inch corrosion resistant metal mesh. Attic vents in eaves or cornices should be baffled or otherwise protected to prevent ember intrusion.

Windows: Radiant heat from burning vegetation or a nearby structure can cause the glass in windows to break. This allows embers to enter and start internal fires. Single-pane and large picture windows are particularly vulnerable. Install dual-paned windows with tempered glass to reduce the chance of breakage during a fire.

Driveways and Access Roads: Driveways should be designed to allow fire and emergency vehicles and equipment to reach your house. Access roads should have a minimum 10-foot clearance on either side of the traveled section of the roadway and should allow for two-way traffic. Ensure that all gate openings are wide enough to accommodate emergency equipment. Trim trees and shrubs overhanging the road to a minimum of 13 1/2 feet to allow emergency vehicles to pass.





Chimney: Cover your chimney and stovepipe outlets with a noncombustible screen of 1/4-inch wire mesh to prevent embers from escaping and starting a fire.

Prune tree branches to at least 10 feet away from the chimney.

Walls: Wood products, such as boards, panels or shingles, are common siding materials. They are combustible and should be kept in good repair. Consider installing a sprinkler system.

Fire resistant materials include brick, cement, masonry and stucco.

Home Site and Yard: Ensure you have 100 feet of defensible space (managed vegetation) around your home (or to your property line). Note that your defensible space zone may need to be enlarged in severe hazard areas. Look past your property line at common slopes, timber land, or the neighbors' yard to determine what impact those factors will have on your property during a wildland fire. Cut dry weeds and grass before noon when temperatures are cooler to reduce the chance of a spark starting a fire. Landscape with fire resistant plants that have a high moisture content and are low-growing. Water your yard. Keep woodpiles, propane tanks and combustible materials away from your home and other structures such as detached garages, barns and sheds. Ensure that trees are far away from power lines.

Eaves: Box in eaves with a noncombustible or ignition resistant material.

Gutters: Screen or cover rain gutters with a flat noncombustible device. This will minimize the accumulation of pine needles and leaves in the gutter. Clean pine needles, leaves and other debris out of gutters as needed.

Fencing: Use noncombustible fencing within 5 feet of your home. Place a metal or other noncombustible pole in between wood fencing and your house.

Garage: Have a fire extinguisher and tools such as shovels, rakes, buckets and hoes available for fire emergencies.

Install a solid door with self-closing hinges between the living area and the garage. Install weather stripping around and under door.

Store all combustibles and flammable liquids away from ignition sources.

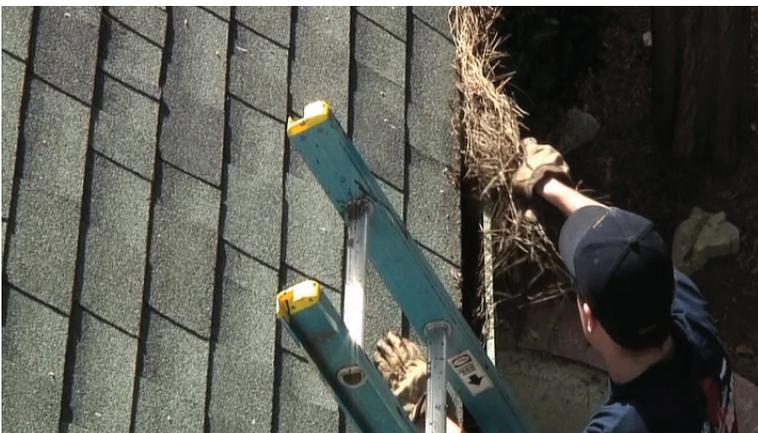
Water Supply: Have multiple garden hoses that are long enough to reach any area of your house and other structures on your property.

If you have a pool or well, consider a pump.

Arkansas Firewise Ready, Set, Go! Create Your Own Action Plan

Now that you've done everything you can to protect your home, it's time to prepare your family. Your **Wildfire Action Plan** must be prepared with all members of your household well in advance of a fire. Use these checklists to help you gain a situational awareness and to prepare. Contact Arkansas Firewise at 501-580-9607 or 501-603-3545 for more information.

Ready – Preparing for the Fire Threat



- Create a **Family Disaster Plan**, which includes where to meet and communication plans. Rehearse it regularly. Include the evacuation of large animals such as horses in your plan.
- Have fire extinguishers available and train your family to use them.
- Show your family where your gas, electric and water main shut-off controls are and how to use them.
- Plan several different evacuation routes.
- Designate an emergency meeting location outside the fire hazard area.
- Assemble an emergency supply kit as recommended by the American Red Cross. Keep an extra kit in your car. (See Emergency Supplies Section, page 10.)
- Appoint an out-of-area friend or relative as a point of contact so you can communicate with family members.
- Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers posted near your phone and in your emergency supply kit.
- Have a portable radio or scanner so you can stay updated on the fire.

HIKING AND CAMPING

- Take long pants and a long sleeve shirt made of natural fibers such as cotton or wool, or nomex.
- Have hard copy updated maps and pre-plan several potential escape routes.

Set – Situational Awareness when a Fire Starts

- Evacuate as soon as you are notified. Alert family members and neighbors.
- Dress in appropriate clothing i.e., clothing made from natural fibers, such as cotton, or wool and wear work boots. Have goggles and a dry bandana or particle mask handy.
- Ensure that you have your emergency supply kit on hand.
- Stay tuned to your TV or local radio stations for updates, or check the Arkansas Forestry Commission and County Sherriff's Facebook pages.
- Remain close to your house, drink plenty of water and keep an eye on your family and pets until you are ready to leave.

HIKING AND CAMPING

- Maintain awareness when hiking or camping during the spring and fall, the typical wildfire seasons in this state.

INSIDE CHECKLIST (if time permits)

- Close all windows and doors, leaving them unlocked.
- Remove flammable window shades and lightweight curtains. Close metal shutters.
- Move furniture away from windows and doors.
- Turn off pilot lights for gas appliances. Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off air conditioning.
- Leave your lights on to make the house visible.



OUTSIDE CHECKLIST (if time permits)

- Gather combustible items, such as patio furniture, toys and door mats, from outside the house and bring them inside.
- Turn off propane tanks and other gas at the meter.
- If you are on a municipal water system, don't leave sprinklers on or water running, this reduces water pressure.
- Leave exterior lights on.
- Back your car into the driveway and pack it to facilitate a quick departure when ready to evacuate.
- Have a ladder available.
- Cover attic and crawl space vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial covers, if time permits.
- Patrol your property and extinguish all small fires until you leave.

IF YOU ARE TRAPPED: SHELTER IN PLACE TIPS

- Shelter away from outside walls.
- Bring garden hoses inside house so fire doesn't destroy them.
- Patrol inside your home, and look in your attic for spot or smoldering fires. Extinguish them.
- Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants made of natural fibers such as cotton or wool.
- Stay hydrated.
- Ensure you can exit the home if it catches fire (remember if it's hot inside the house, it is four to five times hotter outside).
- Fill sinks and tubs for an emergency water supply.
- Place wet towels under doors to keep smoke and embers out.
- After the fire has passed, check around your house and on your roof and extinguish any small smoldering or burning fires.
- Check inside the attic for embers and evidence of smoldering fires.
- If there are fires that you cannot extinguish with a small amount of water or in a short period of time, call 9-1-1.

Go – Leave Early

By leaving early, you give your family the best chance of surviving a wildfire. You also help firefighters by keeping roads clear of congestion, enabling them to move more freely and do their job in a safer environment.

WHEN TO LEAVE

Leave early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke or road congestion. If you are advised to leave, don't hesitate!

WHERE TO GO

Evacuate to a predetermined location (it should be a low-risk area, such as a well-prepared neighbor or relative's house, a Red Cross shelter or evacuation center, motel, etc.)

HOW TO GET THERE

Have several travel routes in case one route is blocked by the fire or by emergency vehicles and equipment. Choose an escape route away from the fire.

WHAT TO TAKE

Take your emergency supply kit containing your family and pet's necessary items.



EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

The American Red Cross recommends every family have an emergency supply kit assembled. Use the checklist below to help assemble yours. For more information on emergency supplies, visit the American Red Cross Web site at www.redcross.org.

- Three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day)
- Non-perishable food for all family members and pets (three-day supply)
- First Aid kit
- Flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries
- An extra set of car keys, credit cards, cash or traveler's checks
- Sanitation supplies
- Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses
- Important family documents and contact numbers
- Map marked with evacuation routes
- Prescriptions or special medications
- Family photos and other irreplaceable items and easily carried valuables
- Personal computers (information on hard drives and disks or flash drives)
- Chargers for cell phones, laptops, etc.

HIKING AND CAMPING

- Use your planned escape routes to leave the area.
- Try to avoid areas of heavy vegetation and avoid cutting across hillsides, particularly at mid-slope.
- If the fire is very close, drop your equipment and run to safety.

Complete your Wildfire Action Guide and post it in a location where every member of your family can see it. Rehearse it with your family.

My Personal Wildfire Action Guide

During High Fire Danger days in your area, and on days when there are burn bans, monitor your local media for information and be ready to implement your plan. Hot, dry and windy conditions create the perfect environment for a wildfire. *

Important Phone Numbers:

Out-of-State Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Work: _____

School: _____

Other: _____

Evacuation Routes: _____

Where to Go: _____

Location of Emergency Supply Kit: _____

Notes: _____

*For fire danger information and burn ban information visit, www.arkfireinfo.org.





Residential Safety Checklist
 Tips To Improve Family and Property Survival During A Wildfire

Home	Yes	No
1. Does your home have a metal, composition, or tile (or other Class A) roof with capped ends and drip edge at the roof edge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are the rain gutters and roof free of leaves, needles and branches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are all vent openings screened with 1/8 inch mesh metal screen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are approved spark arrestors on chimneys?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Does the house have noncombustible or ignition resistant siding material?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are the eaves "boxed in" using noncombustible materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Are the windows double-paned?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Is the underdeck area free of combustible material?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Is all firewood at least 30 feet from the house?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Defensible Space	Yes	No
1. Has dead vegetation been removed in the recommended defensible space area? (Consider adding distance if your home is on a steep slope.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is there separation between shrubs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Have ladder fuels been removed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is there a clean and green area extending at least 30 feet from the house?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Has the 0-5 ft. noncombustible zone been developed and maintained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is there recommended separation maintained between trees and crowns?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Emergency Access	Yes	No
1. Is the home address visible from the street?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is the home address made of noncombustible materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are street signs present at every intersection leading to the house?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are street signs made of noncombustible materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is flammable vegetation within 10 feet of the driveway cleared and are overhanging obstructions removed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. If a long driveway is present, does it have a suitable turnaround area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ready, Set, Go!
www.wildlandfireRSG.org

