

# Guide to Residential Wildfire Mitigation



This guide is intended to help identify risks and take actions to protect your home against wildfires.



## What are mitigation activities?

Mitigation activities refer to actions taken to reduce or prevent the impact of hazardous events, such as wildfires, floods, and extreme heat. These actions may include measures to protect homes and infrastructure, such as installing fire-resistant roofing, clearing vegetation and debris, retrofitting vents and eaves, and implementing flood-proofing measures.

## Why are mitigation activities important?

Mitigation activities are important because they help to reduce the impact of hazardous events, protect lives and property, and save homeowners and communities money in the long term. By taking proactive steps to prevent or reduce the impact of hazardous events, communities can minimize the costs of recovery and rebuilding after an event occurs.



# Understanding the risks of wildfires

This section is to help you understand the risks of wildfires to help you prepare for potential hazardous events.

Wildfires are a common hazard in many regions of the world, including North America. With climate change affecting extreme weather conditions, wildfires have become increasingly frequent and intense, posing a significant threat to both people and property. It is crucial to take proactive measures to reduce the risk of wildfires and to make homes better protected against the impacts of future wildfire events.

Mitigation activities can include using fire-rated or fire-resistant materials when repairing or installing a roof, siding, fences, and decks, and removing materials that can catch fire within 2 metres of your home such as mulch, plants and trees.

By taking these measures, you can help protect your home and community from the devastating effects of wildfires.

## Learn more about home wildfire protection

- Learn what to do before, during and after wildfires <https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/types-of-emergencies/wildfires>
- Learn how to protect your home and property <https://firesmartcanada.ca/>

# Reducing the risk is a shared responsibility

Whether you rent or own your home, residents are responsible for managing the risks to privately owned property and personal belongings.

## Tenants

Tenants are generally responsible for reducing the risk of damage to their personal belongings. Depending on their lease arrangements with the building owner, they may also be responsible for additional maintenance. They may purchase tenant insurance to help replace damaged belongings and cover the cost of emergency accommodation. These costs are not typically covered by landlords.

## Property owners

Property owners are responsible for reducing the risk of damage to their lots, buildings and personal belongings. They may purchase home insurance, to help repair damage, replace belongings and cover the cost of emergency accommodation.



# What you can do to reduce the impact

Below is a list of recommended mitigation activities to help lessen the impact of wildfire damage. Not all the suggested activities are funded through the Red Cross Mitigation Incentive Programs, but all are listed below for your awareness.

## Annual maintenance activities

- Perform roof maintenance/repairs
- Repair windows and / or exterior doors
- Repair cracks, gaps, holes in exterior cladding/siding
- Remove debris from eavestroughs around your home
- Remove all combustible ground cover, such as mulch and plants, within 1.5 metres of the house perimeter
- Remove combustible materials (firewood, lumber and non-fire-resistant vegetation) stored within 10 metres of the home and under the decks
- Create a fire safe apartment patio or balcony: clear combustible items like dry leaves, cardboard boxes, and other flammable items
- Prune trees to create a 2-metre clearance from the ground to the lowest tree branches

## Property upgrades

- Replace existing roofing with Class A fire-rated roofing materials
- Replace combustible siding with non-combustible or ignition-resistant material
- Install/retrofit deck boards (including stair treads and railings) with fire-rated materials
- Replace exterior doors with ones that are fire-rated and thermally insulated
- Install non-combustible gutter guards

## Other mitigation activities

- Purchase of a wildfire suppression gutter or roof mounted sprinkler system
- Create a fire safe apartment patio or balcony: purchase fire-resistant furniture and / or planters. Recommended materials include metal, stone, tempered glass, and treated wood. Avoid plastic, wicker, untreated wood and foam cushions.

# Be ready

## Know the risks in your community

Taking action to protect your home from wildfire damage can reduce but not eliminate risks.

Visit our website at <https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/get-help-disaster-relief-and-recovery/wildfire-information-and-support> for additional resources and to learn more about:

- What to do before, during and after an emergency
- Emergency shelter locations and evacuation routes
- Guidance to assist those with additional needs, and more.

## Make an emergency plan

Make an emergency plan that includes emergency contacts and evacuation plans to help you be ready to deal with any emergency that comes your way. Be sure to practise your plan.

- <https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/be-ready-emergency-preparedness-and-recovery/make-an-emergency-plan>

## Build an emergency kit

Buy or make an emergency preparedness kit in case of evacuation or shelter-in-place orders with enough supplies to meet your family's needs for at least 72 hours.

- <https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/be-ready-emergency-preparedness-and-recovery/get-an-emergency-kit>
- Download emergency plan templates and emergency kit checklists by clicking here: [www.redcross.ca/ready](http://www.redcross.ca/ready)



## Acknowledgements

The information in this publication is for reference only. It should not be considered as a substitute for consulting with specialists about particular situations. It should not be assumed that all fire, floods and extreme heat recovery measures are contained in this publication; other or additional measures may be required under particular or exceptional circumstances.

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**Disclaimer:** It is important to note that no measure can eliminate the risk of damage or loss. Mitigation activities can help reduce the risk and potential impact of natural disasters, but they do not guarantee that properties will not be affected or damaged in the event of a hazard. It is important to always have a plan in place for emergencies and follow any evacuation orders issued by local authorities.