

# Quick facts & stats



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
**FireSmart**

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**FireSmart**<sup>™</sup>  
Canada



## About FireSmart BC

There are now 65 FireSmart Recognized Communities in B.C., and over 100 communities are currently involved in a FireSmart program.

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The BC FireSmart Committee was initiated by the BC Wildfire Service in May 2017.

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The BCFSC consists of members from:

- BC Wildfire Service (BCWS)
  - Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC)
  - Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)
  - Fire Chiefs' Association of BC (FCABC)
  - Emergency Management BC (EMBC)
  - Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC)
  - First Nations' Emergency Services Society of BC (FNESS)
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FireSmart is the Canadian standard recognized by all provinces and territories. It is based on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards that have evolved over the last 40 years

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FireSmart is backed by a vast amount of field, laboratory and modeling research. Its methods have been demonstrated to reduce the risk of losses, under even the most extreme fire conditions.

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## **About the FireSmart Community Recognition program**

The FireSmart Community Recognition Program is designed to encourage local, self-organized groups of neighbors to implement solutions for wildfire safety by engaging and supporting homeowners, community leaders, and others in shared efforts to protect people and property from wildfire.

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This program offers residents in a fire-prone area a unique opportunity to implement FireSmart practices specially tailored to individual and community needs.

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Upon completion of the program, neighborhoods and communities will receive “FireSmart” status from FireSmart Canada.

## FireSmart for homeowners

Wildfire prevention is a shared responsibility between the public, business, and government but the first line of defense is often the homeowner. Homeowners can help protect their properties from wildfire threats by using FireSmart principles.

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Homeowners who diligently implement the recommended FireSmart guidelines greatly increase the probability that their homes will survive a wildfire event.

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Simple measures, such as focusing of the three priority zones of FireSmart, can make a significant difference to the survivability of a home and property.

This includes:

- **Priority Zone 1a** (0 to 1.5 meters from a structure or home)
  - Removing combustible material down to the mineral soil in this zone
  
- **Priority Zone 1** (1.5 meters to 10 meters from a structure or home)
  - Avoid planting flammable plants in this zone, such as cedar, juniper, pine, tall grasses and spruce trees.
  - Keeping lawns well-watered and mowed and clearing needles from gutters.
  - Moving firewood piles, construction materials, storage sheds and other combustible structures into Priority Zone 2.
  
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## FireSmart for homeowners (cont)

Simple measures, such as focusing of the three priority zones of FireSmart, can make a significant difference to the survivability of a home and property.

This includes:

- **Priority Zone 2** (10-30 meters from a structure or home)
  - Measuring the distance between the outermost branches of trees to ensure a minimum of 3 meters between trees in this zone. Small coniferous trees that act as a “ladder” to allow fire to move into the treetops should also be removed from this zone
  - A surface fire can climb up into trees quickly. Remove branches within 2 meters from the ground in Priority Zone 2 will help stop surface fires from moving into treetops.
  - Clean up fallen branches, dry grasses and needles from the ground to eliminate the potential surface fuels in this zone as well.
- **Priority Zone 3** (30-100 meters from a structure or home)
  - Thin and prune coniferous trees to reduce excess vegetation and branches. This will help decrease the intensity and spread of a wildfire
  - Look for opportunities to create a fire break in this zone by creating space between trees.

# The Seven FireSmart Disciplines

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FireSmart principles have shown that they are effective at reducing the risk to life and property in the most extreme wildfire conditions.

There are seven disciplines that make up FireSmart; Education, Vegetation management, Legislation and planning, development considerations, interagency cooperation, emergency planning and cross training.

## The Seven FireSmart Disciplines

These disciplines make up the framework for how FireSmart works on the home, community and provincial level.



### Education

Raising awareness of wildfire risks and teaching about prevention and mitigation.



### Emergency Planning

Encouraging emergency planning by combining local knowledge with expertise in wildfire management.



### Interagency Cooperation

Promoting collaboration between agencies and across different levels of government to better support wildfire preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery.

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## The Seven FireSmart Disciplines (cont)

These disciplines make up the framework for how FireSmart works on the home, community and provincial level.



### Cross Training

Participating in cross-training opportunities like training with fire departments to improve capabilities in the Wildland Urban Interface.



### Fuels Management

Managing fuels on the landscape by using the best available science.



### Legislation and Planning

Development of policy and legislation related to: forestry management practices; integrated land use planning; compliance and enforcement programs; and legal orders.

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## The Seven FireSmart Disciplines (cont)

These disciplines make up the framework for how FireSmart works on the home, community and provincial level.



## Development Considerations

Using effective local government and land use planning that supports community wildfire resiliency and infrastructure survivability.

## Resources

- [FireSmartHomeAssesment](#)
- [How to become a FireSmart recognized community](#)
- FireSmart BC Website: <https://firesmartbc.ca/>
- FireSmart BC Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BCFireSmart>
- FireSmart BC Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/firesmartbc>
- FireSmart BC Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/firesmartbc/>
- Find your Local FireSmart Representative:  
<https://firesmartbc.ca/local-firesmart-representatives/>

## About BC Wildfires

- In 2018 over 60,000 properties received an evacuation order, while nearly 75,000 were on evacuation alert.
- In 2018 over 1.34 million hectares of land burned in BC, up from 1.21 million hectares the previous year.
- In 2018 BC experienced over 2,000 fires up from 1,250 fires in 2017 and 1,000 fires in 2016.
- By the end of June, 2018, there had already been more than 560 wildfires in British Columbia.
- BC has already experienced its first wildfires of the 2019 season.