



# Living in the Wildland/Urban Interface

## Dealing with Fire Danger

### Does your home (or dream home) have any of the following?

1. An untreated wood roof? In a wildfire, the roof is usually the first part of the home to catch fire.
2. Inadequate clearance of combustible vegetation?
3. Combustible exterior walls?
4. Is your home located on a slope?
5. Is your home in a remote location or hidden on your property?
6. Is there a lack of water sources nearby?

### Consider modifications that can help make your property defensible?

1. Building with or replacing your roofing with Class "A" fire-resistant roofing. Consider asphalt, fiberglass, concrete tile, clay tile, metal or other noncombustible roof coverings.
2. Use vegetation to your advantage - but don't clear cut! Vegetation modification does not mean clear cutting.
3. Natural wood siding can be beautiful, but why not consider safer alternatives, such as brick, stone or metal? Or are you willing to make other modifications, such as maintaining a larger defensible space to compensate?
4. Slopes increase the fire danger, both in rate and spread and intensity of the fire. Compensate by maintaining a greater amount of defensible space down slope from your home.
5. This idyllic setting is hazardous - but there are modifications that increase defensibility. Make sure that your address sign is posted for easy identification an emergency. Work with your fire department to make your home easier to defend against fire.
6. Do you have a cistern for water storage and is it available to your fire department for emergency use? Ask your fire department about how you can provide a water supply that is useable for fire fighting.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

For additional information on how to improve the defensible space around your home, contact your local fire department or the other agencies listed.

If you don't know the name of the Fire Protection District that serves your property contact the Sheriffs

Department:  
**Boulder County Sheriffs Department**  
Emergency Services Group  
303-441-3647

More Information:  
**Colorado State Forest Service**  
5625 Ute Highway  
Longmont, CO 80503-9130  
303-823-5774

**Boulder County Land Use Dept.**  
PO Box 471  
Boulder, CO 80306  
303-441-3925

**City of Boulder Fire Department**  
Wildland Fire Coordinator  
1805 33rd St.  
Boulder, CO 80301  
303-441-3350

**In case of fire or emergency call 911**

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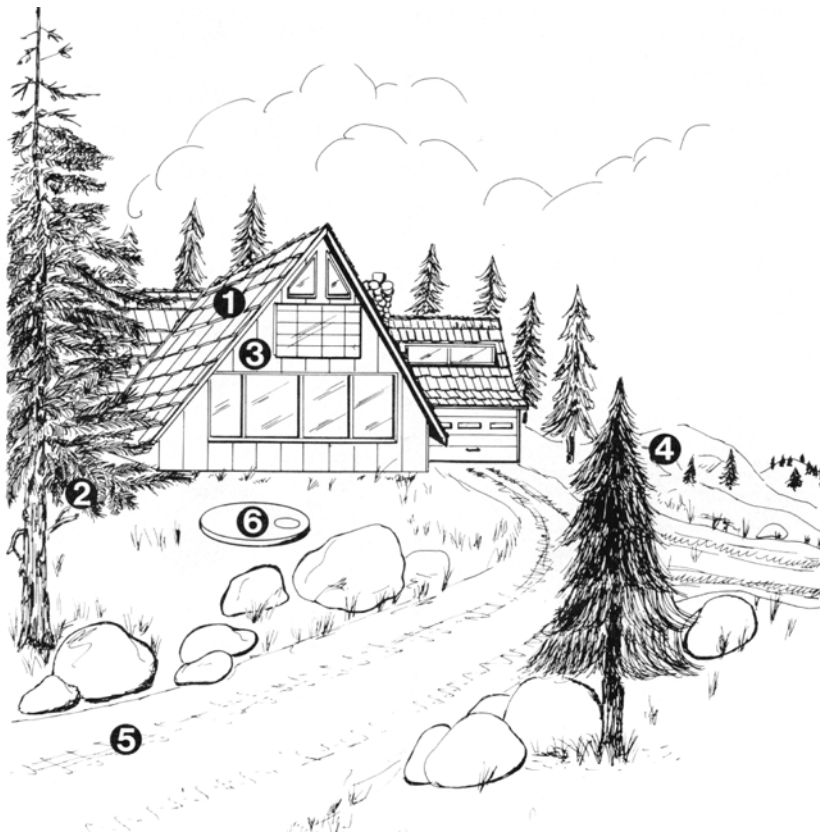
**Office Hours:**  
Monday through Friday  
8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

## 1. ROOFING

There are many modern alternatives to old-fashioned wood shingles or shakes. Overall durability, maintenance and replacement costs are worth investigation. Remember, aesthetically, you don't see your own roof. Why not consider this major fire-defensible modification? In addition, keep your rain gutters cleaned, cut back tree limbs that overhang your roof and have your chimney cleaned at least once a year.

## 2. VEGETATION

"Clearance" does not mean clear-cutting! It does mean "low-limbing" dead lower branches, clustering trees so that there are gaps in the tree branch canopies overhead and cutting "disturbed-land" grasses (those tall grasses introduced by bird seed, etc.) within 30 feet of your home. Consider wise use of fire-resistant shrubs and vegetation. Remove combustible debris from under porches, decks and crawl spaces.



## 3. COMBUSTIBLE EXTERIOR WALLS

There are attractive alternatives to wood or other combustible wall materials, but, if this is your choice, improve your defensible space to compensate. Be sure to screen off crawl spaces and open areas under decks.

## 4. SLOPE

Wildfires "run" up slopes and gullies called "chimneys." Increase the size of defensible space on your property as the steepness of slopes increase. Wood piles and other combustibles should not be located down slope from or near your home. Your fire department can point out likely "fire runs" on your property.

## 5. REMOTE LOCATION

Living in the mountains means it takes the fire department longer to get to your home and that it might be harder to find and protect. Provide "quick access" for large fire apparatus, including a wide driveway, turnarounds, fire

breaks and other defensible modifications to compensate for the remote location.

Be sure to post the address sign that is given to you after your building permit is issued. Know your assigned address so that the fire department can find you in an emergency.

## 6. LACK OF WATER

Many Boulder County fire departments have available only the amount of firefighting water that they can carry on their trucks. They depend upon neighboring departments to bring more water during major fires. The lack of available water in the mountains is a FACT! Household water is limited and is often unavailable after electrical power is lost. Consider the installation of a cistern for water storage. Consult your fire department about installation so that it is usable and make sure that they know it is available.

*Think defensible space. A designated area around your home that is intentionally maintained so as to be free of any features that would tend to increase the risk of damage from wildfire.*