

Wildfire Preparation, Planning, & Mitigation

It's Not a Matter of "If" the Next Wildfire Occurs, But "When"

Wildfire preparation, planning, and mitigation are of paramount importance for residents of Central Texas. Situated in a region prone to wildfires, Austin and its surrounding areas face the risk of devastating fire outbreaks. Adequate preparation and wildfire mitigation strategies, such as creating defensible spaces and promoting community awareness, can significantly reduce the potential loss of life, property damage, and environmental destruction caused by wildfires.

Prepare

Prepare for wildfire in your community by taking the following steps:

- Know Your Risk: Wildfire Risk is based on 5 Wildfire Hazards: Slope, Structure Density, Flame Length Potential, Rate of Spread Potential, and Proximity to the Interface. Learn your property's wildfire risk by visiting the "[What's My Wildfire Risk](#)" website and entering your home address.
- Monitor Wildfire: Monitor wildfire with the [Austin Area Wildfire Activities Map](#).
- Receive Alerts: [Sign up to receive notifications](#) from your local emergency public safety office.
- Raise Wildfire Awareness: Raise awareness in your community by joining local organizations such as the [Austin Firewise Alliance](#) and raise awareness nationally through events such as the [National Fire Protection Associations \(NFPSA\) Wildfire Community Preparedness Day](#).

Plan

In the event wildfire does occur, it is of the utmost importance that you and your family have an effective plan of action to evacuate safely. To ensure you can do so, take the following steps:

- Designate Emergency Meeting Location: Plan and practice several escape routes.
- Create a Go-Kit: Create a "Go-Kit" with essential items such as water, non-perishable food, first-aid kits, extra car keys, credit cards, maps, clothing, and other irreplaceable items.
- Leave Early: In the case of a wildfire that threatens your home or evacuation route, do not wait for evacuation advice. Leave early enough to avoid hazards.

*Check out the [City of Austin's "Ready, Set, Go!" wildfire action guide](#) for more information.

Mitigate

How fireproof is your home? You can take many steps to prepare for wildfire and lessen its impact on your home, the most significant being understanding and strengthening your Home Ignition Zone (HIZ). A home ignition zone is the immediate area surrounding a house, typically extending about 100 feet outwards. It is divided into three zones: the immediate zone, the intermediate zone, and the extended zone. Here are ways to strengthen your home at each zone:

- Immediate Zone (0-5ft): Clean roofs, gutters, and attic vents of debris. Replace/repair damaged roof tiles and window screens, install metal mesh screening on exterior home vents and box-in areas below patios, and move flammable material away from wall exteriors.
- Intermediate Zone (5-30ft): Clear all unnecessary vegetation from under propane tanks and trees, keep lawns mowed to a height of four inches, and plan tree placement for a minimum of 18 feet between crowns (treetops).
- Extended Zone (30-100ft): Clear heavy ground debris, eliminate dead plants and vegetation, and ensure proper spacing between trees. Maintain a distance of 12 feet between canopy tops for trees within 30-60 feet of the house and 6 feet between canopy tops for trees within 60-100 feet of the house.

You can request a home ignition zone evaluation with a Wildfire mitigation specialist [here](#).

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Additional Resources

You, the homeowner, can take many steps, including adequate and proactive preparation, planning, and mitigation strategies to ensure you and your loved ones can safely survive a wildfire. Though this may be a helpful guide, it is not exhaustive. Want to learn more? Engage with the following materials for a more comprehensive understanding of how to mitigate and lessen wildfire's impact on you and your community.

- The [Austin Fire Departments Wildfire Division Website](#) is a valuable portal that can assist you with the following:
 - Assess Your Risk: Enter your address at "[What's My Wildfire Risk?](#)" to see your Wildfire Risk Score based on several critical criteria;
 - Evaluate Your Home: [Request a Home Ignition Zone Evaluation](#) (HIZ) from Wildfire Mitigation Specialists;
 - Plan For Action: [The Ready, Set, Go!](#) "Your Personal Wildland Fire Action Guide" provides the tips and tools you need to prepare for a wildland fire threat. ([Click here for a version in Spanish](#))
- The [Austin-Area Wildfire Hub](#) is a portal for information sharing, cross-agency initiatives, and grass-roots coalition building to prepare our community for wildfire. It can assist you with the following:
 - Monitor Austin-Area Wildfire: [The Wildfire Situational Awareness Monitor](#) is an interactive map where you can monitor local, state, and national wildfires (Located near the top of the "Home" page).
- The [National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\) website](#) is a useful portal which can assist you with Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) Education: [Learn more about what a HIZ is](#) and how to strengthen your home.

