



NEWS RELEASE

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Tips for building in areas prone to wildfires

When the wildfires in California, Arizona and Utah are extinguished, property owners who rebuild can benefit by building to codes developed to protect lives and property where wildfires are likely. While the International Code Council does not advocate building in areas that are prone to wildfires, those who elect to do so need an advantage.

Low or no cost tips

* Create a defensible space around structures—30 to 100 feet away from the structure depending on exposure to natural vegetation areas. Approximate cost: \$0 if you do it yourself; labor costs if you hire out the job.

* Move combustible materials, such as wood piles, away from structures. \$0 if you do it yourself; labor costs if you hire out the job.

* Thin out ornamental shrubs and bushes; remove dead vegetation. \$0 if you do it yourself; labor costs if you hire out the job.

* Cut back dead or dying tree limbs, especially those that overhang the roof, and all vegetation within 10 feet of a chimney. \$0 if you do it yourself; labor costs if you hire out the job.

* Mow grass and cut back low-to-ground vegetation (ivy, vines, weeds) to three to six inches high. \$0 if you do it yourself; labor costs if you hire out the job.

* Keep 12 to 18 inches of bare ground between structures and grasses or other vegetation. \$0 if you do it yourself; labor costs if you hire out the job.

* Keep areas around the home clear so emergency vehicles have easy access. No cost.

* Ask your local building or fire department about developing a fire protection plan. No cost.

Affordable and higher cost tips

* Fire-retardant roof materials such as tile or roof coverings identified as Class A or steel.

Approximate cost over traditional roofing materials: \$2,500 (based on a two-story, 2,000 sq. ft. home).

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Urban-wildland fire safety /Add One

* Tempered or multiple pane windows to reduce heat and protect against wind and debris that can break windows and allow fire to enter the home. Approximate cost: about 20% more than non-tempered or single pane windows.

* Residential fire sprinkler systems to extinguish fire that may enter the home and prevent structural fires from spreading to the wildland. Approximate cost \$1.50 – \$2 per sq. ft. (\$3,000-\$4,000 based on a two-story, 2,000 sq. ft. home).

* Fire-resistant building materials for exterior walls or siding. Approximate cost: \$9,000 (based on a two-story, 2,000 sq. ft. home with brick veneer).

All costs are approximate, may not include labor and may vary due to local economic conditions.

The International Urban Wildland Interface Code (IUWIC), developed by the International Code Council, contains guidelines to build safer and smarter in areas prone to wildfires. Building safety and fire prevention professionals, architects, engineers and other with expertise in construction in wildfire areas contributed to the development of the code.

The International Code Council, a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties and states that adopt codes choose the International Codes developed by the International Code Council.

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EDITORS NOTE: A graphic of wildfire safety tips is available at www.iccsafe.org/wildfire.