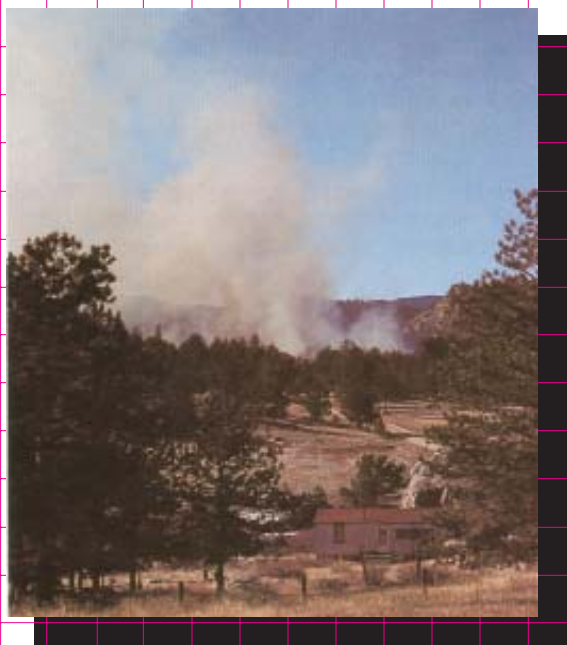


“Your home can be rebuilt,  
but how long will it take to  
replace your trees?”



## Home Fire Protection in the Wildland Urban Interface



### the landowner's role in fire prevention



## Create a defensible space around your home

**Wildfire hazards exist on most forested homesites. Many hazards can be reduced to acceptable levels by following these fire wise guidelines:**

1. Thin out continuous tree and brush cover to create a “defensible space” within  $x^{(*)}$  of your home. Adequate thinning is reached in the defensible space when the outer edge of tree crowns are **at least** 10' to 12' apart. Occasional clumps of 2 or 3 trees are permitted for natural effects if more space surrounds them. Small patches of shrubs may be left if they are separated by **at least** 10' of irrigated grass or noncombustible material. If your home is on a slope, enlarge the defensible space, especially on the downhill side. If it is located at the crest of a steep hill, thin fuels at least  $x^{(*)}$  below the crest.
2. Dispose of all limbs and branches (slash) left from thinning. Common disposal methods are 1) chipping; 2) pile and burn (**only** when snow cover is sufficient to prevent fire spread); and 3) lop and scatter (cut debris into small pieces and scatter over area to accelerate decomposition).
3. Remove dead limbs, leaves and other ground litter within the defensible space.
4. Stack firewood uphill and **at least** 15 feet from your home (**not under the deck**).
5. Maintain a greenbelt (irrigated if possible) immediately around your home using grass, flower garden or ornamental shrubbery. An

alternative is rock or other noncombustible material; avoid bark or wood chip mulch in this area.

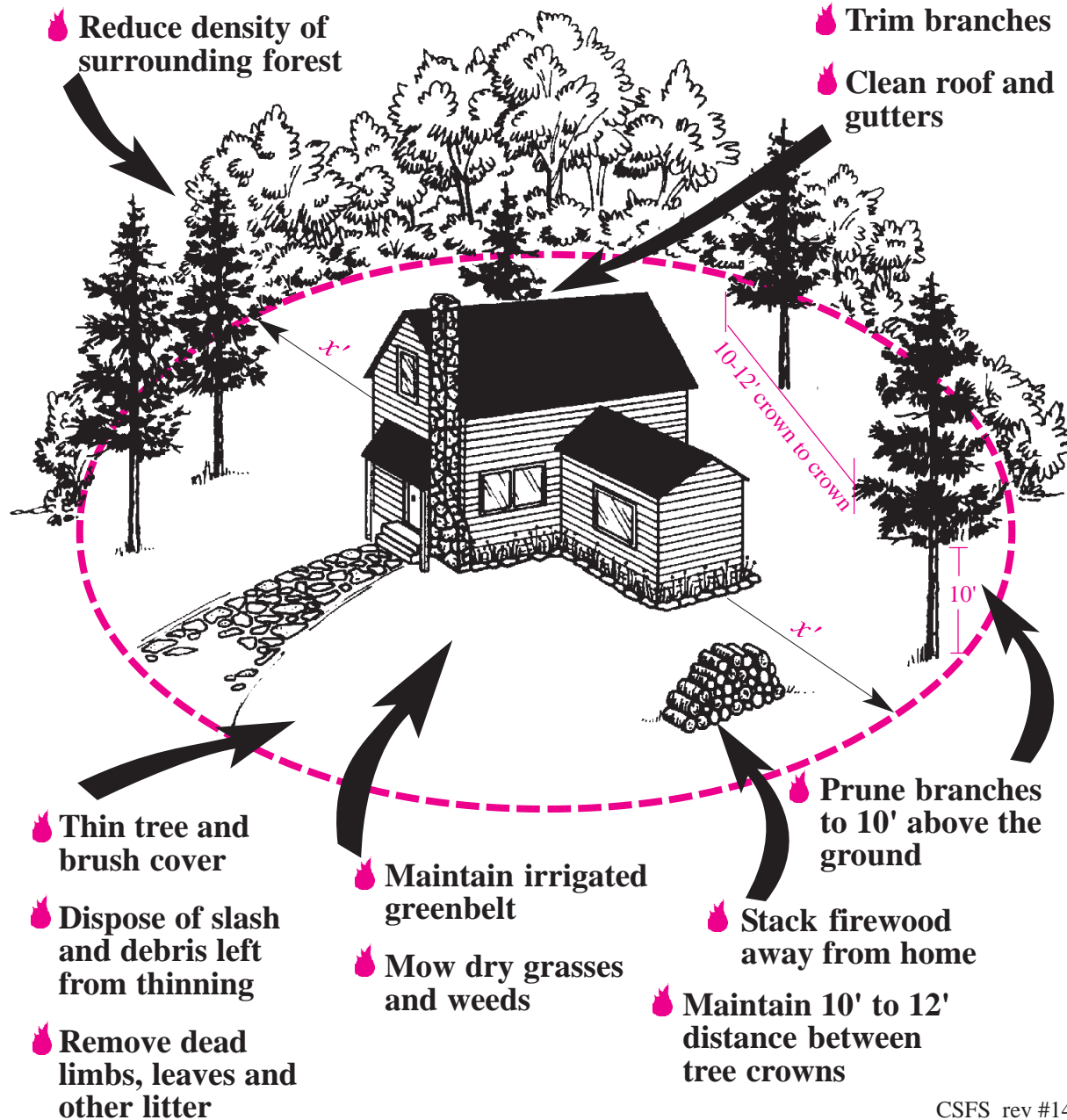
6. Mow dry grasses and weeds to a low height. If possible, keep well watered, especially during periods of high fire danger.
7. Prune branches from trees within the defensible space to a height of 10 feet above the ground. Remove shrubs, small trees or other potential “ladder” fuels from beneath large trees (left in place, ladder fuels can carry a ground fire into tree crowns).
8. Trim branches which extend over the eaves of your roof. Remove branches within 15 feet of a chimney.
9. Clean roof and gutters of pine needles and leaves to eliminate an ignition source for firebrands, especially during the hot, dry weather of the fire season.
10. Reduce density of surrounding forest at least 100 feet out from homesite (it is preferable to thin your entire lot). Thin trees so crowns do not touch each other. Whenever possible, harvest sawlogs, posts, poles, or firewood.

*(\*) Consult your local Colorado State Forest Service office to determine minimum spacing for your situation; most defensible space installations require a minimum 75' to 100'. For more information on becoming “firewise” please refer to Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Fact sheets #6.302, 6.303 and 6.304.*



## Follow these guidelines

## Firewise Practices simple steps for fuel reduction



### Homeowner Activities

- Plan and rehearse a home fire escape drill.
- Know where safety areas are within your subdivision. Meadows, rock outcrops, and wide roads are good example. Know all emergency escape routes.
- Report all fires immediately to you local fire department or the county sheriff's office.
- Inspect and clean your chimney on a regular basis.
- Equip your home with smoke detectors and at least one 10 pound ABC-class fire extinguisher.
- Dispose of leaves and debris with your trash. In most areas open burning is prohibited. If burning is allowed, provide an approved, properly screened incinerator.
- Install chimney screen or spark arrestor.
- Post house or lot number so that it is clearly visible.
- Maintain adequate driveway and turnaround space for emergency vehicle access by providing 15 vertical feet of clearance and thinning trees on each side of driveway.
- Store tools such as shovels, axes, rakes or hoes for use in case of fire.
- Enclose or screen off porch, foundation, roof, and attic openings to keep debris from accumulating underneath or firebrands from entering.
- Protect windows and sliding glass doors with nonflammable shutters and provide fire resistant drapes or blinds on the interior, especially on the side of the house that would most likely be exposed to a fire, e.g., the downhill side.

- Develop an external water supply for fire-fighting. This can be a small pond, cistern, well, swimming pool, etc. If you have a well, provide a power source for the pump motor separate from the house. Have an outside water faucet located away from you home with sufficient hose to reach all parts of your residence.
- Use noncombustible or fire resistant building materials, especially on the roof.
- Bury power and telephone lines underground. If this is not possible, keep poles clear of branches and remove fuel from around base.

### Subdivision Activities

- Form a fire protection or forestry committee to organize and oversee needed wildfire hazard reduction projects and activities.
- Install and maintain all road and street signs.
- Clear at least three feet around and above fire hydrants and make sure they are checked periodically for adequate flow and pressure.
- Install a fire danger sign at the entrance to your subdivision (ratings must be kept current on a daily basis) and other fire prevention signs throughout the subdivision.
- Reduce fuel under utility lines and around poles.
- Install fuelbreaks at strategic locations through out your subdivision.
- Thin dense stands of trees and/or brush in common ground and greenbelts.

*For assistance with layout and installation of defensible space contact your local Colorado State Forest Service office.*