



# Wildfire Prevention in North Saanich

## Wildfire Prevention

In recent years, wildfires have devastated the interior regions of British Columbia and Alberta. These wildfire events are stark reminders of the need for District of North Saanich residents, Council, and staff to work together in safeguarding our municipality from potential wildfires.

The District of North Saanich along with the Dean Park Estates Community Association, North Saanich Residents Association, and Property Responsibility on the Waterfront are deeply committed to maintaining and protecting North Saanich and our Saanich Peninsula neighbours. Since 2011, ongoing efforts have been made by the District, and the North Saanich Fire Department to address wildfire risk, including:

- Creation of the *North Saanich Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2011)*
- Distribution of wildfire prevention information and materials, including banners, brochures, booklets and signage
- Completion of over 50 FireSmart home and property assessments in 2018-2019
- Creation of the *North Saanich Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2019)* - in progress

## High & Extreme Wildfire Risk Areas in North Saanich

Based on the 2011 *District of North Saanich Community Wildfire Protection Plan*, 40% of our community lives in “high” or “extreme” wildfire risk areas. These areas include:

- John Dean Provincial Park and surrounding area
- Horth Hill
- Cloake Hill
- Ardmore
- Curteis Point

## What is FireSmart?

FireSmart is a methodology of managing for wildfire risk in our community. It is a **proactive** prevention program, which empowers individuals to share the responsibility of wildfire risk reduction with government and industry partners. We all have the ability to reduce the risk to our homes, neighbours, and community through FireSmart.

The District encourages all community members and partners to embrace FireSmart and contribute to reducing wildfire risk in North Saanich. This is especially important for residents in high and extreme wildfire risk areas.

For more information on FireSmart visit:  
[FireSmartCanada.ca](http://FireSmartCanada.ca)

## What Can Homeowners Do to Reduce Wildfire Risk?

Here are a few simple FireSmart actions that YOU can take to reduce your home’s vulnerability:

- Remove surface fuel beds (eg. bark mulch, ornamental shrubs, cedars & junipers, wood fences) and trim or eliminate large trees near the home.
- Clean gutter debris and move vulnerable outbuildings.
- Eliminate firewood piles near the home.



Compliance with FireSmart guidelines is shown to greatly increase the probability that homes can survive wildfire events. Refer to the back of this mailout for specific information on FireSmart Priority Zones and further FireSmart actions that you can take to manage your property.



**FireSmart Begins at Home!** Assess your property's priority zones for FireSmart risk and take action.

## Zone 1a (0-1.5 metres)

Zone 1A is the noncombustible zone. Reduce the chance of wind-blown embers igniting materials near your home. A noncombustible surface should extend around the entire home and any attachments, such as decks. Creating a noncombustible surface can be as easy clearing vegetation and combustible material down to mineral soil. To add to your landscape design, use noncombustible materials such as gravel, brick, or concrete in this critical area adjacent to your home. Woody shrubs, trees or tree branches should be avoided in this zone, any that are present should be properly mitigated.

## Zone 1 (1.5-10 metres)

Create a landscape that will not easily transmit fire to the home. A FireSmart yard includes making smart choices for your plants, shrubs, grass and mulch. Selecting fire-resistant plants and materials can increase the likelihood of your home surviving a wildfire. Plant a low density of fire-resistant plants and shrubs. Avoid having any woody debris, including mulch, as it provides potential places for fires to start. Storing items such as firewood piles, construction materials, patio furniture, tools and decorative pieces against or near a house is a major fire hazard. Move firewood piles, trailers/ recreational vehicles, storage sheds and other combustible structures out of this zone and into Zone 2. If unable to move, store firewood inside your mitigated garage, shed or other ember resistant structures, create a noncombustible zone underneath and for 1.5 metres around trailers/ vehicles and mitigate sheds and other structures to the same standards as those of your home.

## Zone 2 (10-30 metres)

If your property extends out to this zone, thin and prune evergreen trees to reduce hazard in this area. Within 30 metres of your home, selectively remove evergreen trees to create at least 3 metres of horizontal space between the single or grouped tree crowns and remove all branches to a height of 2 metres from the ground on the remaining evergreen trees. If possible, pruning trees up to 100 metres from your home (Zone 3) is recommended. Regularly clean up accumulations of fallen branches, dry grass and needles from on the ground to eliminate potential surface fuels. Consider seeking the guidance of a forest professional with wildland fire knowledge on appropriate management options for this zone.

## Zone 3 (30-100 metres)

Taking FireSmart actions in Zone 3 on your property will influence how a wildfire approaches your home. You can change the dynamics of wildfire behaviour by managing vegetation within this zone. Look for opportunities to create a fire break by creating space between trees and other potentially flammable vegetation. Thinning and pruning is effective here as well. These actions will help reduce the intensity of a wildfire. Consider seeking the guidance of a forest professional with wildland fire knowledge on appropriate management options for this zone.