

# HOW MY COMMUNITY IS PREPARING FOR WILDLAND FIRES



## WHAT ARE THEY?

Wildland fires are defined as any non-structure fire — other than prescribed fire — that occurs in wildlands. Wildland fires are caused by both natural phenomena, such as lightning strikes, and human activity, such as unattended or out of control brush or debris-pile fires.

## WHEN DO THEY OCCUR?

Wildland fires can occur throughout the year, but the threat is greatest during the spring fire season, normally between Feb. 15 and May 10. At any time of the year, the potential for and severity of wildland fires can be exacerbated by weather conditions such as high wind or heat, low humidity and drought.

## WHERE DO THEY OCCUR?

The Kansas City metropolitan area does not have a history of significant wildland fires. The threat of wildland fires is more prevalent in rural areas, but it is also present in urban and suburban areas where structures and other development meet or mix with undeveloped wildland. Sloping terrain exacerbates the threat of wildland fires.

## CORRESPONDING HAZARDS

Air quality may be affected by a burning fire. Local government resources may also be strained by the need to fight or clean up after wildland fires.

## DAMAGE TYPE & SEVERITY

Fuel, weather and topography work together to determine how quickly a wildland fire travels and at what intensity the fire burns. Wildland fires can last from a few minutes to several days, depending on factors such as fuel load, weather conditions and available firefighting resources. They can destroy homes, vegetation and infrastructure, and impede transportation.

## VULNERABLE AREAS

Forested areas along the transition zone between urban and undeveloped areas.

COMMUNITIES	ACTION
PC	1. Assess the wildland fire threat for specific communities and compile the results.
PC	2. Work with local fire departments, state and federal agencies to identify areas vulnerable to wildland fires and plot them on maps.
HL	3. Include maps and information from local wildland fire hazard assessments in local emergency operations and land-use plans.
PC	4. Work with fire departments/fire protection districts to inform citizens of the benefits of creating a defensible space around their homes and other structures on their property.
PC HL	5. Distribute wildland fire safety and preparedness materials, especially in rural areas.
	6. Provide homeowners in rural or urban-wildland boundary areas with information on wildland fire safety and preparedness.
PC WL	7. Partner with fire departments/fire protection districts and others to conduct public education events.
WL	8. Adopt ordinances or building-code modifications prohibiting the use of highly flammable materials in new construction.

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COMMUNITIES	ACTION
WL Pk	9. Work with homeowners associations to encourage them to modify their subdivision covenants to promote retrofitting wood-shake roofs with more fire-resistant materials.
WL	10. Consider financial incentives to encourage the use of fire resistant materials in the construction of homes or commercial structures.
WL Pk	11. Adopt the most current editions of model fire and building codes to address structural and architectural issues related to fire safety and prevention.
WL Pk	12. Review or enhance design and installation regulations to minimize structural susceptibility to fire, especially in rural or urban-wildland boundary areas.
	13. Use thinning and prescribed burning to reduce the buildup of surface litter and debris in woodlands and other natural areas.
WL HL Pk	14. Encourage the clearing of brush, debris and other vegetation as a part of routine landscaping and grounds maintenance in parks, campgrounds and publicly-owned natural areas.
	15. Provide homeowners with materials that address the benefits of clearing debris and surface litter from their property.
PC	16. Identify funding sources to increase the ability of fire departments and fire protection districts to conduct fire prevention programs; assist fire agencies with the development of grant applications.
PC	17. Conduct workshops to educate fire service personnel about the full range of state and federal assistance.
	18. Identify training opportunities and conduct courses and exercises focusing on wildland firefighting.
PC WL	19. Identify and inventory alternative water resources for fire departments and fire protection districts, map their locations, and determine methods for accessing these water resources.
Rv WL HL Pk	20. Prohibit the burning of brush and yard debris without a permit.
HL	21. Prohibit burning, use of campfires in parks and similar activities during weather conditions conducive to wildland fires.
WL HL Pk	22. Prohibit or regulate the use of fireworks.