

Fire Mitigation Tip – by Joan Paskewitz

The Pinewood Springs area is a high-hazard fire environment during summer and fall due to hot, dry and windy conditions. The "Home Ignition Zone" (HIZ) is a concept based on research into how homes catch fire due to the effects of radiant heat (for example, from an approaching wildfire). The HIZ is divided into three subdivisions:

1. The "immediate zone" within 5 feet of any exterior surface of the house. Eliminate combustible materials as completely as possible.
2. The "intermediate zone" from 5 to 30 feet from the exterior of the house. Use landscaping and hardscaping to create firebreaks that decrease the intensity of a fire.
3. The "extended zone" from 30 to 100 feet or more, depending on terrain and ground cover. Take steps to interrupt a fire's path to keep it small and on the ground.

(Source: <https://nfpa.org>)

The extended zone around a structure ranges up to 200 feet depending on slope and vegetation. The steeper the slope the more rapidly fire spreads, and dry or dead vegetation and combustible house roofing provide fuel for a fire. Small flames and embers (which can be carried over a mile by the wind) have been shown to be the main sources of ignition in a wildfire.

In the Cold Springs/Nederland Fire of July 9-12, 2016, all twenty-one homes compliant with mitigation principles survived intact, while none of the twenty structures destroyed had been subject to mitigation measures. The Wildfire Partners "Home Survival Success Stories" video states, "Home survival depends on comprehensive, effective mitigation, not luck." <https://nfpa.org>

A mitigation consultation may be requested on the Fire Protection District website <https://www.pinewoodspringsfire.org/> where there is also excellent fire mitigation information. The video "Burning Down The House" explains how flammable debris against the house can ignite and, in the absence of intervention, continue to burn until all combustible material, including the house itself, is consumed.

It is NOT PERMITTED to burn slash from April to October at elevations above 6000', which includes the Pinewood Springs and Estes Park Estates area. A burn permit from Larimer County is required from October to April, but approval must be sought and obtained from the Pinewood Springs Fire Protection District as well before commencing any burning. Go to <https://www.larimer.org/> and enter " burn permits" in the search window. See also the " Open Flame Policy" that applies to all properties within the PSFPD on the bulletin board at the mailboxes or at <https://www.pinewoodspringsfire.org/> .

Boulder County has locations for FREE drop off of limbs, slash, pinecones, and other sorted materials. See <https://www.bouldercounty.org/property-and-land/forest-health/> .

For more information see the Resident Handbook link at <https://pinewoodspringspoa.com/> or the Fire Protection District website, above.