



*Cedar Mesa
Ranches*

Reducing Risk: Tips for Fire Hazard Mitigation on Your Property

The 2020 wildfire season was catastrophic: from Oregon to California, in Arizona and especially Colorado, there was tragic loss of lives and property. While this winter's moisture is welcomed, Cedar Mesa Ranches still faces long-term drought conditions and persistent fire danger.



To reduce the risk for our entire Cedar Mesa Ranches community, every property owner needs to take steps to mitigate fire risk and improve safety in a proactive manner. The best first step of this process is to identify and address hazards on our own properties.

This information is distilled from publications from Colorado State University, Colorado State Forest Service, and other organizations. Much of Cedar Mesa Ranches consists of minimally managed undeveloped land: some have an existing home, while others plan to build a home on their property. Some basic first steps will help protect your investments in your property here.

Risk Reduction Guidelines

The goal is to reduce the opportunities for fire to burn close to your home and other structures by reducing and managing the vegetation both close to and further out from your home. This can range from pruning trees to reduce “ladder fuels” (branches and dead limbs under a tree that allow the fire to ignite the entire tree), removing dead and diseased plants and trees, mowing, or even complete tree removal.



Area Immediately Around Homes and Structures

(More detailed information can be found at this link: [Protecting Your Home From Wildfire: Creating Wildfire-Defensible Zones](https://static.colostate.edu/client-files/csfs/pdfs/FIRE2012_1_DspaceQuickGuide.pdf). (https://static.colostate.edu/client-files/csfs/pdfs/FIRE2012_1_DspaceQuickGuide.pdf)

The first 15 feet surrounding your home and other structures is also known as Zone 1. Steps in this zone will remove flammable materials adjacent to the structures. This is a good place to start.

- Plant nothing within 3 to 5 feet of the structure, especially if the building is sided with flammable material (wood, logs, etc.).
- If building siding is noncombustible, widely spaced, low growing shrubs are acceptable. Do not plant directly below windows or next to foundation vents.
- Plants in this zone require frequent maintenance: prune to maintain low growth; remove dead branches, stems and leaves.
- Do not store firewood or other combustible materials in this zone. Maintain gravel ground cover under decks, and do not use area under decks for storage.
- Ideally, remove all trees within 15 feet of all structures. If you do keep a tree, isolate the tree from others and prune to at least 3 feet above the ground. Remove any branches that reach the roof or are within 10 feet of a chimney.



Creating Defensible Space

The next 75 to 125 feet from your home and structures is also known as Zone 2. Steps taken in this area will help reduce fuel, reducing the intensity of a fire approaching your home.

- Remove dead trees in this zone.
- Thin trees and large shrubs to create at least 10 feet of space between crowns, measuring from the edge of one crown to the edge of the adjacent crown. A crown is the entire area shaded by the canopy of the tree, not the distance between trunks of trees.
- Carefully prune trees to a height of at least 3 feet, removing all “ladder” fuels from under trees and large shrubs.
- Isolated shrubs may remain if they are not under tree crowns. Prune and maintain shrubs, removing dead stems regularly.
- Mow or trim grasses as needed, keeping them at a maximum of 6 to 8 inches in height.
- Dispose of slash from your trimming and pruning by chipping or piling and burning only under appropriate conditions. Always check in with Fire Dispatch before burning: **970-565-8454**.
- Any slope on your property will require a greater spacing between crowns of trees and shrubs. Please consult the Colorado State Forest Service brochure to help calculate spacing or consult with a professional.
- Trim trees along the driveway and access to outbuildings so that firefighters have adequate clearance to access your property.

Examples of Mitigation and Hazards

These pictures demonstrate that fire mitigation is not clear cutting your property. Fire mitigation improves and preserves your property by implementing these guidelines.



Abundant fuels can help a fire build momentum and become uncontrollable. These pictures show a few examples of places where efforts such as removing dead wood and trees would help reduce fuel loads and help slow the momentum of a fire.



As a community, we plan workdays and projects to help accomplish fire mitigation on all of our properties. “Neighbors helping neighbors” is our goal to reduce or eliminate slash, forest floor fuel and generally beautify our properties and our area.



Please visit the CMR HOA website for a partial listing of companies providing mitigation in our area if you are unable to do fire mitigation on your property or are an absentee owner.

If you have used a company other than those listed on the website, please send a message to the webmaster to share your experiences and we will update the list. No matter which company you contact,

always check that company's insurance coverage as well as checking your personal homeowner's policy covering this type of work on your property. <https://www.cmrhoa.org/emergency-preparedness>

Check Your Insurance Coverage

As a final note, with the increased fire danger in the West, there is a growing concern about obtaining homeowner's/property insurance. We know of cases in CMR where some insurance companies will not issue insurance, nor renew insurance, without a physical inspection and if necessary, demanding that fire mitigation be done and signed off by an investigator before issuing a policy. We are aware of two insurance companies who are not insuring properties in our zip code. It goes without saying that without insurance, obtaining a mortgage is difficult, if not impossible.

We will also be happy to show you properties that meet current safety standards in our subdivision. If you have questions or need further information, or would like to see mitigated property, call members of the CMR Fire Safety Awareness Community.

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We look forward to hearing from you. Our objective is to make Cedar Mesa Ranches a safe place to enjoy and protect the beauty that surrounds us.

