



Project Ideas - Wildfire Community Preparedness Day 2020

Projects that reduce wildfire risk, increase preparedness and help your community become FireSmart can be accomplished by a broad range of ages; and come in a variety of time commitments ranging from an hour to an entire day or weekend. You might be asking - what you can do in one day to reduce your wildfire risk? The answer is a lot!

To help get you started, here are a few suggestions (below). With the youngest participants in mind, most can be accomplished without power tools or monetary costs.

You can invest time in your neighbourhood doing a project with family members, or organize a group to help neighbours that need assistance in getting work completed. Wildfire safety also means making others aware, and there's plenty of options for that too: set-up a table at a shopping center to distribute free wildfire education information, or start your community off in becoming a recognized through the FireSmart Canada Community Recognition Program. Make your actions speak loudly and see how personal efforts can contribute to reducing the community's wildfire risk. Enlist the help of friends, relatives or a youth organization and get something GREAT accomplished! Challenge a club, school athletic team or faith based group to develop a project too, and see who can make the largest impact.

Remember to ALWAYS ask for and receive permission from a land/homeowner before doing any type of work or activity on property that is not your own!

Before getting started, make sure everyone has reviewed the safety gear and safety tips below.

Some Project Ideas:

- Contact a Local FireSmart Representative and ask them to work with you in hosting a FireSmart Community Champion Workshop for your community; invite surrounding neighbourhoods. Visit www.firesmartcanada.ca/firesmart-communities for more information and for your Provincial/Territorial FireSmart Liaison contact information.
- Hold your neighbourhoods' first FireSmart Board meeting, or FireSmart Day as part of your steps in becoming nationally recognized through the FireSmart Canada Community Recognition Program. Visit www.firesmartcanada.ca/firesmart-communities for more information and for your Provincial/Territorial FireSmart Liaison contact information.
- Work with neighbours to perform individual FireSmart Wildfire Hazard Assessments on each of the homes in your community using the [FireSmart Wildfire Hazard Assessment System guide](#), the [Structure and Site Assessment forms](#) and the [Area Assessment forms](#).
- Rake and remove pine needles, dry leaves and combustible debris from within a minimum of 1.5 metres from the foundations and walls of neighbourhood homes. As time permits – continue up to a 10 metre distance around each home. Dispose of collected debris in appropriate trash or composting receptacles.
- Get out your measuring tape and see how close wood piles are located to the homes. If they're closer than 10 metres, they need to be relocated and moved to at least 10 metres away from structures.

- Clear leaves, pine needles and combustible debris from the roofs and gutters of neighbourhood homes.
- Sweep porches and decks clearing them of leaves, pine needles and combustible debris. Rake under decks, porches, sheds and play structures and dispose of debris.
- On mature trees, use hand pruners and loppers to remove low-hanging tree branches up to a height of 2 metres from the ground (don't remove more than 1/3 of the trees branches).
- Collect downed tree limbs and broken branches and take them to a disposal site.
- Remove items stored under decks and porches and relocate it to storage sheds, garages, or basements that are enclosed with screened vents (maximum 3mm mesh screening) to prevent ember intrusion.
- Distribute FireSmart information to neighbors, or staff a table at a grocery or hardware store (other high-traffic locations work too) and distribute free FireSmart and emergency preparedness materials. Visit www.firesmartcanada.ca/resources-library to see what resources are available and email general@firesmartcanada.ca to order resources.
- Join forces with neighbors and pool your resources to pay for a chipper service to remove slash.
- Work with local emergency management authorities to develop and practice a neighbourhood evacuation plan.
- Spend the day with neighbours building or updating 72-hour kits for each family in the neighbourhood.
- Work with neighbours to ensure that the address numbers of all homes in the neighbourhood are visible from the street.
- Help an elderly neighbor do FireSmart work to their home.
- As a neighbourhood – locate two alternate routes out of your neighborhood (besides the one normally used); and plan and practice an evacuation drill using those secondary routes.
- Work with neighbors to develop a phone/text tree that can be used to alert everyone about a fire or evacuation.
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire screening no larger than 3mm mesh to help keep embers out during a fire.
- Invite a horticulturist to review the [FireSmart Guide to Landscaping](#) with you and your neighbours and suggest which types of FireSmart plants might work best in your neighbourhood.
- Identify and remove high flammability plants (e.g. Junipers and Cedar hedges) from within 1.5 metres of neighbourhood homes.
- Hold your community's first FireSmart Board meeting, or FireSmart Day as part of your community's steps in becoming nationally recognized through the FireSmart Canada Community Recognition Program. Visit www.firesmartcanada.ca/firesmart-communities for more information and for your Provincial/Territorial FireSmart Liaison contact information.

This list is only a small sampling of potential projects. For more information on how to better prepare for your community for a wildfire, visit www.firesmartcanada.ca



Wildfire Preparedness Projects - Safety Tips and Safety Gear

Before starting a project, it's important to review the safety tips and safety gear below. Each participant needs to be familiar with the information. Always leave power equipment tasks to trained adults.

Safety Tips:

- For safety purposes, many of the projects found on the Project Ideas List are best accomplished by two or more people. It's always a good plan to work in pairs.
- Bending: Keep your feet shoulder-width apart and move your whole body as one unit; bend at your hips and knees, not at your waist.
- Lifting: If an object is too difficult to lift, ask a friend for help. Use slow smooth movements while lifting and keep your body facing the object. Twisting can hurt your back. Keep the load close to your body between your shoulders and waist – this puts less strain on back muscles.
- Moving hazardous materials: Take special caution when moving and storing any type of hazardous items (gasoline, portable propane tanks, etc.). Many products can be dangerous if handled or stored incorrectly – and can harm your health and the environment. Contact local and/or provincial/territorial authorities for more information on dealing with hazardous materials
- Hand tools: Always wear eye protection. Handle sharp-edged and pointed tools carefully with them close to your side and the points and heavy ends downward – never carry them in your pocket. Don't use tools that are loose, cracked or broken.
- **Minors should never** accept a stranger's invitation to enter their home – unless accompanied by a trusted adult or group leader.

Safety Gear:

When working with hand tools, mowing, and hauling branches, always use good safety practices including wearing the proper clothing and personal protective equipment.

- Wear trim-fitting long sleeve pants and shirts and non-slip closed-toed shoes
- Always wear eye protection/safety goggles and work gloves
- Industrial style ear plugs/ear muffs need to be worn in loud work areas

FireSmart Canada, NFPA, The Co-operators and the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction are pleased to support the 2020 Wildfire Community Preparedness Day campaign, but have not assessed or evaluated any of the community projects, activities or initiatives. Recognition of any kind in no way implies endorsement or approval of a project, its safety or effectiveness, and the supporters disclaim all liability in connection with any such project, activity or initiative.