



How to Become a Kentucky Firewise Community

Contact the Kentucky Division of Forestry

Becoming recognized as a Firewise Community/USA begins with the community itself. A community representative contacts Mike Harp, the Kentucky Firewise Coordinator by phone at 502-564-4496 or e-mail mike.harp@ky.gov.

Additionally the community can complete an on-line form on the Firewise Communities/USA website at <http://www.firewise.org>.

Site Visit

At an agreed-upon time, the Firewise Coordinator or Specialist schedules a site visit with the community representatives and local fire officials to assess risk to the community from wildland fires and to discuss the Firewise Community/USA process.

Organize a Firewise Council or Board

If the community is determined to have homes in the wildland/urban interface that are considered at risk, community representatives create a multi-discipline Firewise council or board that can include homeowners, fire professionals, local government officials, and/or members of other interested groups. Members should be informed that developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan may take several months.

Conduct Home Risk Assessments

At the organizational meeting of the Firewise Board a date is scheduled for the Firewise Coordinator or Specialist to meet with community representatives and and/or fire department personnel for training in completing the Kentucky Woodland Home Wildfire Risk Assessment form

<http://forestry.ky.gov/wildlandfiremanagement/Pages/KentuckyFirewiseProgram.aspx>
for homes in the Wildland/Urban Interface.

Develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

Upon completion of the individual home assessments, the Firewise board uses them as a basis for developing a CWPP plan that contains agreed-upon, area-specific solutions to its wildfire issues. All members of the Firewise board must concur with the final decisions (CWPP template and instructions available at <http://forestry.ky.gov/wildlandfiremanagement/Pages/KentuckyFirewiseProgram.aspx>). Their recommendations are presented to, and approved by, the Firewise Coordinator. The Coordinator may at that time, work with the community to seek project implementation funds, if necessary. Local solutions are implemented following a schedule designed by the local Firewise board and Firewise Coordinator.

Sponsor Annual Firewise Day(s)

The CWPP prepared by the Firewise Board contains specific action items that can be implemented by the homeowners with assistance from the Kentucky Division of Forestry and/or the local fire department. When they are executed, they are called "Firewise Days." A Firewise Day must be held each year in order to maintain recognition status. Firewise Days can include chipping days, public awareness events, brush cleanups, etc.

Invest a Minimum of \$2/Capita

Firewise Communities are able to quantify their concern about the wildfire issue. To this end, they are willing to invest \$2/capita in Firewise projects each year. This means that in a community of 200 residents, \$400.00 will be invested in projects named in the plan prepared by the Firewise Board. Volunteer hours, use of equipment, and time spent by fire department personnel staff can be included in this figure, as can state or federal grant dollars.

Certification as a Firewise Community

Firewise Communities/USA recognition status is achieved when the Firewise Coordinator approves the community's completed Firewise plan, and after the community has completed one Firewise project. At that time, a Board member can download the Firewise Communities/USA application form from the program's web site, www.firewise.org/usa. Upon certification by the Kentucky State Forester, the Firewise Coordinator forwards the completed application to the national Firewise program office. A special ceremony will be held in the community after certification as a Firewise Community/USA with all agencies and organizations involved in the process.

Continued Certification

A permanent Firewise task force, committee, commission or department is created that will maintain the program into the future. Recognition renewal must be completed by Dec. 31 each year. Recognized communities submit for homes in the Wildland/Urban Interface.