



# TECHNICAL UPDATE

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## WILDFIRE MITIGATION

CTSI previously distributed a Technical Update on wildfire mitigation in October 2023. This update focused on confronting the wildfire crisis, providing mitigation tips, and sharing the Marshall Fire Mitigation Assessment Team (MAT) Report released by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in June 2023. [Please click here for reference.](#)

Wildfire mitigation is crucial in Colorado to safeguard lives, property, and the environment. Counties can significantly reduce the risk and impact by implementing strategies such as creating defensible spaces, thinning forests, using fire-resistant materials, and conducting controlled burns. Wildfires pose a direct threat to human life. Mitigation efforts can significantly reduce the risk of loss of life. Effective mitigation strategies also help protect homes, infrastructure, and other valuable properties from wildfire damage. These efforts also preserve forest health, maintain biodiversity, and ensure the resilience of ecosystems against climate change.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

Wildfire suppression is highly costly and an economic burden. Mitigation can significantly reduce these costs by preventing fires from becoming large and unmanageable. By reducing the frequency and severity of wildfires, mitigation efforts lower the financial burden on state and local governments, freeing up resources for other critical needs. Protecting homes, businesses, and infrastructure from fire damage also preserves property values and ensures economic stability for communities. Mitigation also supports the tourism industry by safeguarding Colorado's scenic landscapes and recreational areas, vital to the state's economy. Overall, investing in wildfire mitigation is a strategic move for safety and environmental health and a sound economic decision promoting long-term financial resilience.

### DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Creating defensible space is essential to improving your property's chances of surviving a wildfire. Defensible space is the buffer between a building and the shrubs, grass, trees, and any wildland area surrounding it. Not only does this space slow or stop the spread of wildfire, but it can also protect your property from catching fire—either from direct flame contact or radiant heat. Defensible space is also essential for preserving the firefighters.

The spacing between vegetation is crucial to reducing the spread of wildfires and is determined by the type and size of brush and trees, as well as the slope of the land. For example, a property on a steep slope with more extensive greenery requires greater spacing between trees and shrubs than a level property that has small, sparse vegetation.



### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COUNTIES

CTSI recommends that all county facilities be assessed for fire exposure and that basic mitigation practices be deployed to help reduce loss potential. This can be accomplished by having a comprehensive Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) conducted for each community and collectively for the county. Entities like the Ember Alliance can conduct and help build a CWPP. CTSI also has a Loss Control Specialist on staff who is an NFPA Board Certified Fire Protection Specialist to assist if needed. It is also recommended that vehicle and equipment storage configurations be looked at to reduce multiple equipment losses through proper spacing and orientation to common wind patterns. For more information, contact CTSI at (303) 861-0507.

### MITIGATION MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Clear the ground of all dead plant material.
- Remove small trees that are growing between mature trees.
- Remove all vegetation around buildings like storage sheds.
- Avoid highly flammable vegetation like juniper, pine, and fir trees close to your property.
- Follow the guidelines of proper tree spacing. In areas 30-60 feet from the home, there should be 12 feet between tree canopies. Maintain 6 feet between canopy tops in areas 60-100 feet from the property.