

Firewise Patch Program

for Cadette, Senior and Ambassador, Girl Scouts



INTRODUCTION:

Firewise is a national program whose goals are to educate homeowners, community leaders, and developers about; (1) the risk of wildland/urban interface fire, (2) steps they can take to make homes safer and more likely to survive a wild land/urban interface fire. A wildland/urban interface is an area where development meets or intermingles with wild and vegetation.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

In completing this program, girls will

- ❖ Describe a wildland/urban interface area
- ❖ Learn how wildfire behaves and how it can ignite homes
- ❖ Learn three actions that people can take to protect their houses from wildfire

TO ORDER THE PATCH:

Please use the Council Patch Order Form which can be downloaded from the www.gsgcf.org website download section and mail or fax to the council headquarters.

DISCOVER:

- ❖ Using the library or the Internet, develop a five minute presentation about the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI) to provide answers to the following questions:
 1. What is the WUI?
 2. Who lives in and how fast is the WUI growing?
 3. Why do people want to live in the WUI?
 4. What makes the WUI a wildfire risk area?
- ❖ Using resources available on the internet or sections of the "Living on the Edge" CD ROM, develop a five minute presentation on the how you can make your house safer from wildfire:
 1. Entrances and exits for communities.
 2. Road surfaces.
 3. Building materials.
 4. Roof - is it flammable?
 5. Fuel-free area of three feet on all sides of the structures.
 6. Volume and condition of vegetation within 30 feet of the structure.
 7. Overhanging or adjacent branches should be 6-10 feet away from the structure.
 8. Check the baseline of the structure for vegetative buildup (needles and leaves).
 9. Are the gutters free of leaf litter and needles?
 10. What is the condition of adjacent grass?

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CONNECT:

- ❖ Visit a local firefighter or state forestry firefighter and find out:
 1. What is a wildfire cycle and what is the cycle for your community?
Have you had a wildfire there?
 2. What vegetation in your area is most flammable?
 3. How are wildfires different from house fires?
 4. How does the weather affect fire?

- ❖ Ask your local fire department or state forestry representative how your neighborhood can make itself safer from a wildfire. In your discussion include:
 1. Building materials.
 2. Landscaping.
 3. The area thirty feet out from the house.
 4. Neighbors' property.

TAKE ACTION:

- ❖ Using what you have learned about the WUI, wildfires and wildfire risk reduction use one of the wildfire risk score sheets to evaluate your home and five others in your community. After you have completed the risk assessment, develop ideas how you can reduce or eliminate the risks you discovered so that the area has a low wildfire risk. Present your findings and conclusions.

- ❖ Complete a community service project at one of our camps or at a local park/natural area. This could include helping maintain fire trails, talking with the public about firewise or helping homeowners clean up their properties.

- ❖ Complete a community awareness element to promote Firewise in your community, such as:
 1. Design and distribute a flyer using information from the CD/website.
 2. Work with camp/park officials to stage a Firewise demonstration.
 3. Work with school officials to have a Firewise day at school or distribute information to students in your class, ect.

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU COMPLETE THIS PATCH:

- ❖ Wildfire Mitigation Specialist, Florida Division of Forestry local office
- ❖ Florida Division of Forestry web site: fl-dof.com
- ❖ Firewise Communities USA web site: firewise.org
- ❖ Living on the Edge CD ROM ❖
- ❖ Fire Prevention CD ❖
- ❖ Your parents
- ❖ Local Fire Department
- ❖ Wildfire Hazard Assessment Guide for Florida ❖
- ❖ NFPA Hazard Assessment Guide ◇
- ❖ Video: "Why Homes Burn" ◇
- ❖ Video: "Wildfire, Preventing Home Ignitions" ◇

- ◇ Resources available through Firewise.org or your local state forestry office
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