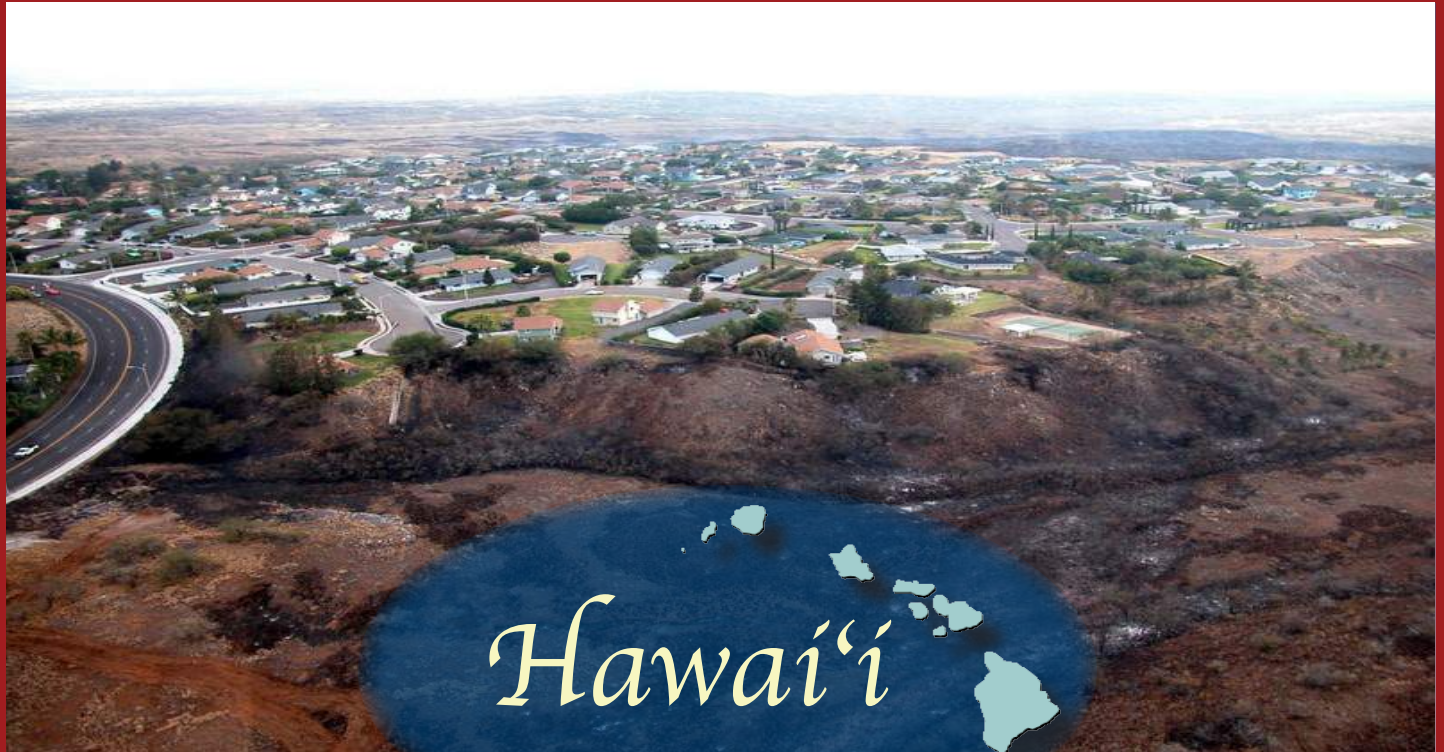


READY, SET, GO!

YOUR PERSONAL WILDLAND FIRE ACTION GUIDE

Rev. 2021



This guide was developed by Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization, in partnership with:



READY, SET, GO!

Wildland Fire Action Guide

Saving Lives and Property
Through Advanced Planning



The fire season is now a year-round reality in many areas across the Hawaiian Islands, requiring firefighters and residents to be on heightened alert for the threat of wildland fire.

Each year, wildland fires consume hundreds of homes across the nation in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), and Hawaii is at a similar risk. Studies show that as many as 80 percent of the homes lost to wildland fires could have been saved if their owners had only followed a few simple fire-safe practices. In addition, wildland fire related deaths occur because people wait too long to leave their home.

In the event of a wildland fire, our first responders take every precaution to help protect you and your property. However, the reality is that in a major wildland fire event, there will simply not be enough fire resources or firefighters to defend every home.

Successfully preparing for a wildland fire enables you to proactively take personal responsibility for protecting yourself, your family and your property. In this Action Guide, we hope to provide the tips and tools you need to prepare for a wildland fire threat (Ready), have situational awareness when a fire starts (Set), and to act early (Go!).

The Ready, Set, Go! Program works in complimentary and collaborative fashion with the Firewise USA® program and other existing wildland fire public education efforts. Utilizing firefighters and local wildland fire prevention expertise, it amplifies their messages to individuals to better achieve the common goal of wildland fire preparedness.

Many residents have built homes and landscaped without fully understanding the impact a fire can have on them and few have adequately prepared their families for a quick evacuation.

It's not a question of **if** but **when** the next major wildland fire will occur. Through advanced planning, understanding and preparation, we can all be partners in the wildland fire solution. We hope you find the tips in the following pages helpful in creating heightened awareness and a more fire-safe environment for you, your family and firefighters.

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Living in the Wildland Urban Interface and the Ember Zone

Ready, Set, Go! Begins with a House That Firefighters Can Defend

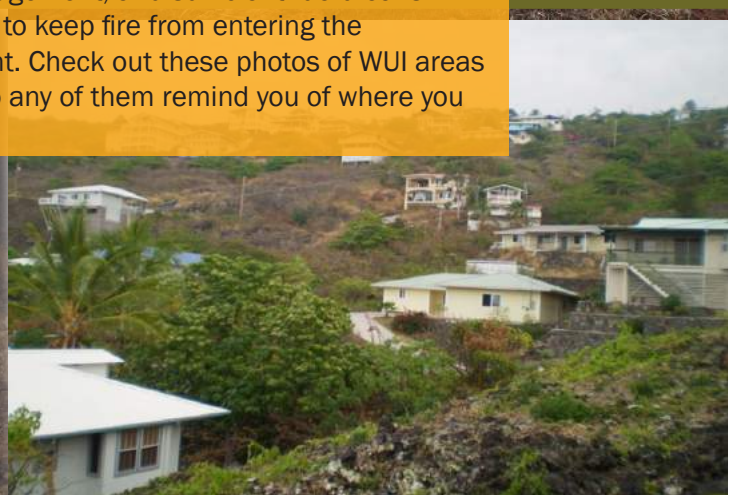
Defensible Space Works!

If you live next to a natural area, the Wildland Urban Interface, you should provide firefighters with the defensible space they need to protect your home. The buffer zone you create by removing weeds, brush and other vegetation helps keep the fire away from your home and reduces the risk from flying embers. Firewise Communities and other wildland fire preparedness education programs provide valuable guidance on property enhancements.



Consider This

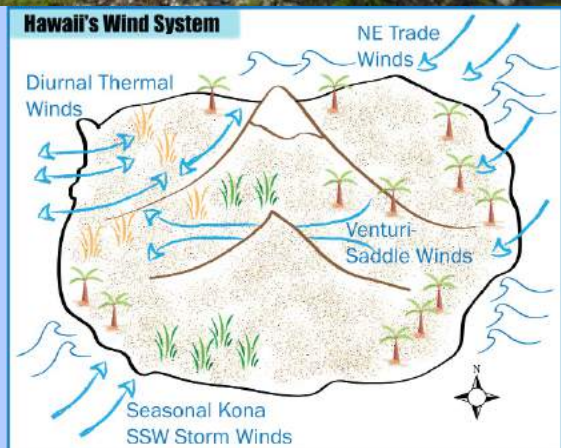
Unmanaged vegetation between and around homes increases the risk of wildland fire spreading throughout the community, endangering lives and property. Pre-fire planning, fuels management, and sufficient fuelbreaks allow firefighters the space they need to keep fire from entering the community during a wildland fire event. Check out these photos of WUI areas from different parts of the islands. Do any of them remind you of where you and your family live?



Not Only the Homes on the Wildland Boundary are at Risk

A home within one mile of a natural area is in the Ember Zone. Wind-driven embers can attack your home. You and your home must be prepared well before a fire occurs. Ember fires can destroy homes or neighborhoods far from the actual flame front of the wildland fire. These threats are amplified in Hawaii due to the culmination of thermal, saddle, storm, and trade winds that create a complex system of strong, erratic winds (see diagram on right).

Fire is wind-driven. Know your wind-related risks.



Hawaii's Growing Wildland Fire Problem

And Why We Should Be Concerned

Traditionally, Hawaii ecosystems existed with a very limited presence of wildland fire. However, as climate conditions and land uses have changed over recent time, non-native, fire-adapted vegetation have rapidly spread through our wildland landscapes and toward community boundaries. In addition, communities are expanding further into fire-prone areas, increasing the risk of wildland fires that threaten natural resources, including native habitats, and people's lives and homes.

Impacts on Natural Resources



Invasive vegetation such as guinea and fountain grass spread easily and rapidly.



These plants also ignite easily. After the fire, they re-sprout and out-compete native plants, spreading over a larger area than before.



All it takes is another spark and the same area will burn hotter, more intensely, and over a larger area than before. This creates a vicious fire cycle.

Wildland fire, fueled by the build-up of dry vegetation and driven by a complex system of hot dry winds, are extremely difficult, expensive, and dangerous to control. Hawaii's wide diversity of challenging terrains add to the challenge for firefighters.



Did You Know?

26% of the state land cover is nonnative grassland. These grasses are fire-prone and spread more and more with each fire.

Mauka Fires Affect Makai Health and Safety



Large fires destroy vegetation that help hold down soil. Heavy winds can lift the soil and create dust storms that impact air quality and human health.



In addition, Hawaii's high-intensity rain events can sweep away soil through erosion, runoff and landslides.



Rivers and streams carry the debris and sediment into the ocean polluting coral reefs and negatively affecting sea life. This adversely affects commerce such as fishing and marine/coastal-based tourism.

Impacts on People & Communities

Towns and cities expanding outwardly into formerly undeveloped areas...

and large areas of fallow, invasive, or un-managed vegetation...

and a steady increase in human ignition sources via human error and intention...



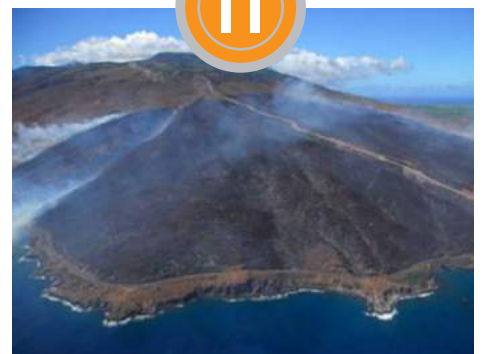
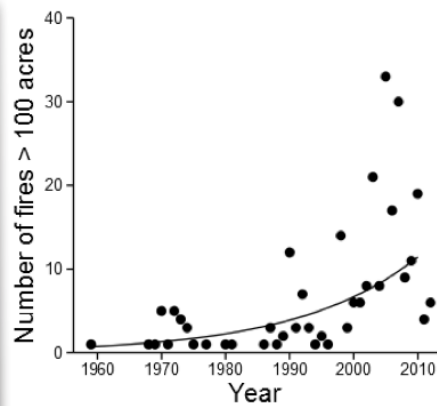
Did You Know?

Hawaii experiences more than 1,000 wildfires per year, burning an average of 20,000- 40,000 acres each year.

On average, every island has at least one 1,000 acre fire every year.

Wildfires in Hawaii are increasing in size, frequency, and impacts.

Every island and every area (windward, leeward, mauka, makai) can be at risk under the right conditions, mainly during periods of dry weather and high winds.

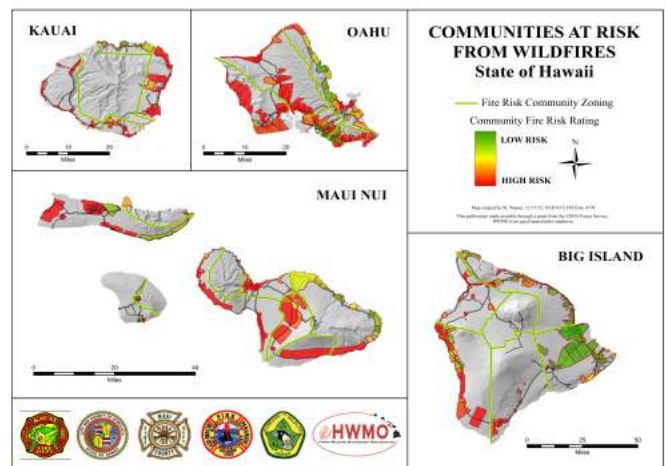


...are increasing the size, frequency, and intensity of fires across all of the islands on both wet and dry sides.

Future Outlook

Climate change is increasing the length and frequency of drought periods, creating drier conditions. Scientists predict these trends will continue and even worsen, which will result in larger fires that are more severe and intense. As more areas become drier, they will become more prone to wildfire. If your area is currently low risk in the map below, it likely is still at risk during very dry periods. Under certain conditions, such as dry periods and heavy winds, anywhere can burn, and we are seeing that occur. As a result, it's best if you take action now, rather than later, when it may be too late.

The Communities at Risk from Wildfires Map (on right) was the result of an effort that looked at 36 hazard characteristics that contribute to wildfire risk for neighborhoods and communities (gray areas were NOT assessed). Many of Hawaii's communities are at moderate to high risk of wildfire for reasons ranging from climate to lack of water to lack of community awareness and action. Many of the challenges are ones we can address with collaborative action.



How You Can Make a Difference

We need to create **resilient landscapes and communities** across Hawaii. You can play a significant role by increasing resilience in and around your own home and preparing your family for a potential wildland fire event. Use the following pages as a guideline.

What is Defensible Space?



Defensible space is the required space between structures and the wildland area that, under normal conditions, creates a sufficient buffer to slow or halt the spread of wildfire to a structure. It protects the home from igniting due to direct flame or radiant heat. Defensible space is essential for structure survivability during wildland fire conditions. For more information about defensible space zones and preparedness techniques within each, visit the Firewise USA® website, www.firewise.org.

ZONE ONE

Zone One extends 30 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

- Remove all dead or dying vegetation.
- Remove “**ladder fuels**” (low-level vegetation that allows the fire to spread from the ground to the tree canopy). Create at least 6 feet of separation between low-level vegetation and tree branches. This can be done by reducing the height of low-level vegetation and/or trimming low tree branches.
- Create “fire-free” area within 5 feet of home, using non-flammable landscaping materials and/or high-moisture content, drought-resistant vegetation.
- Trim tree canopies regularly to keep their branches a minimum of 10 feet from structures and other trees.
- Remove leaf litter (dry leaves/pine needles) from yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Relocate woodpiles or other combustible materials into Zone Two.
- Remove combustible material and vegetation from around and under decks, lanai, or the entire house if foundation is post-and-pier.
- Remove or prune vegetation near windows.



ZONE TWO *

Zone Two extends 30 to 100 feet out from buildings, structures and decks. You can minimize the chance of fire jumping from plant to plant by removing dead material and removing and/or thinning vegetation. The minimum spacing between vegetation is three times the dimension of the plant.

- Remove “ladder fuels.”
 - Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
 - Trim tree canopies regularly to keep their branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees/cluster of trees.
- * For larger properties, consider areas outside of Zone Two as a third zone to address. Continue reducing ladder fuels, managing fuels, hardening structures, and properly storing combustible materials.