
**SUGGESTED
FOREST FIRE
SAFETY
GUIDELINES
FOR
WOODLAND
DEVELOPERS**





Firesafe in the Interface

GOAL:

To develop forest fire protection guidelines for Alabama woodland developments.

WHY ARE WOODLAND DEVELOPMENTS AT RISK?

A home in the woods is a home surrounded by forest fire fuels and in real danger if a wildfire is on the loose.

Areas where homes meet the forest are called the WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE. You can help minimize the fire threat to woodland homes by providing for basic emergency access, by using fire resistant building materials and by creating an environment that is more easily defended from forest fires.

WHAT WILL THE ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION DO FOR YOU?-

1. Determine a FOREST FIRE HAZARD RATING of your site, based on the slope, the type of forest fuels, the proposed type of building, materials, the proposed layout and water availability.

2. The WILDLAND/UNRBAN INTERFACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE is ready to review all new development plans and comment as needed on forest fire protection. Members include representatives from forestry, fire protection, planning, insurance, home owners and other related organizations'and agencies.

3. Develop a PRE-FIRE RESPONSE PLAN for the completed development, in cooperation with the appropriate fire department.

4. Provide technical assistance for DRY HYDRANT design and construction.



SUGGESTED FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINES

TRANSPORTATION AND EVACUATION

GOALS:

1. To make sure that emergency vehicles can easily maneuver, and turn around on development roads.
2. To avoid traffic jams of emergency vehicles arriving on the scene and residents who are leaving during an emergency evacuation.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES:

- ◆ Provide adequate access and roads, by using state road specifications.
- ◆ Provide more than one way into and out of the development.
- ◆ Provide for two-way traffic flow; avoid one-way roads.
- ◆ Avoid dead-end roads and cul-de-sacs; but, if they are planned, provide adequate room for emergency vehicles to turn around.

WATER RESOURCES

GOAL:

1. To make sure there is adequate water available for fighting fires.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES:

- ◆ Plan to have fire hydrants.
Provide adequate access to and identification for all hydrant locations.
- ◆ If your development is not serviced by a municipal water system, consider developing alternate natural and manmade water sources, such as streams, lakes, ponds and swimming pools.
- ◆ Consider using dry hydrants. A dry hydrant is a device connected to a natural or man-made water source that is used by rural fire service to draft water with minimum difficulty. Specifications and design assistance can be obtained from the Alabama Forestry Commission.
- ◆ Consider installing interior home sprinkler systems.

HOMES

GOALS:

1. To reduce the flammability of woodland homes.
2. To reduce the volume and density of flammable vegetation.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES:

- ◆ Choose a level area for each house, set back from steep slopes. Homes overhanging steep slopes are more vulnerable because fire travels uphill faster than on level areas.
- ◆ Use fire resistant building materials for the roof and the siding. The roof 'is the most'vulnerable part of the house.
 - ◆ Avoid wooden shake or shingle roofs!
 - ◆ Use roof coverings and siding with a class A or B fire-resistant or noncombustible rating.
- ◆ Look at structural features of the home.
 - ◆ Avoid wooden decks overhanging steep slopes and flammable vegetation. They are very vulnerable to fire.
 - ◆ Enclose the underside of decks and structures with one-hour fire-resistant material.
 - ◆ Enclose overhangs.
 - ◆ Avoid large windows facing steep slopes with heavy vegetation.
 - ◆ Install spark arresters on all chimneys .
 - ◆ Screen vents with 1/4" wire mesh.
 - ◆ Use underground power lines..

- ◆ Space houses to allow residents to develop a 30'-100' fire-safe zone. (defensible space) around their houses.
- ◆ Provide room for a defensible space on all sides of each structure.
- ◆ The most critical area is 5' from the house. Leave this area clean and clear. Do not plant flammable evergreen shrubs and trees such as juniper, cedar and pines.
- ◆ Flammable vegetation and leaves should be removed and thinned at least 30' from the house, and up to 100' on the downhill side.
- ◆ Remove limbs overhanging or within 10' of roofs and chimneys.
- ◆ Leave yard trees and shrubs no closer than 15' apart.
- ◆ Prune tree branches 15' up from ground level.
- ◆ Establish lawns at least 30' whenever possible.

For more information, contact your local office of the Alabama Forestry Commission. The number is listed on the inside cover of your telephone book or in the blue pages under state government. An office is located in every county..

