

Colorado Jurisdictions Must Adopt a Fire Resiliency Code by the End of This Month

Colorado is implementing a statewide initiative to strengthen wildfire preparedness in accordance with the 2025 Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code (CWRC) last July.

Created by the state's Wildfire Resiliency Code Board under Senate Bill 23-166, the CWRC establishes mandatory construction and landscaping standards for homes and structures that are located in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) — areas where development meets flammable vegetation and wildfire risk is highest.

The code applies to new builds, significant remodels, and certain roofing projects, marking a shift toward more uniform and pro-active wildfire-mitigation practices across the state.

A central feature of the CWRC is its reliance on fire-intensity zones, which local jurisdictions must map and assign to individual properties. These zones determine the level of fire-resistant construction required. At the baseline, all affected

structures must incorporate Class A fire-rated roofing, noncombustible gutters and siding, and ember-resistant vents for attics and crawl spaces. These components are designed to prevent wind-driven embers — responsible for most home ignitions — from entering or accumulating on vulnerable surfaces.

In higher-risk zones, the code mandates additional hardening measures. Builders must install tempered or fire-rated windows, enclose eaves and soffits to block ember intrusion, and ensure garage doors are tightly sealed with gaps no larger than 1/8 inch.

Decks must be constructed from ignition-resistant or noncombustible materials, reducing the likelihood that embers can ignite structures to which they are attached. Landscaping requirements are equally important: new plantings must follow defensible-space principles, including the removal of combustible materials within 5 feet of a structure — an area widely recognized as critical for prevent-

ing home loss.

Although some communities, such as Colorado Springs, already enforce their own WUI codes, the CWRC requires *every jurisdiction statewide* to adopt a code that meets or exceeds these standards by April 1, 2026. Local governments may choose to go beyond the state minimum, but they cannot fall below it. Enforcement will begin on each jurisdiction's timeline after adoption, giving builders, homeowners, and officials time to adjust.

Overall, the CWRC represents a significant

evolution in Colorado's approach to wildfire resilience. As wildfire seasons grow longer and more destructive, the state is moving from voluntary guidelines and inconsistent local rules to a unified, mandatory framework.

For property owners and builders, the code signals a new era in which fire-resistant design is no longer optional but an essential component of responsible development in high-risk landscapes. It was largely a response to the Dec. 30, 2021, Marshall fire.

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By JIM SMITH
Realtor®

KB Is First Builder of Fire-Resilient Neighborhoods

As wildfires intensify across the American West, the question of how to build homes that can withstand a more volatile climate has become urgent. State regulators have tightened building codes, and many homeowners have invested heavily in retrofits to harden their properties. But one national builder is testing a more ambitious idea: designing entire neighborhoods to resist wildfire from the start.

KB Home, one of the country's largest homebuilders, is emerging as the first major developer to construct communities engineered specifically for wildfire resilience — a shift that could reshape how housing is built in high-risk regions.

According to an article on Bloomberg news service by Linda Poon, the company's newest project, Stone Canyon in Cameron Park outside Sacramento, is the first "Wildfire Prepared Neighborhood" in Northern California. Developed in partnership with the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS), the community is designed so that every home meets the organization's most rigorous fire-protection standards. Only one other neighborhood in the United States — also built by KB Home, in San Diego County — has earned the same designation.

The logic behind this approach is straightforward: wildfire risk is collective. A single vulnerable home can undermine an entire block, no matter how well-protected its neighbors may be. As IBHS CEO Roy Wright notes, "You can do your home perfectly, but if your neighbor didn't, you still have a fire risk." By standardizing fire-resistant construction across an entire development, KB Home aims to create shared resilience that individual homeowners can-

not achieve alone.

Stone Canyon's design reflects that philosophy. The homes feature concrete tile roofs, double-paned tempered windows, non-combustible siding, ember-resistant vents, and metal fencing. Each property includes a mandatory five-foot non-combustible zone around the structure — a buffer that research shows dramatically reduces ignition risk.

Even the landscaping is tightly controlled. Instead of dense shrubs and trees pressed against the home, vegetation is sparse, strategically placed, and kept away from buildings. Homeowners can still personalize their yards, but only within guidelines that prioritize safety over lush aesthetics.

The result is a neighborhood that looks noticeably different from the tree-lined streets across the road. It's a visual reminder of the tradeoffs required to live safely in a warming world. But developers emphasize that the goal isn't to eliminate greenery. It's to ensure that trees and plants don't become fuel.

As Steve Ruffner, a regional president for KB Home, puts it, "This is not about removing the tree canopy; it is about ensuring that those trees are not on top of the house."

No one claims these communities are fireproof, but experts say they represent an important evolution in how planners and builders approach risk in the wildland-urban interface — the zone where development meets flammable vegetation.

If KB Home's experiment proves successful, it could signal a new era in Western homebuilding: one where resilience is not an upgrade, but the foundation of community design.

Lakewood Townhome Just Listed by David Dlugasch

Welcome to this move-in ready, stunning townhome at **3225 S. Garrison Street** in the quiet and desirable Jefferson Green subdivision. This beautifully maintained home features bamboo hardwood flooring on the main level and a cozy wood-burning fireplace, creating a warm and inviting living space. The kitchen is well-appointed with stainless steel appliances, a new induction range, an LG refrigerator, washer and dryer, along with a half bath on the main level. Upstairs, the primary bedroom offers a spacious walk-in closet, and the fully remodeled bathroom showcases a sleek glass-enclosed walk-in tiled shower. Parking is easy with one space in a shared two-car garage with a storage area, plus a reserved parking space in the outdoor lot. The HOA covers seasonal pool, water, exterior insurance including the roof, snow removal, trash, and landscaping. If you are ready to move in, this home is ready for you! Find more photos and David's narrated video walk-through at www.GRElistings.com. **Open House Sunday, Mar. 22, 11am to 1pm**, or call David at **303-908-4835** for a private showing.



\$315,000

Coming Soon: Extraordinary Northglenn Townhome



\$550,000

So many upgrades in this 3-bedroom/3-bath unit at **11246 Osage Circle #F** -- new Pella windows throughout, 2021 Lenox furnace with A/C, separate Lenox heat pump, smart thermostat, new hot water heater, upgraded light switches and outlets, new 60" horizontal electric fireplace (gas available), whole house steam humidifier, remodeled primary bathroom with cultured marble shower and counters with double sinks, Kohler smart toilet, added insulation in attic, finished garage with a 240V outlet for EV and a Pro Slat wall for storage, and more upgrades listed online! This is an end unit, with lots of private open space right outside your door. Enjoy the outdoor pool and hot tub/spa, clubhouse, basketball and tennis courts, gazebo for picnics, and playground. It's located just minutes from I-25, Orchard Mall, Outlets, RTD park-and-ride, and light rail. Showings begin on Wednesday, Mar. 25. Meanwhile, view a narrated walk-through at www.GRElistings.com, then come to the open house next **Sunday, Mar. 29th, from 11am to 2pm**. It's move-in ready for you. **Note:** The patio is pre-wired for a hot tub — the only unit in the subdivision with this feature.

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