COMMUNITY FIRE RESILIENCE

Activity Book for Children

2025

Acknowledgements

This handbook is part of a PICS-funded project, **Building Climate Resilience in Rural & Remote Communities.** The project is centred around collaborations that bridge climate strategies and policies in British Columbia with Indigenous and community-driven expertise. It focuses on low-carbon resilience in housing, technical systems, and community planning.

As a step towards Indigenous self- governance, the First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Council (FNHIC) delivers housing and infrastructure programs for First Nations in British Columbia. They provide comprehensive services that promote self-determination, organizational growth, and transformation, ensuring that no First Nation is left behind.

The project team would like to thank the following people for their guidance and support in completing this project:

- The many attendees of our webinar series and focus groups, who saw this project come into reality and offered feedback along the way.
- **Gil Davies**, West Moberly First Nations building manager, and West Moberly Chief and Council, who contributed so thoroughly through their comments, advice, and consistent participation in our workshops.
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- **Patrick Michell** (Nlaka'pamux Nation Elder; Rebuild Director for Lytton First Nation) for his willingness to share his support, guidance, and knowledge.

The Fire Resilient Communities Handbook would not be the tool that it is today without the contributions, kindness, and expertise of those who collaborated and contributed to this project. Thank you.

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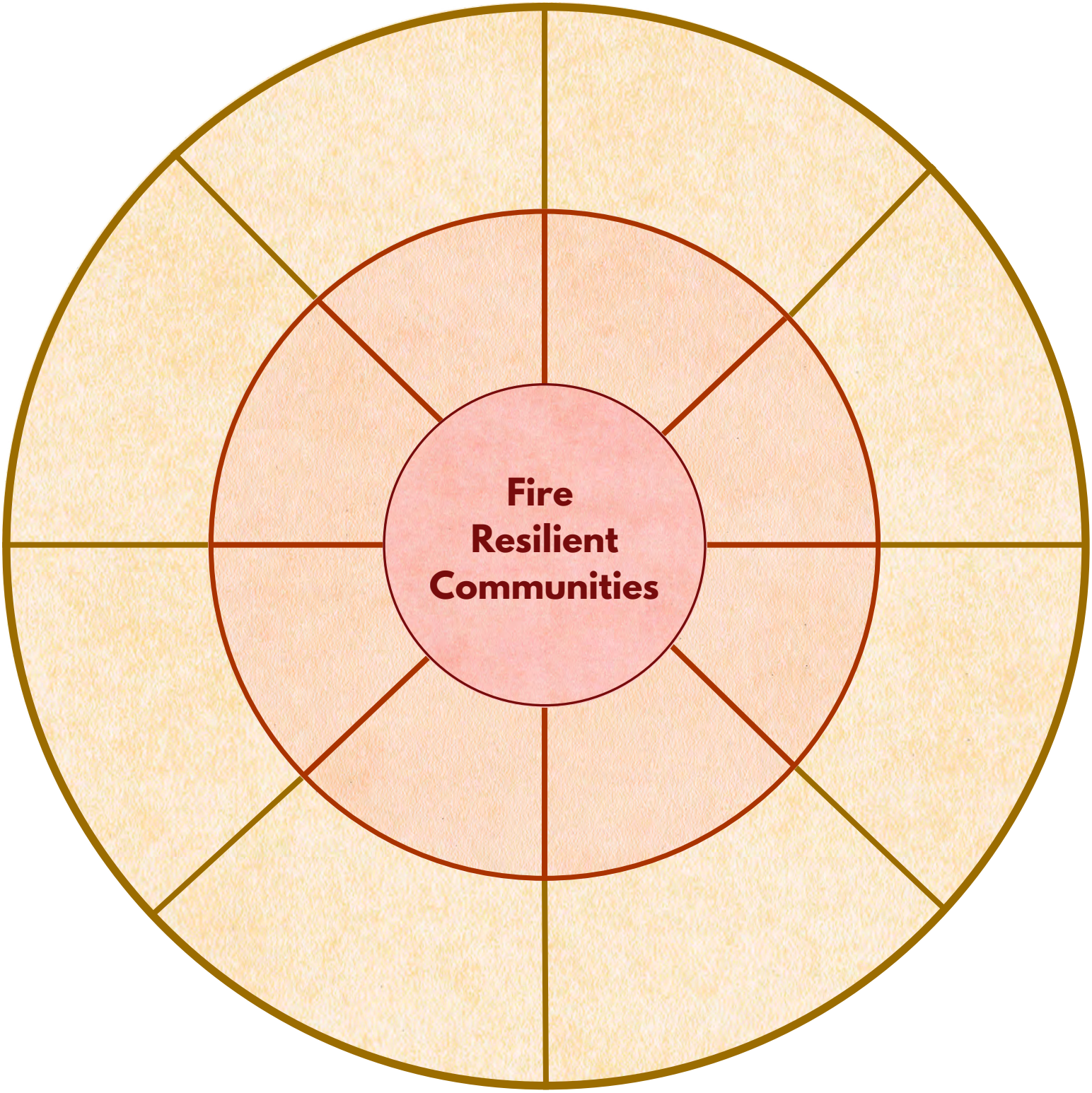
Community resilience includes practices that are embedded into many aspects of community life, governance, and planning. As a result, community resilience is interwoven with other risks, concerns, and the wellbeing of the community. Try filling out your community's values and priorities in this blank wheel.



FIRE SAFETY: KEY CONTACTS

Role	Name	Contact Information
Local emergency service		
Non-emergency fire service		
Urgent health service		
Trusted Adult*		
Trusted Adult		
Trusted Adult		

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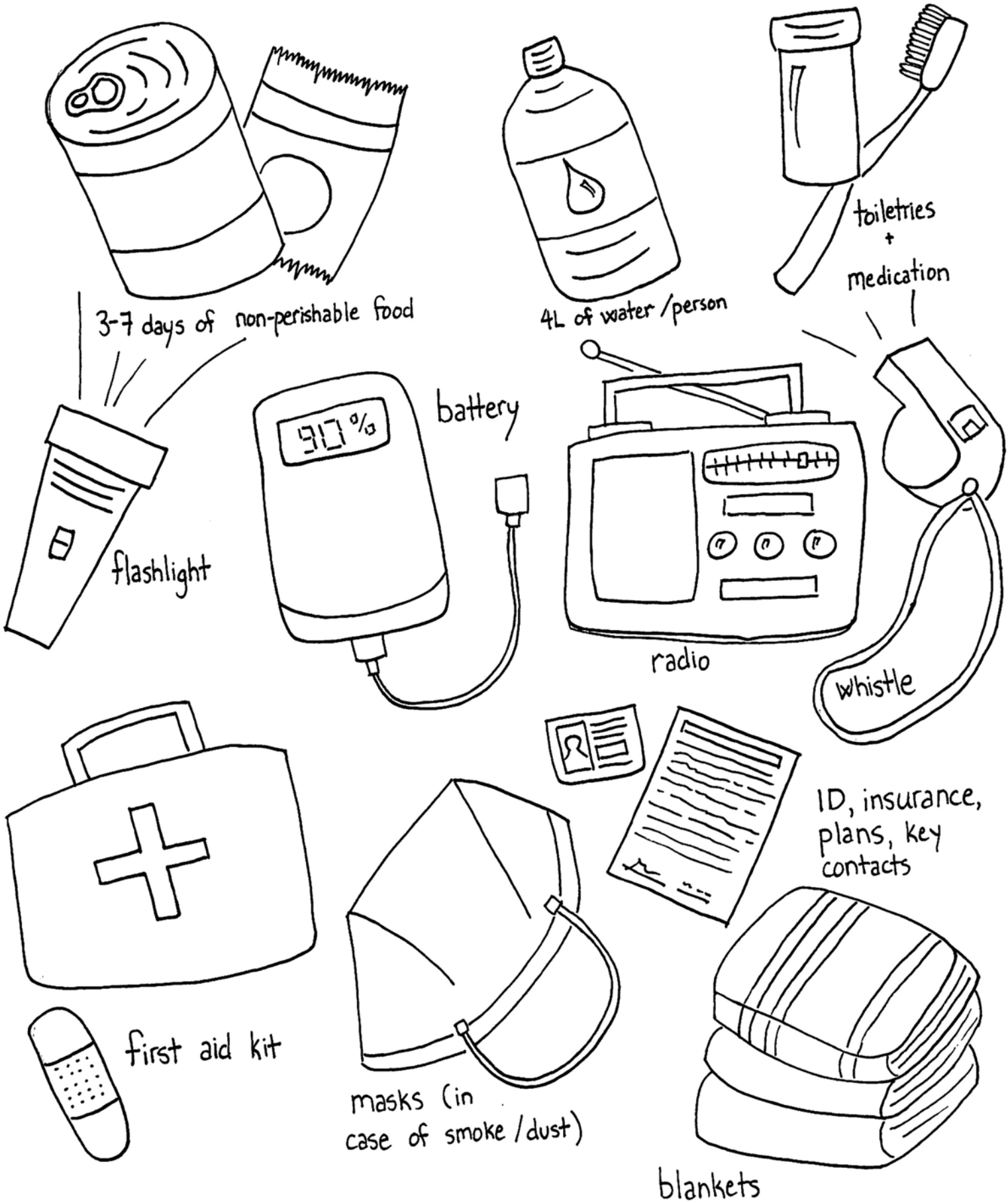
*A trusted adult might be a family member, close friend, community elder, teacher, or anyone else you would feel safe and able to contact in an urgent situation.

GO BAGS


3-7 days of non-perishable food
4L of water /person
toiletries + medication
flashlight
battery
90%
radio
whistle
ID, insurance, plans, key contacts
first aid kit
masks (in case of smoke /dust)
blankets

Map an Evacuation Route!

Guidelines:
If you aren't sure of any locations or routes, ask a trusted adult for some advice!

1. *Start with **important landmarks** like your home or any other place that's important to you.*
2. *In a fire, where would you go? Are there fire halls, **safe shelter sites,** or other locations in your community? Mark those on your map.*
3. *Identify the location of **exit points** - roads or paths out of your community.*
4. *Based on the location of your home and key sites for potential evacuation, draw out some potential **evacuation routes** - these are the paths you would take to leave home in case of an emergency.*

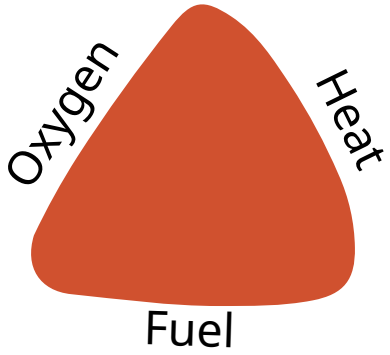
Bonus suggestion: try out the route you mapped with a trusted adult to ensure that all the roads are safe and accessible to you.

Route Notes:

Fire Primer: How do fires spread?

Understanding fire behaviour is the first step in preventing its spread. When forest fires reach residential areas, they become *interface fires*. Mitigating the spread of interface fires requires community planning, home and yard maintenance, and following FireSmart™ practices.

Fire Triangle: Fire requires fuel, heat, and oxygen to start and spread. By clearing surface fuels throughout communities and ladder fuels against structures, the spread of interface fires can be mitigated. Fuels include anything that could catch fire: vegetation, firewood, wood chips, leaf piles, fuel tanks, and trees are all examples of fuels.



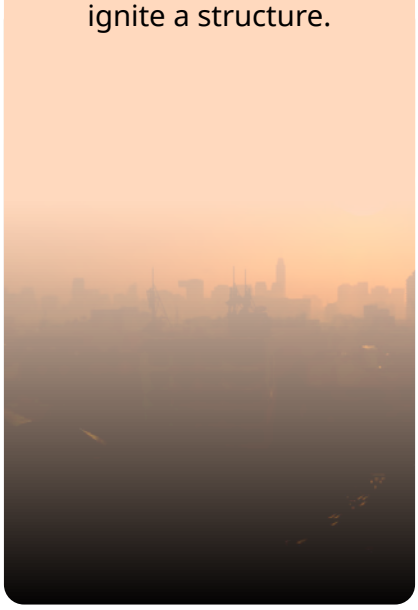
There are three ways fires spread:

Embers

Embers are burning debris carried by wind. They can travel up to 8 km.

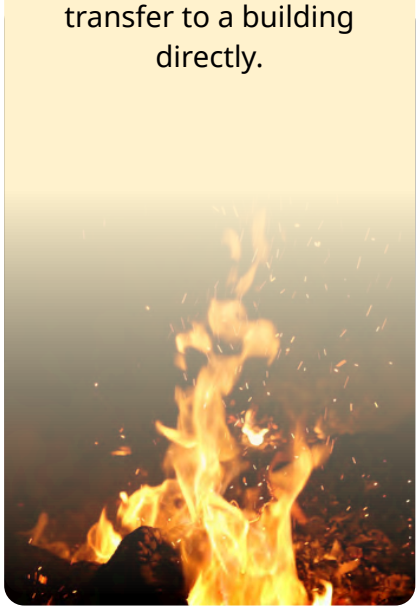
Radiant Heat

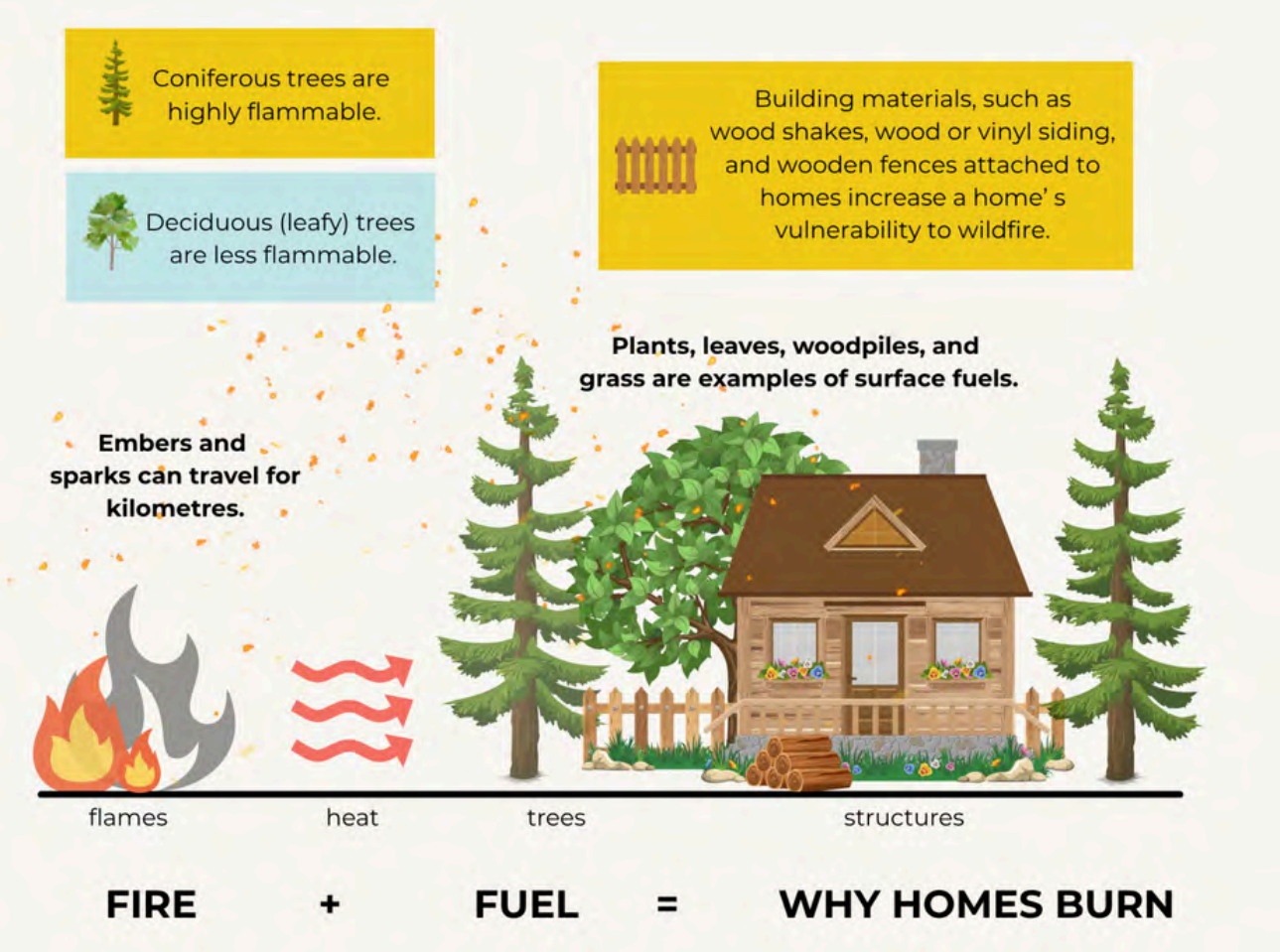
Intense heat from a nearby fire can ignite a structure.



Direct Flame

Fire from a nearby structure or tree may transfer to a building directly.





Fires can spread due to trees, surface fuels, and structures made of flammable building materials. Graphic made by Alexandria Jones (FireSmart™ Canada).

Why does the fire triangle matter?

In many rural households, it's common practice to store firewood against the exterior wall of the home. This can pose a fire risk because the combination of the wood (fuel) and gaps between logs (space for oxygen) can quickly ignite if an ember from a fire, even just a small campfire, falls into the gap. Decks with wooden boards with a >3mm gap pose a similar hazard, especially if leaves and other dry matter that could fuel a fire are underneath the deck.

The other recommendations to mitigate fire spread in the following section also aim to minimise the potential of embers becoming larger, dangerous fires.

Home Ignition Zones

Careful planning and maintenance for each zone can improve your home's resilience to fire and mitigate spread. This section provides some suggestions of important tasks to maintain fire safety in each zone. Additional recommendations are provided in the FireSmart Begins at Home Guide.

Immediate: 0 - 1.5m

Priority: reduce the chance of ignition if an ember lands near your home by reducing fuel sources.

- Clear debris. Nothing should be stored against the house.
- Roofs and gutter cleaned and equipped with <3mm mesh.
- Chimneys equipped with spark arrestors.
- Decks cleared and free of gaps.

Intermediate: 1.5 - 10m

Priority: manage the area to mitigate the risk of fire transmission to the home.

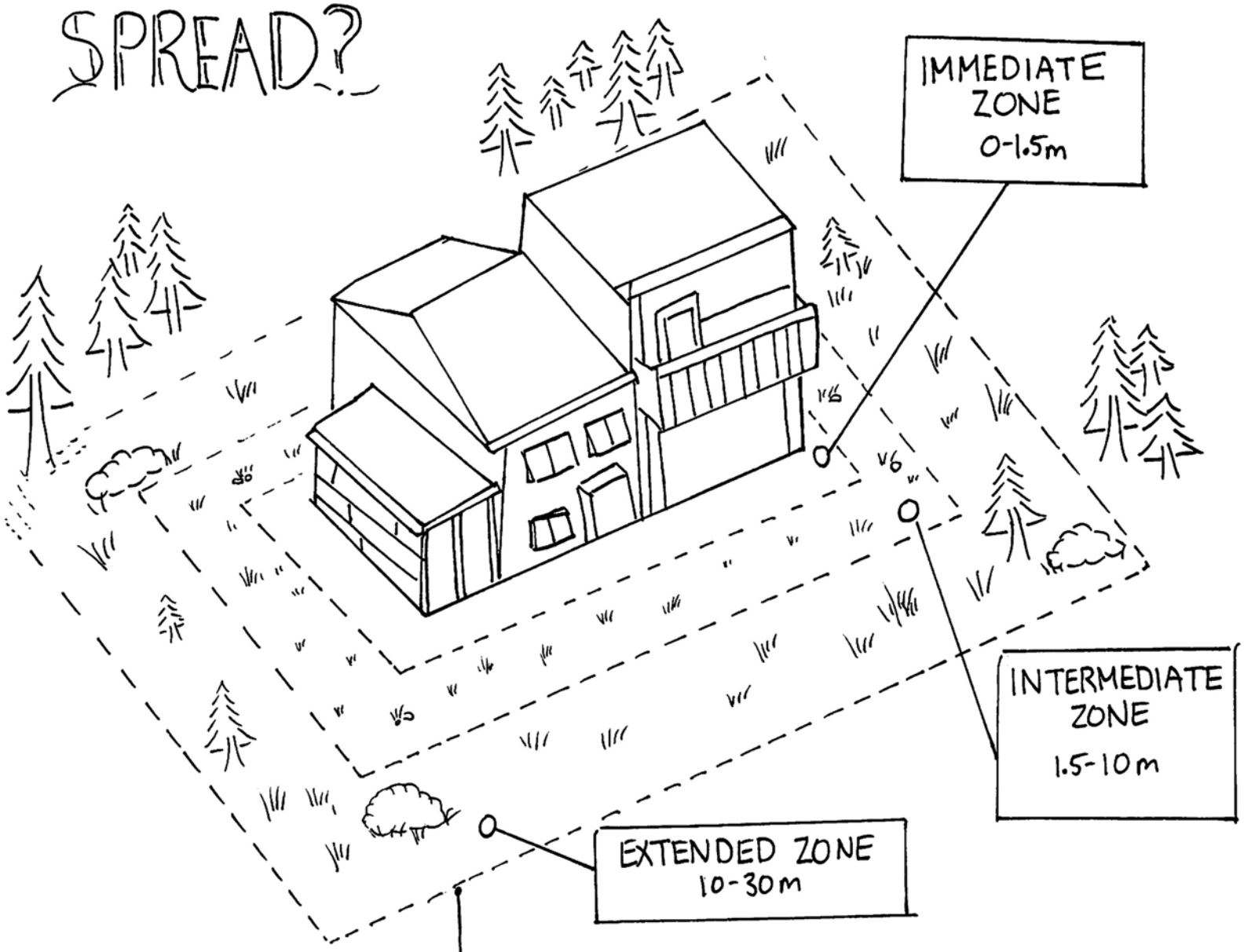
- Lawns mowed shorter than 10 cm.
- Foliage and trees tended from overgrowth.
- Fire resistant foliage and trees when possible.
- No placement of fuel tanks, firewood, or fire pits.

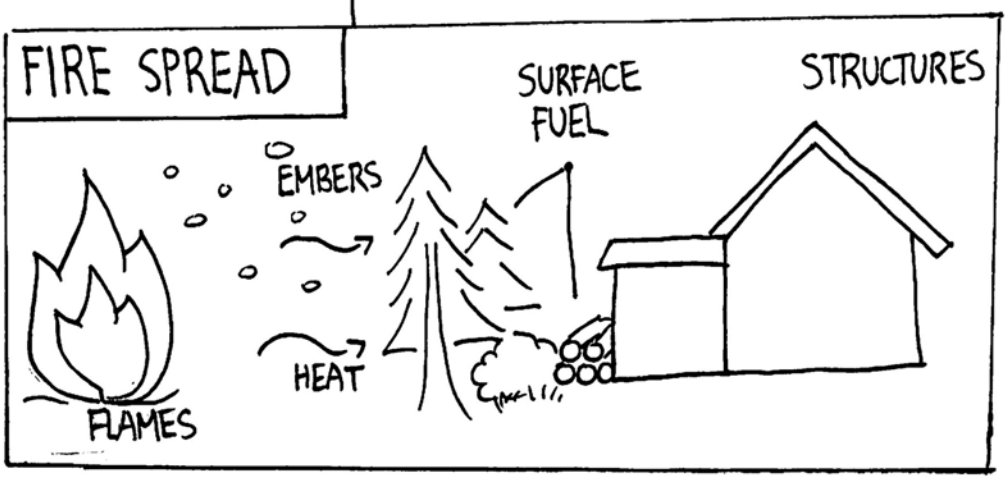
Extended: 10 -30m

Priority: reduce the intensity of any potential fires.

- Trees pruned and thinned from the bottom up.
- Space trees at least 3 m apart.
- Ensure safe and visible exits for emergency services.
- Plan collaboratively with neighbours to steward shared extended zones.

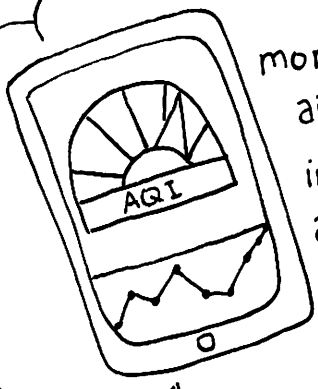
HOW DOES FIRE SPREAD? – HOME IGNITION ZONES





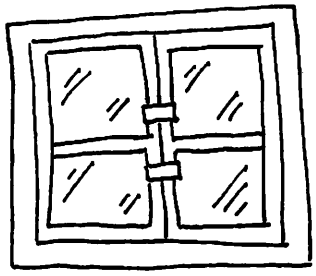
Graphics adapted from FireSmart Canada

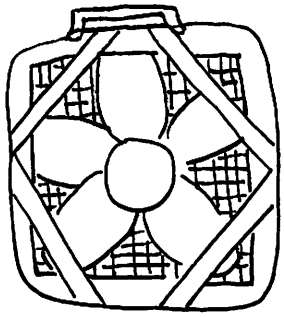
WHAT TO DO WHEN THE AIR IS SMOKY



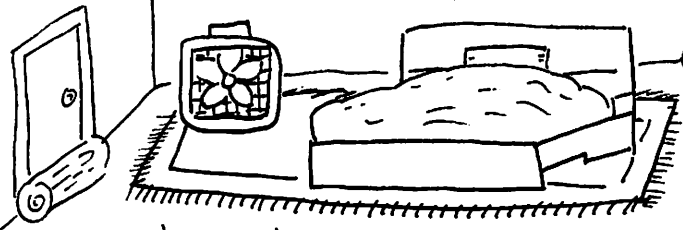
monitor air quality in the area

close windows and doors





make an air filter...



and use it in a 'clean air' room!

Wear an N95 or K95 mask if you need to go outside