



2026 Marin County Community Wildfire Protection Plan – Draft Frequently Asked Questions

What is the CWPP?

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan, or CWPP, is Marin County's roadmap for reducing wildfire risk. It identifies where risk is highest and which actions can do the most to protect people, homes, and critical infrastructure. It provides a shared strategy to help agencies and communities work together to build a safer, more wildfire-adapted Marin.

Why does the CWPP matter?

Wildfire risk is increasing in Marin as climate change drives longer fire seasons, drier conditions, and more extreme fire weather. The CWPP identifies the most effective ways to reduce risk, helping to focus efforts and funding on the actions that can make the biggest difference before any potential wildfire. It also identifies where risk reduction can improve firefighter access and effectiveness, helping protect homes by allowing crews to engage fires near communities more safely.

What does wildfire risk look like in Marin?

Marin's natural landscapes evolved with frequent fire, and keeping fire out entirely harms the ecosystem. The CWPP addresses fire's role in the ecosystem, understanding that wildfire risk is about more than where a fire might start. This broader view helps identify where action can best protect lives and property. The CWPP looks at a range of factors, including:

- How fast and intensely a fire could burn
- Which homes are most likely to ignite

- Where are roads where evacuation may be more difficult
- Which communities, facilities, and roads are most exposed
- Where fires could be harder to detect in early stages of burn
- Which areas could alerts and warnings be less effective

What role do public agencies play?

Public agencies play a major role in carrying out the plan's specific actions. Their work may include:

- Clearing vegetation along evacuation routes
- Managing vegetation in and around communities and key infrastructure
- Improving fire detection and alert systems
- Developing safer, more efficient evacuations
- Coordinating across agencies on shared priorities and risk reduction objectives
- Providing residents with education and resources for home hardening and landscaping improvements

What role do residents play?

Residents are a key part of wildfire risk reduction. There is a shared responsibility between residents and agencies. Agencies can do important work at the community level, but the condition of individual homes and properties also matters. Steps like maintaining roofs and gutters, reducing flammable vegetation near the home, and creating an ember-resistant zone can help lower risk.

What makes this CWPP different from past plans?

This CWPP is more of an overhaul than an update of the 2020 plan. It's driven by more advanced science-based analysis, data from frequent and devastating wildfires across California since 2020, robust countywide parcel inspections, a detailed assessment of Marin's road network through the lens of evacuation effectiveness, and input from over 50 local stakeholders. The result is a more targeted, more actionable plan for reducing wildfire risk across Marin.

Will the CWPP be updated over time?

Yes. The plan is designed to evolve. As new data becomes available and risk-reduction work by agencies and residents is completed, the CWPP can be updated so priorities stay current and reflect progress.

Does the CWPP address evacuation and emergency response?

Yes. Evacuation and life safety are a major part of the plan. The CWPP looks at evacuation routes, warning systems, traffic bottlenecks, and other factors that can affect how safely and quickly people can get out during an emergency. It also identifies prioritized improvements that would support resident evacuations, firefighting efforts, and emergency response.

What if I do not live next to open space?

Even if you don't live near open space, wildfire risk reduction is vital. Embers can travel long distances, igniting homes far from the main fire, and spreading through neighborhoods. Taking actions to reduce risk at your home helps protect you and your neighbors, leading to the entire neighborhood becoming more resilient.

Is my neighborhood unsafe?

Not necessarily. The CWPP shows relative levels of wildfire risk across the county. It does not label a neighborhood as simply "safe" or "unsafe." Some areas may face greater challenges, such as faster fire spread or more difficult evacuation, but risk can be reduced through targeted action.

Will the CWPP create new rules for homeowners?

No. The CWPP does not create new regulations. It is a planning tool that helps guide priorities, programs, and future decisions. Existing requirements, such as defensible space rules, still apply independently of the plan.

Will insurance companies recognize home hardening and defensible space work?

Recognition is growing, but it is still inconsistent, and homeowners need to be proactive. Some insurers offer discounts for Wildfire Prepared Home certifications and NFPA Firewise Community designations, and the California FAIR Plan offers discounts for home hardening (10%) and defensible space (5%). Ask your insurer or agent what discounts are available, and keep records of completed work. United Policyholders tracks California insurer mitigation discounts through its WRAP Resource Center (<https://uphelp.org/preparedness/wrap-resource-center/>)

How is the CWPP different from CAL FIRE's Fire Hazard Severity Zone map?

They serve different purposes. CAL FIRE's map is a statewide hazard map used to apply certain laws and regulations. The CWPP is a local, strategic planning tool. It uses Marin-specific conditions, local values at risk, and community input to identify the most effective ways to reduce risk in Marin.

What is structure-to-structure fire spread, as seen in the 2025 LA Fires?

Structure-to-structure fire spread happens when one burning building ignites nearby buildings through flames, heat, or embers. This has been a major factor in some recent wildfire disasters. Analysis of those devastating events guided recommendations in Marin's CWPP for potential similar situations.

In Marin, some homes are close together and near vegetation, which can increase this risk during extreme fire weather. The CWPP looks at where this type of fire spread could happen and presents specific ways to reduce the risk.

What are the latest Zone 0 draft regulations, and when will they go into effect?

The latest draft regulations would require reducing combustible materials in Zone 0 - the first 5 feet around and under a structure, the area that's most vulnerable to embers - within **officially designated high-risk areas**. Some trees and low, well-maintained plants would still be allowed, but a noncombustible area would be required from the home's exterior wall to the edge of the eaves.

For new construction, the rules would apply once adopted. For existing homes, requirements would phase in: Basic cleanup and vegetation changes within 3 years, and the under-eave zone, fence, gate, and outbuilding changes within 5 years.

The regulations are still in the public comment stage, and a final vote by the full Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has not yet been scheduled.

How does climate change factor into the CWPP?

Climate change is a major reason this work is so important. The plan accounts for longer fire seasons, more extreme fire weather, and changing vegetation conditions. It focuses on actions that can help reduce risk now and into the future as climate change continues to increase the potential for wildfire activity.