

Firewise Guidelines

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Fire emergency: call 911 Edelweiss has NO fire-fighting equipment!

Report an uncontrolled wildfire: call 1-800-562-6010

**EMC Administrative Manager: 360-305-5370
EMC Systems Manager: 509-699-0573**

What does “Firewise” mean?

Being Firewise means employing practical techniques to reduce the risks of home and property destruction by wildfire.

The Firewise Committee maintains these pages to help Edelweiss residents:

- Build and landscape to protect their own and the wider community’s property and contribute to a healthy forest
- Prepare for fire season, including emergency communications
- Monitor wildfire activity and air quality, and if necessary, safely evacuate during a wildfire event

Visit the pages below for brief information on each topic. For those seeking more detail, links are provided to documents stored on the Edelweiss web pages and to expert agencies and organizations.

[PROTECT YOUR HOME](#)

[PREPARE FOR FIRE SEASON](#)

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[EDELWEISS MAIN PAGE LINK](#)

Firewise: Emergency and Evacuation Information

Emergency and Evacuation Information

TO REPORT FIRES, PLEASE PLACE 2 CALLS:

911

[EDELWEISS EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION](#)

[EDELWEISS EVACUATION MAP](#)

Red Flag Warnings: A red flag warning is NOT a notice of evacuation. It means that critical fire-related weather conditions are occurring or will occur shortly. A combination of strong winds, low relative humidity and warm temperatures contribute to extreme fire behavior which might lead to an evacuation. During red flag events, the Okanogan County Electric Co-op (OCEC) will reinstate power only after a manual inspection, so power outages should be expected and can last longer than usual.

Evacuation Levels in Okanogan County

LEVEL 1: ADVISORY: Residents are warned that current or projected threats from hazards associated with the approaching fire(s)/flood(s)/ are present.

LEVEL 2: BE READY: Conditions indicate a good possibility that hazards associated with the approaching fire(s)/flood(s) will severely limit our ability to provide emergency service protection. **YOU MUST BE PREPARED TO LEAVE AT MOMENT'S NOTICE. THIS MAY BE THE ONLY NOTICE YOU RECEIVE.** Be aware of your surroundings and take appropriate actions.

LEVEL 3: IMMEDIATE EVACUATION: Current conditions present specific and immediate threat(s) to the life and safety of persons within this area. Conditions indicate that the hazards associated with the incident will severely limit our ability to provide emergency service protection.

During a bad fire season, it might be wise to plan as though a level three evacuation could happen while you are away and prepare your home and property accordingly.

Firewise: Prepare for the Fire Season

Prepare for the Fire Season

[EVACUATION DETAILS](#)

[EDELWEISS EVACUATION MAP](#)

Preparations

Fire season in the Methow Valley can begin as early as June and last into October. These are actions you can take to prepare.

- Read the material on the [PROTECTING YOUR HOME](#) web page and implement as many strategies as you can
- Create or review a family plan for emergencies. The [STATE OF WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION](#) and others have great advice
- Review the [EDELWEISS EVACUATION MAP](#) and think about a walking route should roads become blocked
- Know how to get emergency notifications (see below)
- Prepare (or make an easy to find list for packing) a “go bag” for your car(s) and for evacuation on foot. It should include:
- **P**ersonal and **P**et needs: Clothes, food, water, first aid kit, phones, and chargers—and items for people with disabilities and others with access and/or functional needs

- **Plastic:** Credit cards, insurance cards, cash
- **Priceless items:** Including pictures, irreplaceable mementos, and other valuables
- **Prescription medications:** Includes dosages, medicines, medical equipment, batteries or power cords, eyeglasses, and hearing aids
- **Papers:** Includes important documents (hard copies and/or electronic copies saved on external hard drives or portable thumb drives)
- Consider that an evacuation COULD occur after dark or in smoky conditions. **Your go bag should include a flashlight or other light source and masks.**

Three sources for emergency communications:

- 1. Go to [OKANOGAN COUNTY'S WEB SITE](#). A link to the Emergency Alert system is featured prominently on the home page. Follow the instructions to provide your contact information for options including telephone, text, and email.
- 2. Edelweiss uses an automated system to notify every Edelweiss member via a telephone message explaining the nature of any emergency and instructions on what to do. The system is called "Edelweiss Maintenance Commission (EMC) Dial-My-Calls Emergency Broadcast System." To ensure that they have your current telephone number(s) please email:
MANAGER@EDELWEISSMETHOWVALLEY.ORG
- 3. Our Edelweiss Neighborhood Coordinators will contact their neighborhood groups to ensure that property owners are aware of an emergency, and will help to give assistance, if possible. Make sure your neighborhood coordinator is aware of updates to your contact information. Please email updates to:
MANAGER@EDELWEISSMETHOWVALLEY.ORG

Firewise: Protect Your Home and Property

Protect Your Home and Property

Building or remodeling? Visit the [EDELWEISS ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE'S PAGE](#) for advice about building materials and landscaping strategies.

Creating Defensible Space: Is your property “Defensible?”

Defensible space is the buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and help protect your home from catching fire—either from embers, direct flame contact or radiant heat. It also provides firefighters a safe area to work in to defend your home.

Need help assessing your property? Contact the [DNR WILDFIRE READY NEIGHBORS](#) program for an assessment.

According to local firefighters and national experts, here are the most important steps you can take:

The House and Things Attached to The House (and/or other buildings):

- Take 15 minutes, walk around, and look for places embers could enter— such as windows, ventilation ducts, chimneys, soffits and under the eaves. Screens with 1/4-inch (or larger) holes should be replaced with 1/8-inch metal mesh (usually sold as “hardware cloth” here in the Valley).
- Remove debris from your roof, gutters, and fireplaces.
- Make sure decks are clean, clear of vegetation, and with no storage of combustible materials underneath (wood, gas tanks, or tires).

First 5 Feet Around the House (The “Non-Combustible Zone”):

- Remove firewood and other combustibles, such as woody plants or wooden garden art and furniture.
- Consider gravel, river rock, concrete (never bark) in the first 5 feet from the house.
- Put 1/8-inch metal screening (hardware cloth) around decks extending to the ground and in any places where embers can enter and create fires.

Intermediate Zone (5 to 30 feet from the house/buildings):

- Vegetation should be well-separated and irrigated, if possible, to keep plants green (remove dead and brown plants).
- Mow dry grasses to a height of 4 inches or less
- Keep other structures and vehicles out of the 30-foot Zone.
- Keep trees and brushy vegetation at least 10 feet from house and prune low branches up to a height of at least 10 feet. No branches overhanging the roof.
- Add a 5- to 10-foot-wide gravel apron (with weed barrier beneath) around your propane tank and transformer
- Have an outdoor water supply available, with hoses and nozzles capable of reaching all parts of the structure
- Provide driveway clearance of 12 ft W x 12ft H

- Be sure driveway address is marked with reflective signs clearly visible from two directions.

In The Extended Zone and Beyond

There are additional steps you can take to protect your property and your neighbors' as well. A professional forester can provide valuable advice about reducing fuels but preserving the healthiest trees, maintaining aesthetics and privacy, respecting wildlife, and contributing to a healthy forest.

For additional information about **tree and bush spacing, the effects of slope, and landscaping with fire resistant plants**, visit our [DOCUMENTS AND LINKS](#) page.

Firewise: Monitoring Fires and Air Quality Sources and Links

Monitoring Fires and Air Quality Sources and Links

Sources for monitoring current fire activity and prescribed fuel reduction burns:

For real-time fire activity, fire updates, and prescribed fire maps, check out the forest website, social media sites, or listen to the day of burn recorded voicemail message:

- Okanogan County Fire [FACEBOOK](#) updates

- US Forest Service-Okanogan County Fire [TWITTER](#) updates
- US Forest Service Fire Updates [INTERACTIVE MAP](#). Active fires, prescribed burns. Zoom in for details.
- Fire & burn recorded message, phone: 509-996-4040
- [INCIWEB](#) Maps and descriptions of active fires are updated at least daily by the Northwest Incident Management group. Tip: You'll need to scroll and zoom into Edelweiss area for updates.
- [CALTOPO](#) A website that provides contour maps and layering of current and past and current fires, topography, wind direction and more. Tip: Click on layers on the right side to adjust layers. A CalTopo app is also available for Android and iPhones.
- [NOAA FIRE WEATHER](#) Includes a customizable map, fire-related weather forecasts, fire potential outlook.
- [OKANOGAN COUNTY FIRE INFORMATION FACEBOOK GROUP](#) also posts regular information about wildfire preparation, safety, current fires, and other related information.
- Facebook: There will likely be a Facebook group for each DNR designated active fire. Once you learn of new fires in the area, search Facebook for the fire and join the group for daily updates from the forest service fire command group.

Sources for monitoring air quality:

- [WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY'S AIR MONITORING NETWORK](#)
- [AIRNOW](#) Enter your zip code in this EPA web site for local air quality information. One section of the site is specifically focused on fires.
- [PURPLEAIR REAL TIME AIR QUALITY MAP](#) Several Edelweiss residents and many others in the Valley have

purchased “Purple Air” air quality measuring devices and allow their results to be publicly available on Purple’s map, providing a VERY local measurement of particulates.

Firewise: Fuels Reduction and Forestry Contractors

Fuels Reduction and Forestry Contractors

****Current as of Spring 2023****

Alliance Ecological Service, Twisp

Sam Israel, Forestry consultant: 415-515-1599

ALLIANCEFORESTRY@GMAIL.COM

Firewise consulting and planning

“I am a forestry consultant. My company, Alliance Ecological Services, specializes in technical forestry assistance to landowners. I do consult on a lot of fuels reduction projects and am a trained/certified firewise planner. I often work with local and out of area arborists and sawyer crews.”

Bailey Consulting, Winthrop

Ric Baily: 509-449-8482

ICILYBEAR@GMAIL.COM

“I am a professional forester and former logger with a lot of experience in “fire safe” forest management, with an emphasis on ecosystem integrity rather than just breakneck logging to remove fuels. I advocate for a holistic approach that takes into account ground fuels as much as standing timber, and protection of wildlife habitat. Folks can have an attractive, ecologically rich forest that is resilient to fire.”

Brothers Forestry, Twisp

(Formerly Brothers Fire, owned by Saul Labanauskas)

CJ Stewart: 509-423-6299

Mike Gray: 509-669-7039

BROTHERSFORESTRYINC@GMAIL.COM

“We have a passion for helping homeowners reduce wildfire fuels. We have years of experience in wildfire firefighting and tree removal services while working for Saul Labanaskas at Brothers Fire LLC. Our services include tree thinning and pruning, by cutting and spacing of residual crop trees for forest health, forest improvement or wildland fuels reduction purposes. Other services include slash disposal by various means, hauling, lop & scatter, chipping, piling and burning. We also do more technical tree removals, on developed land near houses or structures. Our goal

is to work with owners to create a defensible property that is beautiful and healthy forest.”

C2C Wildfire

Mike Meyer: 509-996-3848

MMC2C@CENTURYTEL.NET

Tree removal, fire risk reduction thinning, pruning, forest health planning, tree climbing, and chipping.

Owen’s Tree Care, Winthrop

Owen Almquist: 509-429-0730

SKIPOWDERSUN@YAHOO.COM

Tree removal, fire risk reduction thinning, pruning, forest health planning, tree climbing, and chipping.

Sawyer’s Tree Care, Winthrop

JT Sawyer: 360-701-3580

SAWYERSTREECARE@GMAIL.COM

Not available June-August (commercial fishing)

Tree removal, fire risk reduction thinning, pruning, forest health planning, tree climbing, and chipping.

Three Rivers Arbor Care, Winthrop

Aaron Boley, Winthrop

509-557-2251

Tree removal, fire risk reduction thinning, pruning, forest health planning, tree climbing, and chipping.

Crenshaw, Inc, Omak

JW Crenshaw: 509-429-2444

Tree removal, fire risk reduction thinning, pruning, forest health planning, tree climbing, and chipping.

Smith Timber, Tonasket

Mike and Bonnie Smith: 509-679-9853

BSMITH@NVINET.COM

Goat Wall Landscaping, Mazama

Scott Perryman: 509-322-6330

SCOTT@GOALWALL.NET

Firewise: Documents & Links

Documents & Links

[MONITORING FIRES](#)

[EVACUATION MAP](#)

Additional information from Edelweiss and from outside experts.

Contractors: Here is a list of [CONTRACTORS](#) who have worked in Edelweiss in the past and can help assess properties and limb up or cut down trees, chip, etc. We can't guarantee that the list is current, so please let us know if your calls aren't answered or if you are aware of a contractor not listed here. [link to internal document]

Facebook and Local Fire History

- Facebook: There will likely be a Facebook group for each DNR designated fire. Once you learn of new fires in the area, search Facebook for the fire and join the group for daily updates from the forest service fire command group.
- [OKANOGAN COUNTY FIRE INFORMATION FACEBOOK GROUP](#) also posts regular information about wildfire preparation, safety, current fires, and other related information.

- 2021 CUB CREEK FIRE: This fire threatened the entire Methow Valley.
- 2021 CEDAR CREEK & DELANCEY FIRE: Another 2021 fire that just about devastated the entire Methow Valley.
- [THE US FOREST SERVICE PAGE FOR OKANOGAN COUNTY](#) is a good overall reference page.

Glossary of Firewise/Fire Terms: FIREWISE AND FIRE TERMS and associated organizations.

Landscaping

- **Tree & shrub spacing.** Information and good graphics from the CAL FIRE web site.
- **The effects of slope.** FUELBREAK GUIDELINES FOR FORESTED SUBDIVISIONS & COMMUNITIES. An excellent, but technical, .pdf report from the Colorado State Forest Service. Useful for our whole community, but also individual property owners who wish to understand fire behavior.
- **Landscaping with fire resistant plants.** Check out this comprehensive .pdf created by Oregon State University, Washington State University, and the University of Idaho.

Propane and Power

- WILDFIRE guidelines from Okanogan County Electric Co-op (OCEC) regarding **propane and wildfires** (.pdf).
- **Power shut off during wildfire events.** OCEC's explanation of FIRE SAFETY SHUTOFFS (.pdf).
- OCEC NEEDS YOUR HELP (.pdf). OCEC wants property owner help to keep **power poles and transformers** clear.

Wildfire Tactics

- **Taking shelter** in a wildfire. Good information from CALIFORNIA'S SAFEHOME.ORG within a longer document.
- **Driving** during a wildfire. Advice from CALIFORNIA'S SAFEHOME.ORG
- **If trapped** at home, on foot or in a car near a wildfire. ADVICE FROM CALFIRE.

PDF of the entire Edelweiss Firewise website: A hard or full electronic copy can come in very handy when the power is out, or for future easy reference.

Firewise: Edelweiss and Wild Land Fire Glossary

Edelweiss and Wild Land Fire Glossary

Burn Ban [[OKANOKGAN COUNTY LINK](#)]: A burn ban generally prohibits all outdoor burning, including recreational fires, even those in metal fire pits. According to Okanogan County combustible materials include, but are not limited to outdoor burning of yard waste, non-emergency agricultural burning, exploding gun targets and bullet tracer rounds. Enclosed grills are okay, but need to be closely monitored for stray sparks. State parks and National Forests may issue their own burn bans. The Okanogan County Emergency Management webpage is the official host page for all the burn ban/restriction information for all unincorporated parts of Okanogan County.

C C & R's [LINK]: Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions. These are the rules that govern the Edelweiss Community.

Chimney: A topographic feature having walls that form a steep, narrow chute. In a fire, air flow is funneled to the chimney's shape and increases in speed, which increases fire intensity. The Cassal Creek drainage in Edelweiss is an example.

Crown Fire: A fire that spreads from the crown (top) of one tree to the crown of another. Crown fires often spread faster than surface fires.

Defensible space: The buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and it helps protect your home from catching fire—either from embers, direct flame contact or radiant heat. Proper defensible space also provides firefighters a safe area to work in, to defend your home.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) [LINK]: This is Washington State's wildfire fighting force. Approximately 600 permanent and temporary employees fight fires on more than 13 million acres of private and state-owned forest lands. The agency works with the National Weather Service to provide the fire weather forecasts and fire precaution levels. The Forest Resilience Division works to ensure forested ecosystems retain their resilience against disturbance mechanisms such as fire, insects, and diseases. Some Edelweiss projects are subject to regulations from this agency.

Edelweiss Rights of Way Fuel Reduction Project: A three-year project (2022-2025) funded by a special assessment to reduce fuels on Edelweiss-owned lots, chimneys, and rights of way—especially along roads—to make ingress and egress safer for fire-fighters and residents and to slow a wildfire.

Fire-resistant plants: Are those that do not readily ignite from a flame or other ignition sources. These plants can be damaged or even killed by fire, however, their foliage and stems do not significantly contribute to the fuel and, therefore, the fire's intensity. Generally, deciduous trees and plants are less flammable than conifers and mature pines withstand fire better than firs.

Firebreak: A strip of land, at least 20 to 30 feet wide, from which all vegetation is removed down to bare, mineral soil each year prior to fire season.

Firewise: The ability to understand and employ strategies to live safely near a fire-dependent natural community.

Firewise USA [\[LINK\]](#): The national Firewise USA® recognition program provides a collaborative framework to help neighbors in a geographic area get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance of their homes and community and to reduce wildfire risks at the local level. Edelweiss is a member in good standing.

Fuelbreak (or shaded fuelbreak): An easily accessible strip of land of varying width (depending on fuel and terrain), in which fuel density is reduced, thus improving fire control opportunities. The stand is thinned, and remaining trees are pruned to remove

ladder fuels. Brush, heavy ground fuels, snags, and dead trees are disposed of, and an open, park-like appearance is established.

Ground Fire: (sometimes called underground or subsurface fires): Occur in deep accumulations of humus, peat and similar dead vegetation that become dry enough to burn. These fires move very slowly but can become difficult to fully suppress. Occasionally, especially during prolonged drought, such fires can smolder all winter underground and then emerge at the surface again in spring.

Home ignition zone: The first 5 to ten feet of space surrounding a home or other building.

Incident Command System (ICS): A standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of emergency response providing a common hierarchy within which responders from multiple agencies can be effective. We have one for the Edelweiss Community which has been shared with Fire District 6.

InciWeb [\[LINK\]](#): An interagency all-risk incident information management system. The web-based program provides information for wildland fire emergencies and prescribed fires, but can also be used for other natural disasters and emergency incidents such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc.

Ladder fuels: Smaller trees and bushes that can be ignited by a surface fire and climb larger trees to become crown fires.

Okanogan County Electric Co-Op (OCEC) [\[LINK\]](#): Our electricity provider here in the Valley.

Okanogan County Conservation District [LINK]: Conservation education and planning services are provided without charge to property owners and tenants within Okanogan Conservation District boundaries. A non-regulatory agency.

Okanogan County Emergency Management [LINK]: Prepares for, responds to, and mitigates any emergency or disaster. This agency issues burn bans and manages emergency alerts, including evacuation notices.

Okanogan County Fire District 6 [LINK]: Our local organization of volunteer and career firefighters that provide fire, rescue, and emergency response services throughout the Methow Valley. Main fire station is located in Winthrop; there is a small station near the intersection of Highway 20 and Lost River Road in Mazama.

Pine Bark Beetles. These beetles are drawn to fresh pine slash and downed or weakened pine trees. After colonizing an area, they can attack nearby live pine. This is why it is important to remove slash and chip downed trees. Some projects in Edelweiss are only done during the beetles' dormant period.

Red flag warning: Critical fire weather conditions are either occurring or will occur shortly. A combination of strong winds, low relative humidity and warm temperatures can contribute to extreme fire behavior. ***No outdoor burning or use of spark causing tools*** such as welding torches or chainsaws. Note that OCEC will only reinstate power outages after a manual inspection of lines during these events, so outages can last longer than usual.

Surface Fire: Burns only surface litter and duff. These are the easiest fires to put out and cause the least damage to the forest.

U. S. Forest Service [\[LINK\]](#): The USFS manages 3.8 million acres of land in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, some of it adjacent to Edelweiss. This agency works closely with other federal, tribal, state, and local partners to manage wildland fires and to maintain, enhance, and restore healthy forest and grasslands conditions. Forest Service Road 100/East Fawn Creek Road within the bound of Edelweiss is the responsibility of the USFS. The USFS grants grazing leases to local ranchers, hence the many close encounters with cows here in Edelweiss.

Wildfire Ready Neighbors (WRN) [\[LINK\]](#): A division of DNR. Works with communities such as Edelweiss to provide free advice.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). The wildland–urban interface is a zone of transition between wilderness and land developed by human activity – an area where a built environment meets or intermingles with a natural environment. Human settlements in the WUI are at a greater risk of catastrophic wildfire. Edelweiss is located in the WUI!

Firewise: About Us

About Us

The Edelweiss Firewise Committee is composed of members of the Edelweiss community and serves at the direction and discretion of the Edelweiss Board to maximize fire preparation and safety in our community.

The Committee was formed in 2017 and currently consists of 8 members who meet monthly.

Members of the committee serve as “resident leaders” in the Firewise USA organization. They file an annual report and a three-year action plan to maintain Edelweiss’s status as a Firewise USA Community in good standing.

The Committee provides information for the Edelweiss monthly newsletter, organizes and coordinates events such as chipping and yard waste disposal and works with the board on grant applications and initiatives such as the current “rights of way fuel reduction” project.

Current Members (as of Spring 2023)

- Craig Bartholomew, Chair
- Sharon Cupp
- Jason Edwards
- Jodie Edwards
- Bill Huff
- Catherine Humblet
- Becky Sproat
- Simon Windell

If you are interested in becoming a member of the committee, helping with any of our activities, or have questions about firewise work, please email us at: EMCFIREWISE@GMAIL.COM

