

The [Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code](#) (CWRC), adopted on July 1, 2025, mandates that all Colorado jurisdictions with [Wildland-Urban Interface](#) (WUI) areas adopt the new construction standards by **April 1, 2026**. Full enforcement and compliance are required by **July 1, 2026**.

Key Details Regarding the 2026 Deadline:

- **Adoption Deadline:** Local jurisdictions must formally adopt the CWRC by **April 1, 2026**.
- **Compliance Deadline:** The code must be enforced for new construction, major additions, and significant exterior remodels (over 25% of surface area) by **July 1, 2026**.
- **Applicability:** Applies to new construction, any renovations over 25%, additions over 500 sq. ft., and reroofing projects in designated WUI areas.
- **Standards:** Focuses on wildfire-resistant materials, including Class A roofing, noncombustible siding, ember-resistant vents, and defensible space.

Important Considerations:

- **Map Issues:** Some municipalities have raised concerns about the accuracy of the state-provided WUI map, which is needed for proper implementation.
- **Local Adoption:** While mandated by the state, local city councils and county commissioners are responsible for enacting the codes.
- **Cost Impact:** The codes are expected to increase construction costs, particularly for custom homes, though they aim to reduce long-term risk and improve insurability.



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Key Requirements for Defensible Space and Site Management

The code defines three home ignition zones around a structure with specific mitigation requirements. The Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code (CWRC) provisions take precedence over other codes in case of conflict. **Please refer to Chapter 5 - Site and Area Requirements**

Structure Ignition Zone 1 (0-5 feet): The Immediate Zone (Applies to Class 1 & 2)

- Is designed to reduce or eliminate ember ignition and direct flame contact with the structure.
- Use noncombustible, hard surface materials like rock, gravel, or concrete.
- Removal of all plantings including shrubs, slash, combustible mulch, and other woody debris, with an exception for ignition-resistant vegetation from an approved list either created by the Colorado State Forest Service or a list created by the AHJ that meets or exceeds CSFS Fact Sheet 6.305. [Ignition-Resistant Landscape Plants - Fact Sheet 6.305](#)
- There shall be no planting of new trees. Existing mature trees must have crowns pruned to maintain a 10-foot clearance from any structure. Branches must be pruned to 6-10 feet from the ground or one-third of the tree's height, whichever is less.

Structure Ignition Zone 2 (5-30 feet): The Intermediate Zone (Applies to Class 2)

- This zone is designed to give an approaching fire less fuel and to reduce its intensity.
- Hazardous dead plant material must be removed, and large accumulations of surface fuels should be avoided.
- Tree crowns must be spaced to promote fuel discontinuity to limit fire spread and maintain 10-foot clearance from structures. Shrub groups must be spaced to prevent structure ignition and be at least 10 feet from the edge of tree branches.

Structure Ignition Zone 3 (30-100 feet): The Expanded Zone (Applies to Class 2)

- This zone focuses on mitigation that keeps fire on the ground.
- Tree crowns within this zone shall be spaced at a minimum of 6-10 feet.

Additional Site Requirements (Applies to Class 1 & 2):

- Site Signage: Requirements for marking access roads/driveways, fire protection equipment, and posting visible address markers.
- Retaining Walls: Must be noncombustible or ignition-resistant if within 8 feet of a regulated structure or integral to its support/egress. Also required if a retaining wall is integral to the egress from a structure regulated by this code to a public way, easement, or private road.
- Fencing: Fences within 8 feet of a regulated structure (or to the property line if closer) must be noncombustible or ignition-resistant, though vinyl fencing may be an exception

Triggers For The Code

- New construction of structures and defensible space around structures
- Significant alterations/additions/repairs
 - 500 sf+ increased footprint of a structure
 - 25%+ of an exterior of a structure affected

Who needs to adopt? A Governing Body defined as one of the following:

- The city council, town council, board of trustees, or other governing body of a city, town, or city and county;
- The board of directors of a fire protection district organized pursuant to part 1 of article 1 of title 32, C.R.S.;
- The governing body of an improvement district that provides fire protection services organized pursuant to part 5 of article 20 of title 30, C.R.S.; or
- The board of county commissioners with respect to the area within a county that is outside the corporate limits of a city or town and outside the boundaries of a fire protection district.

Contact Information

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Key Requirements for Structure Hardening

The Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code (CWRC) sets 2 tiers of requirements for exterior design and construction of all occupancies, as well as site level mitigation, based on the identified Fire Intensity Classification.

Adoption of this Code Does Not Require the Adoption of the Colorado Energy Code.

General Materials: Please see Section 402 Building materials must be noncombustible, fire-retardant treated wood (labeled for exterior use), or ignition-resistant materials.

Class 1 Structure Hardening- For Low Fire Intensity Areas (Yellow). Please refer to Chapter 4 - Section 403. Class 1 requires the following:

- Roofing must be Class A rated.
- Gutters and downspouts must be noncombustible.
- Ventilation openings (e.g., in attics, crawl spaces) must be covered with listed vents or noncombustible corrosion-resistant mesh with openings not to exceed 1/8-inch to resist ember and flame intrusion.

Class 2 Structure Hardening- For Moderate or High Fire Intensity Areas (Orange or Red). Please refer to Chapter 4 - Section 404. Class 2 requires all Class 1 requirements, plus the following:

- Eaves and soffits must be protected on the underside by noncombustible, ignition-resistant, or 1-hour fire-resistance-rated materials.
- Exterior walls must meet specific fire-resistance ratings or be constructed of approved noncombustible, heavy timber, fire-retardant treated wood, or ignition-resistant materials.
- Exterior wall coverings are limited to noncombustible, fire-retardant treated wood, or ignition-resistant materials (vinyl siding is allowed only if the underlying wall assembly meets specific fire-resistance ratings).
- A minimum of 6 inches of flashing is required vertically between the wall sheathing and the exterior cladding at the ground, the decking, and at roof intersections
- Unenclosed decks require a Class A walking surface (exception: composite walking surface with a Class B rating)

- Exterior glazing (windows, glazed doors, skylights) must be tempered glass, multilayered panels, glass block, or have a fire protection rating of at least 20 minutes. (No Single Pane)
- Exterior doors must be noncombustible, solid core wood at least 1¾ inches thick, or have a fire protection rating of at least 20 minutes.
- Gaps around vehicle access doors (like garage doors) must not exceed ¼ inch to resist ember intrusion.

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