

WILDFIRE PREPARED

— A PROGRAM OF IBHS —

MULTIFAMILY TECHNICAL STANDARD

VERSION DECEMBER 2025



WILDFIRE 
PREPARED®
— MULTIFAMILY —

December 2025 Wildfire Prepared Multifamily Technical Standard

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2025 Wildfire Prepared Multifamily™ Technical Standard

1 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1 Designations

The Wildfire Prepared Multifamily™ program provides property owners with science-based actions to help protect their properties from wildfire. Developed by the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) and informed by research from IBHS's Suburban Wildfire Adaptation Roadmaps, this program follows a systems-based, two-tiered approach to reducing parcel-level wildfire risk.

A property earns a designation by meeting all wildfire mitigation requirements for its selected level. Applicants are encouraged to use the [Wildfire Prepared Multifamily: How-To Prepare Checklist](#) to complete the wildfire mitigation work before applying.

To apply, applicants must pay a nonrefundable application fee and submit eligibility photos of each structure for IBHS review. If the property is eligible and all required mitigation work has been completed, verification will be conducted by an authorized third-party evaluator. Once all requirements are confirmed, IBHS issues a designation certificate for the structure.

1.1.1 Designation Levels

Two designations are available. To earn a designation, a property shall meet all the requirements for the chosen designation level, as evaluated by an authorized third-party, and verified by IBHS. The Multifamily - Enhanced level builds upon the Multifamily - Essential level requirements. See Figure 1.

- **Wildfire Prepared Multifamily - Essential** - Requires mitigation measures such as establishing the 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone, upgrading key building features, and maintaining the defensible space to 30 feet from the structure. This level is typically achieved through retrofitting existing properties.
- **Wildfire Prepared Multifamily - Enhanced** - Includes additional mitigation measures beyond the Essential level, including enhanced protection of key building features and structure spacing requirements. This level is typically achieved through new construction or more extensive retrofitting



Figure 1. Abbreviated List of Requirements

1.1.2 Designation Level Goals

Wildfire Prepared Multifamily is a designation program that helps reduce wildfire risk to individual structures through a system of mitigation actions at the parcel level, developed using the latest science and research from IBHS.

- **Wildfire Prepared Multifamily - Essential** - Provides essential structure protection from wind-driven embers by addressing vulnerable building features, vegetation and combustible items on and around the building, reducing pathways for fire to spread to the structure.
- **Wildfire Prepared Multifamily - Enhanced** - Builds on Essential by incorporating enhanced building materials and features to help defend against **radiant heat and direct flame exposure, providing a higher level of protection.**

1.1.3 Designation Eligibility

- **Eligibility -**

- Visit the “Resources by State” page at wildfireprepared.org to view current program availability.
- **The designation has strict no-exception requirements. Protected trees may disqualify some properties, and property owners may need to coordinate with neighboring properties to meet the 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone setback.**
- Properties under active construction are not eligible.

- **Applicant and Designation Recipient(s)**

The applicant is responsible for completing the wildfire mitigation requirements, submitting eligibility photos, and paying a nonrefundable application fee. The designation recipient(s) receive the Wildfire Prepared designation from IBHS. Applicant and designation recipient(s) roles vary by dwelling type, as outlined below:

- **Qualifying Dwelling Types** - Qualifying dwelling types must be located on permanent foundations, limited to three stories above grade, and be designed, built, and sited to meet all applicable state and/or local WUI building codes. To be eligible for designation, the entire building and surrounding area to 30 feet must meet all program requirements. Individual units are **not eligible** for Multifamily designation. *Buildings exceeding 3 stories may qualify on a case-by-case basis.*

- **Rental Apartments (Multifamily)**

- Applicant: Building owner or managing entity
- Designation Recipient: Building owner

- **Owner-Occupied Attached Units with a Managing Entity (e.g., condominiums, HOA-governed properties)**

- Properties must be governed by a managing entity (e.g, HOA, condo board, or similar authority) that have authority over exterior building features, including the roof, structure, and landscape.
- Includes:
 - Condominiums
 - Townhomes
 - Duplexes
 - Multiplexes (3 or more units)
 - Note: Additional shared-use or accessory structures serving the residential community may be included (e.g., clubhouse, detached garage, fitness center, laundry facility, pet spas).
- Applicant: Managing entity (e.g., HOA, condo board)
- Designation Recipient: Managing entity

- **Non-Qualifying Dwelling Types -**

- Mixed-Use Buildings (Commercial/Residential)
- Mobile or Manufactured Structures built before July of 1994.
- See the Wildfire Prepared **Home** Technical Standard for eligibility for the following (*Not Eligible for the Multifamily designation*)
 - Single-family detached homes
 - Modular Homes
 - HUD-Code Manufactured Home Built After July 1994
 - Owner-Occupied Units **without** a Managing Entity (e.g., townhomes, duplexes, multiplexes). *May qualify for Home designation on a case-by-case basis.*

- **Wildfire Mitigation Requirements** - To qualify, all requirements for the desired designation level **shall be met for the entire building, and surrounding area to 30 feet**, to reduce wildfire risk, using the [Wildfire Prepared Multifamily: How-To Prepare Checklist](#), based on the technical standard.

- **Eligibility Photo Requirements** - The applicant must submit clear, **multi-angle photos** that adequately document all required wildfire mitigation measures to qualify for an evaluation. Photos must show **all sides** of the building, key building features (e.g., **each deck, porch, pergola, balcony, shed, hot tub, propane tank**), and the **0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone** (including fences). If something isn't clearly visible, additional photos may be requested.

- **Photo Tips:** Take as many photos as necessary to adequately show all areas of the building, including the front, back, and both sides (right and left when facing the front).
 - Corner and sides: Stand at each corner of the building and take at least two photos per side, showing the full length and the 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone.
 - Wide angles: From 30 feet away, take two wide shots of the front and two of the back, capturing the entire width of the building, corner to corner. Larger buildings may require multiple photos to capture the entire width of the building.
 - Take additional photos of key features like pergolas, decks, porches, balconies, sheds, hot tubs, and propane tanks.
- **Accepted File Formats:** jpg, jpeg, pdf, png, gif, svg, webp, jfif, heic, heif

1.1.4 Designation Process and Timelines: Initial, Annual Reviews, and Designation Renewal and Expiration

1.1.4.1 Initial Designation

Properties earn a **Wildfire Prepared Multifamily designation** by meeting all wildfire mitigation requirements for their selected level in the program. The designation is **valid for three years** and remains in **Active status** by completing an **Annual Review** each of the first **two years** following the initial designation, leading up to the **3-year designation expiration**.

How to Apply

- Complete the required wildfire mitigation, using the [Wildfire Prepared Multifamily: How-To Prepare Checklist](#), based on the Technical Standard.
- To get started, fill out the Wildfire Prepared Multifamily Inquiry Form <https://wildfireprepared.org/wildfire-prepared-multifamily-program-inquiry/>
- Once approved to apply, visit the website at <https://wildfireprepared.org> and click "Apply Now."
- An application and a nonrefundable application fee is required for each building.
- Submit eligibility photos for each structure IBHS review. See *Eligibility Photo Requirements* for tips above.

Once eligibility photos are approved, a qualified third-party evaluator will conduct an in-person evaluation to collect documentation that will be verified. Once all requirements are confirmed, IBHS will issue a **Wildfire Prepared Multifamily designation certificate for that structure**.

1.1.4.2 Annual Reviews

To remain in **Active designation status** and ensure continued maintenance compliance, property owners, or managing entities must complete an **Annual Review** each of the first **two years** following their initial designation, leading up to the **3-year designation expiration**. This process verifies that your property remains mitigated to reduce wildfire risk and continues to meet the Wildfire Prepared Multifamily Technical Standard in place at the time of designation. The entire building, including all individual units, **MUST** remain compliant to maintain the designation. The applicant of record (e.g., property owner, HOA, or managing entity) is responsible for completing the Annual Review.

How to Apply

- Complete required maintenance.
- Visit the website at <https://wildfireprepared.org/portal> and click "Start Annual Review."
- Pay the nonrefundable application fee.
- Submit **clear, multi-angle photos** that document all required maintenance to reduce wildfire risk. Photos must show **all sides** of the building, key building features (e.g., **decks, porches**), and the **0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone**. Be sure to include any **recent** changes such as new fences, structures, decks, sheds, hot tubs, or propane tanks. If something isn't clearly visible, additional photos may be requested.

Ongoing Maintenance Requirements for Annual Reviews

Regular maintenance is required to ensure the building and defensible space continue to meet the designation standard to meaningfully reduce wildfire risk. Growing, fallen, or dead vegetation, as well as new structures, can increase ignition risk. Think of your Annual Review like a **Red Flag Warning** – take proactive maintenance measures to help protect your property. To stay compliant, complete all of the following annual maintenance steps:

- Keep **gutters, downspouts, and the roof clear** of debris.

- Ensure the **0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone** is properly maintained.
- Ensure the **5-30 Foot Defensible Space** is properly maintained.
- Regularly maintain all **decks and porches**.
- Ensure any **new additions or changes** (e.g., fences, structures, decks, hot tubs, propane tanks) remain compliant.
- **Note:** For specific maintenance requirements, see the appropriate sections in this technical standard.

On Time Annual Reviews

- **When to Apply:** To maintain Active status, designated properties must apply for the Annual Review during the 60-day period leading up to the Anniversary Date, as indicated on the most recent designation certificate. Submissions after the Anniversary Date will incur a late fee.
- **Application & Fee:** Applicants must submit an Annual Review application, pay the nonrefundable Annual Review fee in effect at the time of submission, and provide photo documentation demonstrating maintenance compliance.
- **Paid Grace Period:**
 - **Active:** If the Annual Review has been paid for by the Anniversary Date, the property will remain in Active status for 60 days following the Anniversary Date (Active 60-day grace period) to allow time to complete the Annual Review process.
 - **Inactive:** If the Annual Review has been paid by the Anniversary Date but is not completed and approved by IBHS within the Active 60-day grace period, the application will become Inactive. Inactive applications will be automatically closed 60 days before either the second Annual Review Anniversary or Expiration Date listed on the most recent designation certificate, whichever comes first.

Late Annual Reviews

- **When Is It Late?** An Annual Review is considered late if submitted after the Anniversary Date listed on the most recent Wildfire Prepared Multifamily designation certificate.
- **Application & Late Fee:** Applicants must submit an Annual Review application, pay the nonrefundable Annual Review fee, as well as an additional late fee in effect at the time of submission. They must also provide photo documentation demonstrating maintenance compliance.
- **Grace Period:**
 - If the Annual Review is paid for within the 60-day "Active" Grace Period following the Anniversary Date but is not completed and approved by IBHS within this timeframe, the application will automatically become Inactive.
 - If the Annual Review is paid for after the 60-day "Active" Grace Period following the Anniversary Date, the property will remain Inactive until the application is approved by IBHS. Inactive applications will be automatically closed 60 days before either the second Annual Review or the Expiration Date listed on the most recent designation certificate, whichever comes first.

1.1.4.3 Designation Renewal and Expiration

At the end of the 3-year designation period, a property's Wildfire Prepared Multifamily designation will expire. To maintain an Active designation status, the property owner must complete the full designation process to verify continued compliance with this technical standard.

Designation Renewal

- **When to Apply:** To maintain an Active designation, property owners must submit their application and complete the full process before the Expiration Date listed on the most recent designation certificate. Allow enough time to complete all required steps. If approved, the new certificate will align with the initial designation date and extend the designation for another 3 years.
- **How to Apply:** See Initial Designation requirements.

Expired Designation

- **Expired Status:** A Wildfire Prepared Multifamily designation is considered Expired if the full re-designation process is not completed by the Expiration Date listed on the most recent designation certificate.
- **How to Apply:** Once expired, applicants must complete the full designation process as a new application, verifying compliance with this technical standard. The designation will remain Expired until IBHS approves the new application. See Initial Designation requirements.

1.1.4.4 Legacy Exemption

IBHS reserves the right to update the Wildfire Prepared Multifamily Technical Standard at any time. New versions of the Wildfire Prepared Multifamily Technical Standard will be numbered and list an effective date. A new applicant must meet all requirements in the latest version of the Wildfire Prepared Multifamily Technical Standard as of that version's effective date. A renewal applicant must meet all requirements in the newest version of the technical standard as of that version's effective date, unless the renewal applicant receives a Legacy Exemption from IBHS. A Legacy Exemption allows IBHS to apply some or all of the requirements from the version of the Wildfire Prepared Multifamily Technical Standard that was in place when the renewal applicant first obtained a designation. IBHS reserves the right to assess and apply Legacy Exemptions on a case-by-case basis.

1.1.4.5 Technical Bulletins

A Technical Bulletin is an official document issued by IBHS to:

- Address common technical and/or compliance issues.
- Provide compliance guidance for situations not addressed in the technical standard.
- Provide a "deeper dive" into existing program requirements.
- Introduce new technical standard requirements or modify existing requirements between full technical standard updates.

Technical Bulletins issued between technical standard updates are typically incorporated into the technical standard during the next update.

1.2 Red Flag Warning and Extended Absence Preparedness

To help protect your building during Red Flag Warning days and extended absences, take the following maintenance steps:

- **0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone** - Clear all accumulated vegetative debris and combustible items from this critical area.
- **Roof and Gutters** - Ensure no vegetative debris, such as leaves or needles, is left on your roof or in gutters.

IBHS recommends taking the following precautions during Red Flag Warning days and extended absences.

- **Combustible Items** - Relocate combustible items indoors or at least 30 feet away from the building. Examples include small door mats, chair cushions, potted plants, trash and recycling bins, kids' toys, pet beds, pool accessories, decorations, and BBQ grills with a propane tank.

2 ESSENTIAL LEVEL DESIGNATION REQUIREMENTS

To achieve a **Wildfire Prepared Multifamily – Essential** designation, the property shall meet all listed requirements for this level, including specific building features and maintaining 30 feet of defensible space or to the property line around the building. These requirements must be met and maintained to qualify for and receive a designation certificate.

2.1 Building Feature Requirements for the Essential Level

2.1.1 Roof Covering

- The **roof covering material** shall have a **Class A rating** when tested in accordance with ASTM E108 or UL 790. Class A rated roof covering types include, but are not limited to, fiberglass composition asphalt shingles, concrete and clay tiles, metal shingles or sheets, and slate.
- **Single-ply membranes** are permitted on flat/low slope roofs only when installed as part of a tested and listed Class A roof assembly in accordance with ASTM E108 or UL790. The membrane alone is not considered Class A - only the tested assembly is. Owners must provide proof through one of the following **documentation paths**:
 - **Approved Construction Documents & Final Inspection Record:** Approved plans specifying the exact membrane type, cover board, attachment method, ASTM/UL Class A assembly reference, AND final building inspection record confirming the roof passed inspection as specified.
 - **Installation Records & Photo Documentation:** Roofing contractor invoice/work order listing the exact membrane type (brand + product name) and all underlayment, cover board, insulation, attachment details, AND detailed photo documentation and material verification. Acceptable evidence must include:
 - Comprehensive photo documentation of product labels for all roof assembly materials used and photos of each layer as installed.
 - Approved testing documentation identifying the Class A tested assembly and the materials used in the test.
 - Photographic correlation showing the installed assembly matches the tested assembly materials.
 - If verification that the single-ply membrane is part of a Class A roof assembly cannot be provided, the roof system must be retrofitted or replaced in accordance with the above to meet this requirement. See Technical Bulletin WP 2025-1 Single-ply Roof Membranes for more detailed information.
- **Roof cover maintenance** shall also meet all the following:
 - Kept **clear of vegetative debris**.
 - Where provided, barrel tile or corrugated roof coverings shall include **noncombustible bird stops** at the eave ends to prevent the entry of embers and debris.
- **Note:** Given the potential service life uncertainties of both ignition-resistant treatments and applied ignition-resistant coatings, the use of wood shake, wood shingle, or any wood roof covering material regardless of test rating are not permitted.

2.1.2 Gutters and Downspouts

Where gutters and downspouts are provided, shall include all the following:

- Gutters and downspouts shall be made of **noncombustible material** (e.g., metal).
- Gutters and downspouts shall be maintained **clear of vegetative debris**.

2.1.3 Vents

Ventilation openings, including for enclosed attics, gable ends, ridge ends, under eaves and cornices, enclosed eave soffit spaces, enclosed rafter spaces formed where ceilings are applied directly to the underside of roof rafters, underfloor ventilation, foundations, and crawl spaces, or for any other opening intended to permit ventilation, shall meet one of the following requirement options:

- **Performance-based Option** - Corrosion-resistant vents installed, conforming with the following ASTM E2886 test requirements for **flame- and ember-resistance**:
 - No flaming ignition of the cotton material during the Ember Intrusion Test.
 - No flaming ignition during the Integrity Test portion of the Flame Intrusion Test.

- Temperature of the unexposed side of the vent does not exceed 662°F.
- **Note:** Joints around such vents shall be sealed with sealants in accordance with vent manufacturer installation instructions to avoid ember and flame intrusion through the joints.
- **Prescriptive Option** - Vents shall be **covered with a noncombustible, corrosion-resistant mesh** with openings not to exceed 1/8-inch in diameter for ember-resistance.
- Turbine vents (e.g., whirlybird vents) are not allowed.
 - **Exceptions:**
 - Forced air vents (e.g., dryer and central vacuum) shall have a functional louver or flap in lieu of mesh.
 - Plumbing vents are excluded from this requirement.
 - **Note:** The portion of a foundation vents frame/trim located within 6 inches above the ground or deck shall be noncombustible.

2.1.4 6-inch Vertical Noncombustible Wall Covering Clearance

All exterior walls shall have at least **6-inches of noncombustible material** (e.g., exposed concrete foundation, fiber-cement, brick or stone veneer, stucco, metal flashing) applied vertically on the **base of the wall** measured from the ground at grade and the nearest horizontal surface (e.g., decks and patios).

- **Note:** All combustible deck posts shall include the 6-inch Vertical Noncombustible Wall Covering Clearance requirement, see Sections 2.1.5 and 2.1.6 below.

2.1.5 Attached Patios, Decks, and Overhead Structures (Containing Any Combustible Materials)

Any attached patio, deck, stair, or overhead structure that contains combustible materials is considered part of the building footprint, as shown in Figure 2 and shall meet all the following requirements:

2.1.5.1 Noncombustible Zone Around the Deck and Overhead Structure

Where provided, a combustible deck or overhead structure shall have its own **0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone**, measured from the outermost posts (see 2.2.1 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone for requirements).

- **Exception:** Where provided, an attached patio, deck, stairs, and overhead structure (e.g., pergola) **constructed entirely of noncombustible materials** such as concrete, fiber-cement, stucco, or metal, shall comply with the 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone requirements measured from the home's exterior walls, rather than from the outermost posts.

2.1.5.2 Top of Walking Surfaces

0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone

- Shall remove all combustible items within 5 feet, except as permitted in the Exceptions listed below.

Vegetation Maintenance

- Walking surfaces shall be **clear of vegetative debris, planter boxes, and climbing vines**.
- Woody vegetation - including shrubs and trees are not permitted.
 - **Exception:** Up to **10 plants in noncombustible pots** (e.g., terra cotta or clay) are permitted, provided:
 - Each plant (including the pot) shall not exceed 36 inches in height and width.

Furniture

- Furniture shall have a **noncombustible frame** (e.g., cast iron, aluminum, or metal), including but not limited to, hanging chairs, rocking/lounge chairs, swinging benches, picnic benches, tables and chairs, and sectionals and ottomans.
 - **Exception:** A limited number of small combustible items (e.g., chair cushions) are permitted if they can be relocated indoors or 30 feet away during Red Flag Warnings or extended absences.

Combustible Items

- Combustible items shall be **removed**, including but not limited to: sheds (including noncombustible sheds), saunas, storage containers, combustible privacy dividers, artificial turf, large area rugs, plastic covers, hanging lamps, window-mounted AC units, drapes, shade screens, plastic rain barrels, wine barrels, wood planters, and retractable shade screens without a noncombustible housing or replaced with noncombustible alternatives.
 - **Exceptions:**

- A limited number of items are permitted, including, but not limited to door mats, string lights, TVs, speakers, bird feeders, ceiling fans, pet doors and beds, trash/recycle bins, kids' toys, pool accessories, decorations, garden hoses, and BBQ grills with propane tanks and covers.

2.1.5.3 Additional Structures

Overhead Structures (e.g., covered porches, pergolas, carports, and gazebos)

- **Roof Covering** - Shall meet one of the following requirements:
 - A solid roof covering material with a Class A rating when tested in accordance with ASTM E108 or UL 790, or
 - Constructed of combustible slats (e.g., pergola) that cover no more than 15% of the total surface area.
- **Setback** - A detached combustible overhead structure (e.g., pergola and gazebo) on an attached deck shall be at least **10 feet from all exterior walls** of the building. (see Section 2.2.3 Detached Accessory Dwelling Units and Accessory Structures for additional requirements).
 - **Exception:** An overhead structure (e.g., pergola) constructed entirely of noncombustible materials is permitted with no setback requirement.
- **Posts** - Combustible posts shall have at least **6-inches of noncombustible wall covering material** (e.g., fiber-cement, metal flashing, masonry veneer, or stucco) applied vertically on the base of the posts measured from the ground at grade and the nearest horizontal surface (e.g., decks and patios).
- **Other** - Shall be free of any vegetation, curtains, drapes, and shade screens.
 - **Exception:** Shade screens that retract into noncombustible housing are permitted.
- **Carports**- In addition to having at least **6-inches of vertical noncombustible wall covering material and the 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone** under and around the structure, shall meet all of the following requirements:
 - Shall not store combustible items.
 - An open carport with exposed combustible interior wall covering (e.g., wood), shall be enclosed.

Other Large Combustibles (e.g., hot tubs, saunas, outdoor kitchens, bars, built-in countertop areas)

- **Hot Tubs and Saunas (where provided)** -
 - Shall be located at least **10 feet from the building's exterior walls and from other large combustibles, and not under a combustible overhead structure** (e.g., covered porch, pergola, or gazebo).
 - When installed **on a combustible surface** (e.g., wood or composite deck), shall have noncombustible material under the hot tub and sauna, extending to 2 feet beyond all sides.
 - When installed **on a noncombustible surface or patio (e.g., concrete patio)**, the 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone shall be maintained around the hot tub or sauna.
- **Outdoor Kitchens, Bars, and Built-ins (where provided)** -
 - All horizontal exterior surfaces shall be constructed entirely of **noncombustible materials**. If any cabinets or built-ins have combustible vertical surfaces, they shall have at least 6-inches of noncombustible material applied vertically on exposed exterior walls, measured above any horizontal deck or patio surface.
 - If attached to the building and the exterior wall covering is combustible, at least 6-inches of noncombustible material (e.g., backsplash) shall be applied vertically on the wall above any horizontal surface of the kitchen, bar, and built-in.

2.1.5.4 Underneath an Elevated Deck

- **Vegetation and Groundcover** - Shall **remove all vegetation and combustible groundcover** (e.g., grass, artificial turf, weeds, plants, shrubs, bushes, trees, exposed weed cloth, wood and rubber mulch) to bare mineral soil.
 - **Note:** Noncombustible hardscape materials (e.g., gravel, pavers, river rocks, decomposed granite, steppingstones, and concrete) are permitted.
- **6-inch Vertical Noncombustible Clearance** - Shall have at least **6-inches of noncombustible wall covering material** (e.g., fiber-cement, metal flashing, masonry veneer, or stucco) applied vertically at the base of all posts, supporting walls, and stairs measured from the ground at grade.
- **Lattice and Mesh** - Where provided, **combustible lattice material** (e.g., wood or plastic), shall be removed from at least the bottom 6-inches or replaced with noncombustible material (e.g., metal). Where noncombustible corrosion-resistant metal mesh is provided, the mesh shall be installed on the outside of the lattice.

- **No Storage** - Shall have **nothing stored underneath**.
 - **Exception:** An open outdoor living area under the deck shall meet the same requirements as top of walking surfaces (see Section 2.1.5.2 Top of Walking Surfaces).
- Additionally, **decks with a walking surface of 4 feet or less above the ground**, shall be enclosed with the following:
 - When measured from the walking surface to the ground, the underdeck area with this height or less shall be **enclosed with noncombustible, corrosion-resistant mesh**. The mesh openings shall not exceed 1/8-inch in diameter and shall fully enclose the outer edge of the deck from the walking surface to the ground. This enclosure is required to reduce debris accumulation and limit ember intrusion beneath the deck.

2.1.6 Detached Decks and Overhead Structures (e.g., Covered Porches, Pergolas, Carports, and Gazebos)

Where provided, detached decks and overhead structures within 30 feet of the building shall meet the same requirements as attached decks (see 2.1.5 Attached Patios, Decks, and Overhead Structures).

2.2 Defensible Space Requirements for the Essential Level

2.2.1 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone - Area within 5 Feet of the Building and Attachments

The first five feet surrounding the building and its attachments (e.g., patios, decks, stairs, and overhead structures) is the **most critical area of defensible space**. This zone shall be established and maintained as noncombustible.

The 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone is measured horizontally from the **edge of the building's exterior walls** and, if present, the outermost posts of a combustible deck or overhead structure, extending outward to 5 feet (see Figure 2). This noncombustible area also extends vertically to the sky.

The **0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone** shall meet all the following requirements:

Vegetation -

- Shall **remove all vegetation** (e.g., grass, weeds, flowers, succulents, cacti, plants, shrubs, bushes, and vegetative debris) **within 5 feet** to bare mineral soil.
- Shall **remove all trees**, limbs, branches, and vines that are within **and that overhang** the 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone.

Groundcover -

- Shall **remove all combustible groundcover materials** (e.g., wood and rubber mulch, artificial turf, and exposed weed cloth) within 5 feet to bare mineral soil.
 - **Note:** Noncombustible hardscape materials (e.g., bare, dirt, gravel, pavers, river rocks, decomposed granite, steppingstones, and concrete) are permitted.

Fencing and Retaining Walls -

- Shall **remove combustible fencing materials** (e.g., wood and vinyl), posts, gates, and retaining walls **within 5 feet** or replace with noncombustible material.

Parked Items -

Shall not store vehicles, motorcycles, trailers, boats, campers, RVs, ATVs, and similar vehicles within 5 feet.

Combustible Items -



Figure 2. The 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone

- **Removal Requirement:** Shall remove all combustible items within 5 feet including, but not limited to, drapes, hot tubs, firewood, furniture, hanging lamps, window-mounted AC units, large area rugs, combustible privacy dividers, plastic rain barrels, wine barrels, wood planters, playsets, saunas, sheds, storage containers, shade screens, and retractable shade screens without a noncombustible housing.
- **Replacement Option:** Certain combustible items (e.g., furniture) may be replaced with noncombustible-framed alternatives.
- **Exceptions:**
 - A limited number of items including, but not limited to, door mats, string lights, TVs, speakers, bird feeders, pet doors and beds, trash/recycle bins, kids' toys, pool pumps and accessories, garden hoses, BBQ grills with propane tank and cover, HVAC units (e.g., compressor fans), plastic downspout extensions, retractable shade screens with noncombustible housing, solar panel battery enclosures, and irrigation valves are permitted.

Reference Sections for Other Items:

- For large combustibles (e.g., hot tubs, saunas, outdoor kitchens, bars, and built-ins), see Section 2.1.5.3.
- For pergolas, see Section 2.1.5.3.
- For large structures (e.g., sheds, ADU units), see Section 2.2.3 for Essential and Section 3.2.2 for Enhanced.

2.2.2 5-30 Foot Defensible Space Zone - Area Surrounding the Building and Attachments

To slow fire spread and reduce flame intensity near the building, horizontal and vertical separation of vegetation, structures, and other connective fuels shall be created and maintained within 5 to 30 feet around the structure and its attachments or to the property line, whichever is closest. The 5-30 Foot Defensible Space Zone shall meet all the following requirements:

2.2.2.1 Vegetation

Tree Spacing -

- Shall prune tree limbs and branches to a minimum height of **6 vertical feet above the ground or one-third the height of the tree** if the tree is under 18 feet tall.
- Hedges of trees, forming a boundary, **shall be located a minimum of 10 feet from the building's exterior walls and have 10 foot of horizontal spacing from other trees.**
- Shall keep all branches at least **10 feet away from chimney** and stovepipe outlets.

Shrub Spacing -

- Shrubs taller than 2 feet shall **not be placed under trees.**
- Individual shrubs or clustered groupings ("islands") may be used, provided each grouping has total foliage **less than 10 feet in horizontal diameter.** Shrub groupings are treated as a single shrub.
- Shrub and shrub groupings shall have horizontal spacing from other vegetation of **2 times the height of the tallest plant** up to a maximum spacing requirement of 10 feet.
 - Example: A 3-foot-tall shrub requires 6 feet of clearance around it.
- Hedges of shrubs, forming a boundary, **shall be located a minimum of 10 feet from the building's exterior walls and have the same horizontal spacing from other vegetation.**

Maintenance -

- Shall cut down annual grasses to **less than 4 inches** in height.
- Continuous vegetative groundcover kept at less than 18 inches in height when isolated from other fuels may be maintained on slopes where necessary to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion.
- Shall routinely **remove dead and dying vegetation** (e.g., grass, weeds, groundcover, shrubs, trees, logs, stumps, branches, leaves, and pine needles).
- Shall place **wood piles at least 30 feet away** from the building unless the wood is stored in an accessory structure (see Section 2.2.3 Accessory Dwelling Units and Accessory Structures for Base Level requirements or Section 3.2.2 for Plus Level requirements). Fire-retardant tarps are not permitted.

2.2.2.2 Other items

Liquid Propane Gas Storage Tanks and Fuel Tanks (e.g., diesel and kerosene) - Where provided, shall meet one of the following requirements:

- Shall be at least 30 feet from the building, or
- Shall be at least 10 feet from the building and have the following minimum clearance
 - **0-10 feet** - Shall have 10 feet of noncombustible clearance to bare mineral soil under and around the tank, including removal of groundcover, shrubs, trees, fencing, and all combustible items. Noncombustible hardscape materials (e.g., bare dirt, gravel, pavers, river rocks, decomposed granite, steppingstones, and concrete) are permitted.
 - **Exception:** Healthy, mature trees are permitted if limbed up to maintain at least 6 feet of clearance above the tank.
 - **10-20 feet** - Shall extend clearance an additional 10 feet around their exterior. The additional 10 feet of clearance includes cutting annual grasses down to less than four inches in height; removing shrubs and trees; and removing dead shrubs, trees, limbs, branches, logs, and stumps.
 - **Exception:** Healthy, mature trees are permitted if limbed up to maintain at least 6 feet of clearance above the tank.

Combustible Water Storage Tanks -

- Where provided, shall be at least **5 feet from the building's exterior walls** and other large combustibles and not under a combustible overhead structure (e.g., covered porch, pergola, or gazebo).
 - **Exception:** Multiple water storage tanks within 5 feet of each other are permitted.
- Shall have the 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone (e.g., bare dirt, gravel, pavers, river rocks, decomposed granite, steppingstones, and concrete) underneath and surrounding the tank.

2.2.3 Detached Accessory Dwelling Units and Accessory Structures (within the 5-30 Foot Defensible Space Zone)

All Structures [e.g., Overhead Structures (e.g., Pergolas, Carports, Gazebos) Sheds, Garages, Greenhouses, Playsets, etc.] with a footprint greater than or equal to 15 square feet and within 30 feet of the building and attachments, where provided, shall meet all the following requirements:

- **All structures shall be at least 10 feet from the building and attachments.**
- Structures shall meet the same wildfire resilience requirements for the building, such as roof covering, gutters and downspouts, vents, 6-inch vertical noncombustible wall covering clearance, decks, and the 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone surrounding them.
- Space **multiple structures** at least **10 feet apart** from each other. Each structure's 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone under and around the structure shall not overlap the 0-5 Foot Noncombustible Zone required for the building, decks, or other structures within 30 feet.
- Shall have **no more than 3 total** ADUs and accessory structures within 30 feet.
- Additionally, **open detached carports and garages**, where provided:
 - Shall not store combustible items.
 - An open carport with exposed combustible interior wall covering (e.g., wood), shall be enclosed.
- **Note - Ongoing Research:** As of publication of this technical standard, IBHS continues active research into the spacing required between structures to reduce the likelihood of wind-driven building-to-building fire spread, including the impact of structural openings, building materials, and connective fuels. The provisions of this section of the standard may be updated as this research matures.

3 ENHANCED LEVEL DESIGNATION REQUIREMENTS

To achieve a **Wildfire Prepared Multifamily – Enhanced** designation, a property shall first meet all the requirements of the **Essential** level, except where superceded by more restrictive **Enhanced** requirements. The property shall also meet all of the following **Enhanced** level requirements:

3.1 Building Features Requirements for the Enhanced Level

3.1.1 Gutters and Downspouts

Where provided, in addition to having noncombustible material for gutters and downspouts as required for the Essential level, gutters shall also be **covered with a noncombustible material**.

3.1.2 Eaves and Soffits

In addition to the vent opening requirement for eaves and soffits listed for the Essential level requirements, eaves shall be **enclosed (soffited) with noncombustible material (e.g., fiber-cement, stucco, or metal), inclusive of outlookers, fascia boards, and any decorative features**.

3.1.3 Vents

In addition to having a functional louver or flap for forced air vents (e.g., dryer and central vacuum) as required for the Essential level requirements, they shall also be **made of noncombustible material** (e.g., metal).

3.1.4 Exterior Wall Covering

All exterior wall covering shall be made of a noncombustible material (e.g., metal, fiber-cement, masonry veneer, stucco, brick, concrete), **inclusive of external columns, beams, and decorative features**.

- Where provided, all shutters (decorative and operable) shall have all exposed surfaces constructed of noncombustible material.
- **Note:** Combustible and ignition-resistant wall cover material (e.g., vinyl, wood shake, wood shingle, or any other wood siding material including ignition-resistant treatments and coatings) by construction or assembly are not permitted.

3.1.5 Exterior Glass (Windows, Skylights, and Glazed Openings within Doors)

All exterior windows, skylights, and glazed openings within doors shall comply with one of the following requirements:

- Multipaned glass with **at least two tempered panes**.
 - **Exception:** Skylights may be constructed with one outer tempered pane and one inner laminated pane.
- Glass with a fire-protection rating of not less than 20 minutes, when tested according to NFPA 257 or UL 9.
- Glass block (windows only).

Operable skylights, regardless of glass configuration, shall be protected with a noncombustible mesh screen where mesh openings shall not exceed 1/8-inch in diameter.

3.1.6 Exterior Doors

All exterior doors shall comply with one of the following requirements:

- **Noncombustible construction.**
- Solid-core wood not less than 1¾ inches thick (44 mm).
- Have a fire-resistance rating of not less than 20 minutes when tested according to NFPA 252, UL 10B, or UL 10C.
- Doors made of combustible material (e.g. non-solid core wood doors) are permissible provided a noncombustible exterior storm door is installed as the outermost door.

In addition to the above, all of the following are required:

- The exterior door frame shall be constructed with a noncombustible threshold.
- Where provided, windows within doors and glazed doors shall be constructed in accordance with this standard's exterior glass requirements (see Section 3.1.5 Exterior Glass).
 - **Exception:** Garage doors may have a single pane of tempered glass or solid (e.g., no glass).

3.1.7 Underfloor and Under Projections (e.g., cantilevers, balconies, structures on piers)

Underfloor areas and underneath building projections, excluding decks, shall meet one of the following:

- Shall have a **noncombustible material covering** the exposed underside, or
- Be enclosed to the ground with a noncombustible material wall covering in accordance with Section 3.1.4.

Decks complying with the retrofit option 2 in Sections 3.1.8.1 and 2.1.5.4 comply with this Section.

3.1.8 Decks, Stairs, and Additional Attached Structures

3.1.8.1 Decks and Stairs

In addition to the Essential level requirements, decks shall meet one of the following required options:

Option 1: New Construction - (Fully Noncombustible Deck)

- All deck components, including posts, joists, railings, stairs, and walking surfaces, shall be constructed entirely of noncombustible materials.

Option 2: Retrofit - (Noncombustible Upgrades to Existing Deck)

- **Deck Walking Surfaces** shall be constructed with a solid, noncombustible material (e.g., metal or light-weight concrete) with no gaps.
- **Deck Railings** within 5 feet of the building shall be constructed with noncombustible material, including where they attach to the building.
- **Deck posts** shall have a minimum of 6-inches of noncombustible material (e.g., metal flashing or fiber-cement board) applied vertically to the base.
- **Stairs Attached to a Deck** shall meet one of the following requirements:
 - **Stairs Wider Than 4 Feet, with a Walking Surface of 4 Feet or Less in height and Open Underneath:**
 - The area underneath shall be enclosed with **noncombustible, corrosion-resistant mesh** with openings not to exceed 1/8-inch in diameter.
 - A minimum of **6-inches** of noncombustible material (e.g., metal flashing or fiber-cement) shall be applied vertically at the exterior base, measured from the ground at grade.
 - Stairs shall have **closed risers**. Stair treads and risers shall be solid (no gaps), and made of noncombustible material (e.g., metal or light-weight concrete).
 - **Stairs not covered by the section above:**
 - A minimum of **6-inches** of noncombustible material (e.g., metal flashing or fiber-cement) shall be applied vertically at the exterior base, measured from the ground at grade.
 - Stair treads shall be a **solid (no gaps)** and made of noncombustible material (e.g., metal or lightweight concrete).
 - **Exception:** If stairs are constructed with closed risers, they shall also be **solid (no gaps)** and made of noncombustible material.

3.1.8.2 Additional Attached Structures

Overhead Structures

Where provided, overhead structures shall be completely noncombustible and shall meet the same material requirements as the main structure.

Outdoor Kitchens, Bars, and Built-Ins

Where provided, these features shall be constructed entirely of **noncombustible materials**.

3.2 Defensible Space Requirements for the Enhanced Level

3.2.1 Parallel Fences within 5 to 30 feet

Back-to-back (parallel) combustible fencing (meaning separate fences that are combustible and closer than 5 feet apart) are not permitted.

- **Exception:** If one or both **back-to-back (parallel) fences** are constructed with noncombustible materials (e.g., concrete or metal).

- **Note:** Meeting this requirement may necessitate coordination with neighboring properties to eliminate at least one of the combustible parallel fences.

3.2.2 Detached Accessory Dwelling Units and Accessory Structures

- **All Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Accessory Structures [e.g., Overhead Structures (e.g., Pergolas, Carports, Garages, Gazebos) Sheds, Greenhouses, Playsets, Etc.]** with a footprint greater than or equal to 15 square feet shall be **located a minimum of 30 feet away** from the building and attachments.
- **Note - Ongoing Research:** As of publication of this technical standard, IBHS continues active research into the spacing required between structures to reduce the likelihood of wind-driven building-to-building fire spread, including the impact of structural openings, building materials, and connective fuels. The provisions of this section of the standard may be updated as this research matures.

4 APPENDIX A. TECHNICAL RESOURCES

Wildfire Prepared Multifamily offers tools to assist property owners, applicants, and other stakeholders achieve designations. Find them at wildfireprepared.org.

4.1 Preparing for a Wildfire Prepared Multifamily Designation

To meet the wildfire mitigation requirements for a designation, applicants should use the [Wildfire Prepared Multifamily: How-To Prepare Checklist](#). This checklist is based on the technical standard and is intended to help applicants complete all required mitigation actions for their selected level prior to applying.

4.2 IBHS Portal, Contact Information, and Status Updates

After creating an account, log in at wildfireprepared.org/portal to ask questions and check your application status.

4.3 Definitions

- **Combustible** - Materials that can ignite and burn.
- **Hedge** - a boundary formed by a dense row of shrubs or trees.
- **Noncombustible** - Made from material of which no part will ignite and burn when subjected to fire. Any material passing ASTM E136 shall be considered noncombustible.
- **Performance-Based Option** - Specifies a desired outcome by requiring compliance with a certain standard(s), without prescribing specific methods or materials.
- **Prescriptive Option** - Specifies exact methods or materials to achieve compliance, rather than focusing on a desired outcome (compliance with a certain standard(s)).
- **Red Flag Warning** - A Red Flag Warning is determined by local offices of the National Weather Service (NWS) and is specific to those local areas. A Red Flag Warning means warm temperatures, very low humidities, and strong winds are expected to combine to produce an increased risk of fire danger.
- **Roof Covering** - The material applied to the roof deck to provide weather resistance, achieve fire classification, or enhance appearance.
- **Shrub** - A woody perennial plant with several major branches arising from near the base of the main stem.
- **Tree** - A woody perennial plant with a well-defined stem or trunk, a diameter at four and a half feet above the ground of at least four inches, and a height at maturity of at least fifteen feet.
- **Wall Covering** - An exterior wall material applied to provide a weather-resistant barrier, insulation, or aesthetic appeal.

4.4 List of Referenced Standards

4.4.1 ASTM

- **E84** - Standard Test Methods for Surface Burning Characteristics of Building Materials
- **E108** - Standard Test Methods for Fire Tests of Roof Coverings
- **E136** - Standard Test Method for Behavior of Materials in a Vertical Tube Furnace at 750°C
- **E2768** - Standard Test Method for Extended Duration Surface Burning Characteristics of Building Materials (30 min Tunnel Test)
- **E2886** - Standard Test Method for Evaluating the Ability of Exterior Vents to Resist the Entry of Embers and Direct Flame Impingement

4.4.2 NFPA

- **252** - Standard Methods of Fire Tests of Door Assemblies
- **257** - Standard on Fire Test for Windows and Glass Block Assemblies

4.4.3 UL

- **9** - Standard for Fire Tests of Window Assemblies
- **10B** - Standard for Safety - Fire Tests of Door Assemblies
- **10C** - Standard for Positive Pressure Fire Tests of Door Assemblies
- **723** - Standard for Test for Surface Burning Characteristics of Building Materials
- **790** - Standard Test Methods for Fire Tests of Roof Coverings

4.4.4 ISO

- **17065** - Requirements for Bodies Certifying Products, Processes and Services