

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA GUIDELINES

DPA 10 WILDFIRE HAZARDS



General Regulations

12.10.1 Category

DPA 10 is designated under the following categories of Section 488 (1) of the *Local Government Act*:

(b) Protection of development from hazardous conditions.

12.10.2 Area of Applicability

- DPA 10 guidelines apply to all development on parcels within DPA 10, as shown on Appendix K.

12.10.3 Justification

As the city grows, development may occur in areas of wildfire interface. Development in these areas presents a danger to people and property as wildfire can spread quickly from forests and grassed slopes to buildings and structures. The intent of the Wildfire DP Guidelines is to ensure that all new development is resilient to catastrophic wildfire hazardous fuel conditions through abatement. Using appropriate precautionary measures as part of site and building design, construction, landscaping, and long-term maintenance can help minimize risk to people and property from wildfire hazards.

12.10.4 Objectives

The following guidelines are intended to:

- Mitigate the risk to people and property from wildfire hazards
- Minimize the risk of fire to the City's wildland areas
- Promote activities to reduce wildfire hazards while addressing environmental issues

12.10.5 Exemptions

The following exemptions to DPA 10 may be applied:

- Interior Renovations not resulting in any change to the footprint of the building
- Construction, addition, or alteration not exceeding 10m²
- Parcel consolidation
- Emergency circumstances to remove any immediate danger
- The only activity being proposed onsite relates to the removal of hazardous trees and a report prepared and submitted by a forest professional registered in British Columbia holding either Wildlife/Danger Tree Assessor qualifications or Tree Risk Assessment Qualifications (TRAQ) concludes the tree(s) is (are) hazardous
- The activity proposed on the site relates solely to normal farm practices in accordance with the Farm Practices Protection Act and the landowner follows other regulations listed in the Act
- Buildings that have been destroyed by fire and/or natural disaster less than 75%, as determined by the Building Official, provided the building's massing, siting and general appearance are as prior to destruction and the use conforms to the City's Zoning Bylaw, as amended from time to time
- Any servicing work undertaken by or on behalf of the City of Merritt

Guidelines

The following guidelines may be applied when setting Development Permit conditions.

DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS

To establish general conditions and expectations of development in areas with potential wildfire hazards.

12.10.6 Covenant

A restrictive covenant is required for all properties in DPA 10, as shown on Appendix K. The covenant must outline wildfire hazard mitigation methods, to the satisfaction of the City, and be registered on title at the expense of the applicant.

12.10.7 Land Transfer

For wildland areas that are being dedicated to the City, such as parkland dedication, mitigate wildfire hazards through fuel modification, to a level deemed acceptable to the City, prior to transfer to the City.

SITE PLANNING

To guide the site design to reduce the risk of potential hazards to the property and its surroundings.

12.10.8 Site Design

Design the site to mitigate wildfire hazards.

12.10.9 Access

If the subdivision or neighbourhood has only a single means of vehicular egress, provide a secondary access road to enable evacuation and emergency response.

12.10.10 Street Buffer

Where wildland areas abut new subdivisions, consider placing a street between the development and the wildland area to improve access for emergency vehicles and act as a fuel break.

12.10.11 Building Sites

Avoid locating buildings in gullies or draws where winds are funneled, and fuel accumulates.

12.10.12 Defensible Space

Create a defensible space of at least 10 metres between development and the top of slopes with the goal of reducing risks from approaching wildfire.

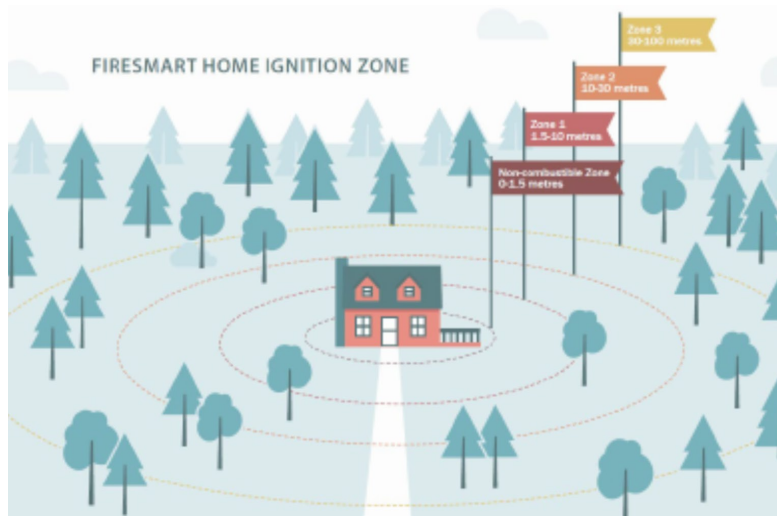
LANDSCAPING

To guide the design of landscaping for the mitigation of hazardous conditions.

12.10.13 Fuel Management

Fuel management should be undertaken from the anticipated building site to a distance of 30 metres (FireSmart Zones 1 and 2), or where hazard levels are assessed as being higher to a distance of 100 metres (FireSmart Zone 3), or to the edge of the property, as follows:

- Thin the canopy and understory and prune lower branches to create an environment that reduces the risk of a crown fire as per a fuel management prescription developed by a registered forest professional;
- Space and maintain trees so that canopy spacing is a minimum of three metres;
- Remove dead and dying trees unless suitable specimens have been converted into wildlife trees as assessed by a forest professional with Wildlife Danger Tree qualifications; and
- Use alternatives to burning or an approved burning method such as pit, trench or air curtain burning to remove hazardous woody debris from wildfire fuel treatments.



12.10.14 Fire Smart Zones

Landscape according to Fire Smart guidance for each zone:

- Non-combustible Zone (up to 5 metres from building site): No or limited plantings.
- Zone 1 (5 to 10 metres from building site): Plantings should be limited and be fire resistant species.
- Zone 2 (10 to 30 metres from building site): Carefully space plants and trees. Use fire resistant plants and trees.
- Zone 3 (30 to 100 metres from building site): Use fire resistant species.

12.10.15 Xeriscaping

Landscape with drought tolerant and native plant and tree species.

12.10.16 Fire Smart Planting

Use fire resistant plants, where possible. Deciduous trees are preferred. Avoid the use of highly flammable plants and trees, including coniferous trees with cones or needles. Cedars, junipers, spruce, pine other than Ponderosa, tall grasses, and mulch are prohibited.

12.10.17 Landscape Maintenance

Maintain landscaping to reduce wildfire risks, including the following:

- Keep trees and shrubs pruned. Prune all trees up to 2 – 3 metres from the ground.
- Remove leaf clutter and dead and overhanging branches.
- Mow lawns to ensure grass is not tall.
- Dispose of cuttings and debris promptly, and in accordance with disposal regulations.
- Store firewood away from buildings and structures.
- Maintain any irrigation systems.
- Store and use flammable materials properly.

BUILDING DESIGN

To guide the design of buildings for the mitigation of hazardous conditions.

12.10.18 Roofing Materials

Use fire resistant or fire-retardant roofing materials as referenced in the current BC Building Code, as amended. Wood shakes are not permitted. Screen or close gutters to prevent the accumulation of leaves or needles.

12.10.19 Exterior Cladding

Use fire resistant materials for cladding of exterior surfaces. Untreated wood and vinyl siding are not permitted. Skirt manufactured homes with a fire-resistant material.

12.10.20 Exterior Doors and Windows

Use exterior doors and garage doors constructed of non-combustible materials. Use double paned or tempered exterior windows and glazing.

12.10.21 Balconies, Decks and Porches

Use heavy timber construction as defined in the BC Building Code for structural components (post & beam) of balconies, decks, and porches. Alternatively, clad the structural components with fire resistant material. Sheath balconies, decks, and porches (no exposed joists) with fire-resistant materials. Cover openings under decks and porches to prevent the accumulation of combustible material.

12.10.22 Eaves, Soffits and Vents

Close eaves and soffits so no joists are exposed. Cover ventilation openings in exterior walls, roofs, eaves, and soffits with non-combustible corrosion-resistant panels with openings no larger than 3 mm. Wall-mounted exterior vents are exempt from having wire mesh with 3 mm openings if vents with mobile flaps are used (subject to venting requirements in the BC Building Code).

12.10.23 Chimneys

Construct chimneys for wood burning fire appliances with spark arrestors made of 12 gauge (or better) welded or woven wire mesh, with openings not exceeding 12 mm.