

Washington Wildfire Hazard and Risk Map – Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

Q: What is the Washington Wildfire Hazard and Risk Map?

A: The wildfire hazard and risk map identifies areas across Washington that are more likely to experience wildfires and where those fires may have significant impacts on people, property, and resources. It is based on data such as vegetation, climate, topography, past fire activity, and human infrastructure.

Q: Why is this map being created?

A: The map is being developed in response to Senate Bill 6120 (2024) to help local governments, planners, homeowners, and emergency services better understand and respond to wildfire risks.

Q: Who is creating the map?

A: The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in coordination with local governments, fire agencies, researchers, and community stakeholders.

Map Content and Use

Q: What's the difference between wildfire hazard and wildfire risk?

A: *Hazard* refers to the likelihood that wildfire could occur in a certain area based on environmental conditions. *Risk* refers to the chance a wildfire will ignite, spread, and cause negative impacts to assets such as homes or infrastructure.

Q: Does this map classify individual properties as “high risk” or “very high risk”?

A: No. The map provides general hazard zones and overlays that indicate where local evaluations may be needed. It does not determine the risk for a specific home or parcel without further on-the-ground (local) assessment.

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Q: How accurate is the map?

A: The map is built using the best available science and data sources. It is a planning-level tool and should be used alongside local knowledge and site-specific assessments.

Impacts on Property Owners

Q: Will this map affect my insurance rates or ability to get coverage?

A: Insurance companies use their own risk models developed independently from the DNR wildfire hazard and risk maps. The state's map is not directly tied to insurance rate-setting or coverage availability. For questions about coverage, contact your insurance provider.

Q: Will being in a high-hazard area affect my ability to build or renovate?

A: Local governments will adopt building codes or land-use regulations based on wildfire hazard. Being in a high-risk area might mean additional requirements for fire-resistant materials, for example.

Q: What can I do if my property is in a high-risk area?

A: There are many actions you can take to reduce wildfire risk, such as creating defensible space around your home, using fire-resistant construction, and joining community fire preparedness programs like Firewise USA®.

Public Process and Transparency

Q: How is the public being involved in map development?

A: DNR will conduct statewide listening sessions beginning in early 2026 to share draft maps, gather feedback, and host GIS-focused workshops to incorporate local data. Your feedback helps ensure the map reflects on-the-ground realities and community values.

Q: Will I be notified if my area is added to a high hazard zone?

A: Public notification efforts will accompany map updates, and local jurisdictions may provide direct outreach if changes impact planning, permitting, or other processes.

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Q: How often will the map be updated?

A: The map will be reviewed and updated regularly (frequency to be determined) to incorporate new data, local assessments, and changes in fire patterns due to climate or development.

Access and Resources

Q: Where can I view the map?

A: The map will be available through the [Washington DNR website](#) with interactive tools to explore your community's wildfire hazard and risk levels.

Q: How can I give feedback or ask questions about the map?

A: You can provide comments online during official public comment periods, attend local public meetings, or contact the project manager. Visit the project webpage for more information at <https://dnr.wa.gov/wildfire-resources/wildfire-prevention/wildfire-hazard-and-risk-mapping>.

Q: Are there resources to help me prepare for wildfire?

A: Yes. Visit wildfireready.dnr.wa.gov or contact your local fire district for home hardening tips, evacuation plans, and preparedness programs.