



# NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center  
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## Tasking Memorandum

Reference: TM-2008-06

To: Chair, Wildland Urban Interface Working Team (WUIWT)  
Chair, Safety and Health Working Team (SHWT)

From: NWCG Chair

Date: June 5, 2008

Subject: Shelter In Place: Implementation Alternatives

**Background:** Homeowner education programs are a common tool for wildfire management in the wildland urban interface (WUI) across the US, Australia, and Canada alike. Funds allocated to homeowner education are seen as valuable investment dollars with the potential for high-yield returns. Current federal fire appropriations for suppressing wildfires are being directed increasingly for structure protection, rather than actual fire suppression in the WUI.

**Tasking:** The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) has tasked NWCG with evaluating the various “Shelter In Place” concepts (Australia and Canada) and developing an alternative proposal for potential implementation in the US. NWCG is tasking the Wildland Urban Interface Working Team (WUIWT) to take the lead on this effort and to work collaboratively with the Safety and Health Working Team (SHWT) in this endeavor.

**Outcomes/Deliverables:** The WFLC is particularly interested in the international concepts of sharing responsibility with homeowners in terms of preparation and defense of their property. The concept that encourages residents to consider the *option* of remaining on their property in the event of an approaching wildfire and defending their property from potential ignition offers potential options to engage the public in solving this societal issue. The WFLC also recognizes this concept calls for some people to evacuate early as the only viable option. Data shows that many fatalities in wildland fire are caused by people leaving their homes at the last minute; a significant portion of those

killed or injured were in their vehicles or out in the open attempting to escape on foot. By encouraging personal responsibility in this decision-making process, we can increase effectiveness in managing wildland fire and enhance our ability to protect homes and communities.

Your working teams are encouraged to evaluate this concept considering hurdles to implementation, policies needing change, cost of implementation, and potential savings from implementing such a strategy as you develop recommendations for potential implementation.

**Timeline:** The WFLC is looking for your recommendation for the January 2009 Meeting in Washington, DC. Draft recommendations should be completed for review by NWCG no later than November 12, 2008.

Any questions should be directed to the NWCG WUIWT Liaison, Jim Erickson, at (509) 633-1067.

cc: NWCG Executive Board