RESEARCH

Current research on wildland and urban interface fires provides resources and data that can help fire fighters respond to these events, including:

- Effectiveness of building codes in the wildland urban interface.
- Education of homeowners and the public on defensible open spaces and fuels management.
- Unifying and improving effectiveness (agency co-operation and coordination).
- Initial response staffing effectiveness and the value of funding appropriately.
- Effectiveness of firefighting tactics, PPE, physiological impact of wildland firefighting on fire fighters.

AWARENESS

More than 70 million homes already exist in the urban interface. Nearly three-quarters of IAFF locals are affected by Wildland/urban interface issues, and need to understand the true costs of wildland fires and their effect on the economy in order to seek funding.
The International is providing resources and programs to help members who are responding to the threat to the urban interface, borderlands and areas within woodlands and urban areas.

- Guidance and subject matter expertise on addressing urban interface fire problems.
- Technical and real world experience to advance IAFF legislative and administrative actions that protect our members’ health and safety and understanding of working conditions.
- Assistance and analysis of IAFF-sponsored fire research, including a lead role on climate and structure trends.
- Expertise to meet the training needs of our members.
- Advocacy for increased federal funding for fire suppression and response.

The IAFF is making sure our members are equipped and trained to safely and effectively respond to the challenges of wildland and urban interface fires. Increasingly, dangerous urban interface fires are raging across North America, becoming catastrophic with enormous loss of property and significant risk to human life. Consequently, IAFF members are faced with a variety of extraordinary challenges that will only worsen if not addressed.

The NFPA’s report on Wildland/Urban Interface: Fire Department Wildfire Preparedness and Readiness Capabilities identifies several issues with wildland and urban interface fire training.

- Wildland/urban interface fire training may be adopted inconsistently, with variations in the level and adequacy of the training.
- The need to transition to wildland/urban interface fire training from traditional training practices that emphasize structure fires.
- More than 66 percent of fire departments that respond to wildland/urban interface fires don’t train all of their fire fighters to respond.

The IAFF is working with the many wildland/urban interface advocacy groups across the United States and Canada that speak and act for fire fighters to provide guidance on training, education, staffing and health and safety issues that affect our members’ working environment.

The IAFF is making sure our members are equipped and trained to safely and effectively respond to the threat in the urban interface environment and successfully defend homes while suppressing interface fires.

Responding to the Interface training course includes online education with two days of hands-on training designed to provide fire fighters and company officers a consistent basic understanding of safety, command and control, and strategy and tactics for defending structures from a wildland fire (defensive strategy) or suppressing a wildland fire in and around structures (offensive strategy). This training will give fire fighters and company officers the basic skills needed to safely operate in the urban interface environment and successfully defend homes while suppressing interface fires.