

Firewood Storage

Santa Fe Trail Ranch POA | Wildfire Mitigation Best Practices

A well-stocked firewood supply is a winter necessity in Southern Colorado — but how and where you store it can make the difference between a saved and a lost home during a wildfire. Firewood piles are dense, highly combustible fuel sources that can dramatically accelerate fire spread toward structures when improperly located. Following a few clear storage guidelines protects your home while keeping your firewood accessible and ready for use.

BEST PRACTICES FOR FIREWOOD STORAGE

- **30-Foot Rule:** Store all firewood at least **30 feet away** from any structure — this includes the house, garage, shed, barn, or propane tank.
- **No Contact with Structure:** Never store firewood directly against or under exterior walls, on a covered porch, under a deck, or inside an attached structure.
- **Uphill or Level Placement:** Stack firewood **uphill from — or at the same elevation as — structures.**
- **Elevate Off the Ground:** Use **metal rack legs or concrete blocks** to lift stacks off the ground; do **not** use wood pallets as a base, as they add fuel loading.
- **10-Foot Clearance Buffer:** Maintain a 10-foot cleared, mowed, or non-combustible zone around all firewood storage areas — remove grasses, weeds, shrubs, and dry debris.
- **Away from Trees:** Do not stack firewood between or beneath trees, which would add fuel to the base of the tree canopy.

- **Covering:** Cover stacks with a **non-combustible metal roof or tarp that does not overlap the sides** — covering sides traps moisture, promotes rot, and attracts pests.
- **Seasoning Separation:** Do not store green (freshly cut) and dry (seasoned) wood together in large mixed piles; season wood in small batches away from structures.
- **Monthly Debris Inspection:** Inspect the storage area **at least monthly during fire season** for accumulated leaves or needles and clear immediately.
- **Porch/Garage Limits:** Bring only the quantity you will use within **24–48 hours** onto a porch or into a garage — never stockpile large amounts adjacent to or inside the home.

⚠ Critical Reminder for SFTR Residents

The dry, wind-prone conditions of Southern Colorado and Las Animas County mean wildfire can travel faster than most residents can evacuate. A single misplaced woodpile can ignite a structure within minutes of a fire front arriving. Compliance with these guidelines is not just a POA recommendation — it may be life-saving.

DISPOSAL OPTIONS

Option	Description
Relocation	If your current woodpile is too close to the structure, move it in stages to a compliant location 30 feet or more away from all structures.
Give Away or Sell	Offer excess firewood to neighbors with compliant storage or community members via local bulletin boards and neighborhood groups.
Wood Utilization	Contact local firewood splitters or sellers who may accept green or oversized logs for further processing and resale.
Pile Debris	Sawdust, bark, and wood chips that accumulate under the pile should be raked and either spread thinly at a distance from structures or bagged for landfill disposal.

References & Resources

- NFPA Firewise USA® Home Ignition Zone Guidance — [firewise.org](https://www.firewise.org)
- USDA Forest Service — fs.usda.gov
- Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) Home Ignition Zone Checklists — csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire
- National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) — nifc.gov

