



# Wildfire Mitigation Specialist

## *Candidate Handbook*

This Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist (CWMS) Candidate Handbook contains important program information for wildfire mitigation professionals, along with the following documents:

- Home Ignition Zone Assessment Forms
- Verification Forms

Please carefully review this handbook and retain it for future reference.



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# CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

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# CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
NFPA’s MISSION.....	4
MISSION OF NFPA CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS.....	4
WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.....	4
PROGRAM GOALS.....	4
FEATURES & BENEFITS.....	4
ELIGIBILITY.....	4
STEPS TO CERTIFICATION.....	4
APPLICATIONS & FORMS.....	5
APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE.....	5
PROGRAM FEES.....	5
EXAM PREPARATION.....	5
REFERENCE MATERIAL.....	5
EXAM FORMATS.....	6
EXAM RULES AND PROCEDURES.....	6
SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS.....	6
EXAM RESCHEDULING/CANCELATION.....	7
EXAM SECURITY.....	7
COPYRIGHT.....	7
EXAM RESULTS.....	8
RETEST.....	8
CONFIDENTIALITY.....	8
PRACTICUM PHASE.....	8
USE OF YOUR CWMS CREDENTIAL.....	8
RECERTIFICATION.....	8
NON-DISCRIMINATION.....	9
REPLACEMENT CERTIFICATES.....	9
CONTACT INFORMATION.....	9
EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE AND WEIGHTED CRITERIA TABLE.....	10
PRACTICUM ACTIVITIES.....	10

# CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

## NFPA's MISSION

**Our vision:** We are the leading global advocate for the elimination of death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards.

**Our mission:** To help save lives and reduce loss with information, knowledge and passion.

## MISSION OF NFPA CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

The overall mission of NFPA's Certification Program is to enhance human and organizational performance as related to the use and application of NFPA codes and standards.

## WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The NFPA Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist Program (CWMS) was created in 2018 after discussions with fire service and forestry professionals at the federal, state, and local levels. The CWMS credential offers professionals whose work involves wildfire hazard mitigation, the ability to demonstrate that they understand hazard mitigation measures, planning and preparedness strategies, public education practices, and wildland fire science.

## PROGRAM GOALS

- Recognize and provide evidence of competence
- Enhance professionalism within the wildfire mitigation community
- Ensure a uniform, fair process for certification that is accessible to everyone who is eligible
- Ensure proficiency in the use of NFPA codes and standards
- Facilitate success for those seeking certification
- Promote professional development through continuous learning

## FEATURES & BENEFITS

CWMS credential holders receive the following benefits:

- A nationally recognized certification
- Recognition as an expert by your colleagues
- Greater confidence in your abilities
- Improved job performance
- Career advancement opportunities

Certificate holders also receive an NFPA certificate that highlights their accomplishment.

## ELIGIBILITY

A candidate for the CWMS certification must have a high school diploma or the equivalent before being allowed to sit for the exam.

## STEPS TO CERTIFICATION

Step 1 - Submit your application with the examination fee to NFPA Admin. & Support Services (see application form for details).

Step 2 - Examination - You will have to sit for a computer based examination within four months of entering the CWMS program. If you fail your exam, you are permitted to retest two (2) additional times (*completing a retest application and paying a retest fee each time*) within twelve (12) months from the day your original CWMS application was accepted. If you fail the examination three (3) times within this period, you must wait until the twelve (12) month testing period expires before you will be allowed to restart the registration process.

## CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

Step 3 - Practicum - Complete four required home ignition zone assessments. The completed practicum materials and assessment verification forms must be submitted to NFPA within twelve (12) months from the day your original CWMS application was accepted.

### APPLICATIONS & FORMS

All CWMS applications may be found at [www.nfpa.org/cwms](http://www.nfpa.org/cwms).

### APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE

An application is accepted only when both the completed and signed application is received by NFPA, and when the examination fee has been processed.

**Important:** When emailing this application to NFPA, you must use the NFPA secure email server at [web1.zixmail.net/s/welcome.jsp?b=nfpa](mailto:web1.zixmail.net/s/welcome.jsp?b=nfpa). Once you access this server and create your NFPA secure email account, you should select OTHER from the "To" pull-down list, and then enter [adminsvecs@nfpa.org](mailto:adminsvecs@nfpa.org) in the address box. Complete the email process by attaching your personal documentation and clicking "Send."

Following the receipt of your CWMS application form and exam fee, the NFPA will send you an authorization letter with instructions on how to schedule your computer based exam.

### PROGRAM FEES

\$350 USD for the initial exam. \$150 USD to recertify at the end of each three (3) year certification period. The most up to date fee schedule may be found on the applicable forms at [nfpa.org/cwms](http://nfpa.org/cwms).

### EXAM PREPARATION

Regardless of how long you have been on the job, you should still prepare for the CWMS exam. Candidates should have a strong working knowledge of the principles and practices contained in the reference materials listed below.

NFPA offers a 2-day seminar *Assessing Structure Ignition Potential from Wildfire* which is available on a contract basis for groups. A virtual instructor-led training option for individuals will be available at the end of 2021. There are also seminars offered by National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) that may prove beneficial, such as *S-190. Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior*. While these training options are not test preparation courses, they do cover material that may be found on the exam. Attending these seminars is not a prerequisite of the certification and does not guarantee success on the exam. More information on NFPA seminars and other NFPA training solutions can be found at [www.nfpa.org/training](http://www.nfpa.org/training).

### REFERENCE MATERIAL

The exam content is found within the following documents. The NFPA standards listed below are available for purchase, or may be viewed for free on the NFPA website. The remainder of the documents may be downloaded for free at [www.nfpa.org/cwms](http://www.nfpa.org/cwms).

- *NFPA 1141, Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Wildland, Rural, and Suburban Areas (2017)*
- *NFPA 1143, Standard for Wildland Fire Management (2018)*

## CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

- *NFPA 1144, Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire (2018)*
- Community Guide to Preparing and Implementing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2008),
- Fire Communication and Education (NWCG 458, 1999)
- Establishing Fire Prevention Education Cooperative Programs and Partnerships (NWCG 463, 1999)
- Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior (NWCG S-190, 2008)
- Reducing Wildfire Risks in the Home Ignition Zone (Firewise USA™)
- Safer from the Start, A Guide to Firewise-Friendly Developments

It is the candidate's responsibility to obtain these references for study purposes. If you would like to purchase the NFPA standards listed above, please go to the NFPA website at [www.nfpa.org/catalog](http://www.nfpa.org/catalog).

### EXAM FORMATS

The CWMS exam is a three-hour, closed-book examination, containing 100 multiple-choice questions. The examination is only available in English. It is designed to evaluate the candidate's knowledge of wildfire mitigation principles and application skills. The examination is available in a computer-based format at test centers throughout the world. Upon receipt of the CWMS examination application and test fee, the candidate will receive their authorization letter with instructions on how to schedule the computer based examination.

### EXAM RULES AND PROCEDURES

The following suggestions, regulations, and procedures pertain to every candidate taking the examination:

- You must present a valid photo ID at the test center.
- Smart phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in the testing area.
- For computer-based exams, personal calculators are NOT permitted at the test center. A scientific calculator is available on-screen.
- You will not be permitted to continue the test beyond the established three-hour time limit.
- You will not be allowed to bring any printed or electronic materials into the exam room.
- If you wish to leave the room during the test, you must secure the proctor's permission. You will not be allowed to make up lost time.
- Visitors are not permitted at the test center.
- Smoking is not permitted in the testing area.
- Candidates may provide comments on exam items by entering them directly on the computer screen. All comments will be reviewed by NFPA certification staff. Candidates will not receive responses to their comments.

### SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

NFPA provides special accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 (ADA). If a disability prevents you from taking the exam under standard conditions, you may request special accommodations. Written requests explaining the nature of the disability (i.e., the diagnosis), the type of accommodation you feel is appropriate, and supporting documentation of the diagnosis from a qualified healthcare professional must accompany the registration application. NFPA reserves the right to request reasonable

## CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

documentation from healthcare or other professionals to support requests for special accommodations.

### **EXAM RESCHEDULING/CANCELATION**

If you wish to change your exam date or time, you may do so through the Prometric scheduling portal at <https://proscheduler.prometric.com/?prg=NFP2&path=confirm> or by contacting Prometric's contact centers listed on <https://www.prometric.com/nfpacert>.

There is no charge for reschedule or cancellation of an appointment if the change is made 30 or more days prior to your appointment date.

Between 29 and 5 calendar days prior to your appointment date, you may cancel or reschedule your appointment, but you will be required to pay a \$50 fee (to Prometric).

4 or fewer days prior to your appointment date, you may not reschedule. If you cancel your appointment during this period or fail to appear for your appointment, you will be considered a no-show, and will need to submit a retest application with NFPA and pay applicable fees prior to scheduling a new appointment. Information on how to submit retest application can be found on the applicable certification program website at <https://www.nfpa.org/certification>.

### **EXAM SECURITY**

Failure to follow candidate instructions regarding exam security will result in your application being voided and forfeiture of your application fee. Conduct that results in violation of exam security or disrupts the administration of the exam could result in cancellation of your exam and dismissal from the testing center. In addition, your exam will be considered void and will not be scored.

Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following: writing on anything other than the margins of your test booklet, looking at another candidate's exam, or talking with other candidates anytime during the entire exam period. You are particularly cautioned not to do so after you have completed the exam, as other candidates in the area might be taking a break and still have not completed the exam. You may not attend the exam only to review or audit test materials. You may not copy any portion of the exam for any reason. No exam information may leave the test room under any circumstances. This includes memorizing questions for distribution to any other person. No unauthorized persons will be admitted into the testing area.

It is very important for you to note all exam content is strictly confidential. You may only communicate about the test, or questions on the test, using the appropriate forms provided within the exam delivery system. At no other time, before, during or after the exam, may you communicate orally, electronically or in writing with any person or entity about the content of the exam or individual exam questions.

The NFPA shall have the right to revoke or invalidate any exam score with or without a finding of fault or misconduct if data forensic analysis or other credible evidence establishes a reasonable possibility that a score is not valid or the integrity or security of the exam was compromised.

## CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

### COPYRIGHT

CWMS exam questions are copyrighted by the NFPA. All rights reserved. Reproduction, distribution or display in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical or otherwise, is strictly prohibited.

### EXAM RESULTS

The computer-based examination allows candidates to receive their results immediately upon completion. The exam results are reported as pass or fail. Your actual exam score or percentage will not be provided. You will also receive an email with a diagnostic report that provides an infographic indicating how you performed on each content area so that you may see which topics you will need to study to prepare for a retest.

### RETEST

If you fail your exam, you are permitted to retest two additional times (completing a retest application and paying a retest fee each time) within 12 months from the day your original CWMS application was accepted. If you fail the exam three times within this period, you must wait until the 12-month testing period expires before you will be allowed to restart the registration process. The retest application is online at [nfpa.org/cwms](https://nfpa.org/cwms). The cost to retest is \$175 USD.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

The identity and information concerning all candidates is confidential. Information regarding exam results are only communicated in writing from NFPA Admin. & Support Services directly to the candidate. Exam results are never provided over the phone.

### PRACTICUM PHASE

Candidates are required to complete four home ignition zone assessments. Candidates may use the *home ignition zone assessment form* provided in this handbook, or a comparable assessment form if approved by their jurisdiction. Candidates must also complete a signed verification form for **each** home ignition zone assessment. The home ignition zone assessment forms and verification forms are found in the appendix of this handbook, and are also available online at [www.nfpa.org/cwms](https://www.nfpa.org/cwms). The completed forms must be sent to the NFPA Admin. & Support Services to fulfill the certification requirements.

### USE OF YOUR CWMS CREDENTIAL

Once granted the CWMS credential, the certified may refer to themselves as a CWMS credential holder as long as the certified has an active certification status. The certified is authorized to use the CWMS designation after their name on business cards, personal letterhead, resumes, websites and in their email signature.

### RECERTIFICATION

Once a candidate has been certified, to remain active, they must recertify every three years. If NFPA does not receive the necessary recertification materials, the certification holder will no longer be considered a Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist (CWMS), and will no longer be entitled to use the CWMS credential in professional communications. To regain certification, the candidate must successfully complete the entire CWMS certification program (subject to the applicable application fees).

## CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

In order to maintain currency and relevancy with wildfire mitigation challenges, CWMS certification holders are required to demonstrate their continuing participation in professional development activities. Sixty (60) points of professional development activities related to wildfire mitigation must be earned and submitted during the recertification cycle. Certification holders must complete the Summary of Recertification Points Form, and submit it to NFPA for processing. This form is available at [www.nfpa.org/cwms](http://www.nfpa.org/cwms). It is important that you begin accumulating the required points as soon as possible. If college courses are declared for training hours, the same course cannot be taken twice within the 3-year period, and the candidate must convert credit hours to actual hours spent in the classroom.

**RECERTIFICATION AUDIT** - Certification holders will be subject to a random audit of their CWMS recertification documentation for a period of up to six months after their recertification date. Accordingly, certification holders are expected to retain recertification documentation in their possession for six months beyond their recertification date. Back up documentation is not required when submitting the Summary of Recertification Points Form.

The certified must submit documented evidence of a total of 60 credit points from the following categories:

CATEGORY	POINT ALLOTMENT	MIN. POINTS	MAX. POINTS
Training	1 point per contact hour	15	60
Professional practice	1 point per hour dedicated to a home assessment or CWPP	0	30
Association membership	1 point per related membership per year	0	3
Instruction provided by certificate holder	2 points per contact hour	0	30
Publication by certificate holder	5 points per article 10 points per book	0	10

**Documentation** – Reasonable proof of attendance or participation in the described categories will be accepted. Reasonable includes course certificates (in person or online), letters of attestation from course sponsors, college transcripts, letters from employers, and other evidence as required.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

NFPA evaluates all CWMS candidates without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, or family/parental status.

### **REPLACEMENT CERTIFICATES**

Replacement certificates are available at a charge of \$15.00 per certificate by contacting NFPA Admin. & Support Services at [adminsvcs@nfpa.org](mailto:adminsvcs@nfpa.org).

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

NFPA Admin. & Support Services  
11 Tracy Drive

# CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

Avon, MA 02322

Email: [adminsvcs@nfpa.org](mailto:adminsvcs@nfpa.org)

## **NFPA CWMS EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE AND WEIGHTED CRITERIA TABLE**

The following table indicates the percentage (%) of exam content (exam items) for the four (4) major domains of the CWMS exam, and lists the sub-components of each of those domains:

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <b>I. Wildland Fire Science</b>   | <b>27%</b>     |
| <b>A. Identify wildland fire fuel types and associated concerns and hazards to the built environment</b>  |                |
| i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Commonly used wildland fire fuel models, fire behavior characteristics, and mitigation techniques                              |                |
| ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Identify hazards associated with wildland fuels and the impacts to the built environment   |                |
| <b>B. Determine anticipated wildland fire behavior based on site conditions</b>   |                |
| i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - How fuel, terrain, and weather influence wildland fire behavior  |                |
| ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Make mitigation recommendations based on wildland fire behavior  |                |
| <b>C. Analyze structure ignition potential in the wildland/urban interface using a science-based approach</b>   |                |
| i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - How structures ignite in wildland/urban interface fires  |                |
| ii. (B) Requisite Skills – Accurately assess the potential for structure ignitions in wildland/urban interface fires, using scientifically-based analysis   |                |
| <br><b>II. Planning &amp; Preparedness</b>  | <br><b>24%</b> |
| <b>A. Identify appropriate construction materials, material ratings, and techniques for the wildland/urban interface</b>                                    |                |
| i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Construction materials, material ratings, and appropriate construction techniques for use in the wildland/urban interface      |                |
| ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Identify appropriate construction methods and materials to reduce the risk of structure ignition in the wildland/urban interface |                |
| <b>B. Determine the hazard, risk, and values-at-risk rating, for a wildland/urban interface jurisdictional area</b>   |                |
| i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Appropriate hazard assessment systems, wildland urban interface risks, and values at-risk ratings                              |                |
| ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Apply a hazard assessment system to a project, property, or jurisdictional area  |                |
| <b>C. Assist in the planning phase of homes and subdivisions within the wildland/urban interface</b>  |                |

## CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

- i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Subdivision planning and jurisdictional guidelines, applicable policies, procedures, codes, standards, and best practices
- ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Make observations and recommendations based on wildfire concerns and mitigation techniques

### III. Hazard Mitigation

31%

- A. Create a mitigation plan using treatments appropriate for the wildland/urban interface
  - i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Applicable and effective mitigation treatments, the application of relevant policies, procedures, codes and standards, and best practices
  - ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Apply effective mitigation treatment techniques based on wildland fire behavior
- B. Implement fuel modification plans in order to reduce wildland/urban interface hazards
  - i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Techniques pertinent to selective tree thinning, brush disposal, pruning, grazing, mowing, prescribed fire, and chemical treatments
  - ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Prepare clear written treatment prescriptions, and initiate and sustain required fuel modification activities
- C. Recommend appropriate mitigation strategies for the wildland/urban interface
  - i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Fuel types, wildland fire behavior, building construction, defensible space, landscaping, mitigation strategies, and planning documents
  - ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Select an effective wildland/urban interface mitigation strategy

### IV. Public Education

18%

- A. Assist with development and implementation of a wildland/urban interface public education program
  - i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Wildland/urban interface fire issues, fire prevention goals, public education delivery methods, and tools
  - ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Identify fire education needs and to recognize effective tools necessary to implement and measure success of delivery strategies
- B. Assist with development of written, and audio-visual materials, on the wildland/urban interface fire environment and mitigation techniques
  - i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Data resources, information systems including format and materials, learning theory, computer, writing, and editing
  - ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Collect information in a specific format, generate written or audio-visual materials, recognize and use powerful images, and identify and organize outreach to affected audiences and the community at large

## CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)



- C. Coordinate or provide presentations on wildland/urban interface and wildland fire issues
  - i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Awareness of potential community partners, community concerns, and available community resources
  - ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Prepare presentations, facilitate meetings, and motivate partners to achieve goals

### CWMS PRACTICUM PHASE

The practicum is at the core of certification programs that seek to recognize competence. The practicum is designed to ensure that candidates are able to demonstrate competency in the field prior to becoming certified. A competency-based certification program without a practicum holds little weight with regard to determining whether or not a candidate should be deemed capable of executing their duties correctly.

This practicum helps demonstrate that candidates are able to identify risks for home ignition when exposed to a wildfire, and are able to develop mitigation recommendations for homeowners or occupants prior to a wildfire emergency. It not only ensures that you have the relevant job experience, but also provides additional learning opportunities for any deficiency.

#### **Practicum Requirements:**

Candidates are required to complete four (4) home ignition zone assessments. Candidates may use the *Home Ignition Zone Assessment Form* which is included in this handbook, or any comparable assessment form if approved by their jurisdiction. Supporting documentation, such as field notes and photographs of the property being assessed, must be included with the assessment forms. Candidates must also include a completed and signed verification form for each home ignition zone assessment form. This form is used to verify that the required home ignition zone assessment has been completed and that it represents the professional work of the candidate.

#### **Submittal:**

1. Perform the required four home ignition zone assessments, filling out the home ignition zone assessment form included in this handbook, or a comparable assessment form approved by your jurisdiction. Include all notes, supporting images, and mitigation recommendations with your assessment forms.
2. Secure a completed and signed verification form for each of the four home ignition zone assessments. Each verification form must refer back to a specific home ignition zone assessment form. The verification forms may be signed by a fire chief, fire

## CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

marshal, chief building official, supervisor, academic advisor, or property owner with adequate knowledge of the candidate's activities to the verify work is/was solely that of the candidate.

3. Submit the required home ignition zone assessments and verification forms to the CWMS program administrator. They should be scanned and emailed to [adminsvcs@nfpa.org](mailto:adminsvcs@nfpa.org) or mailed to NFPA Admin. & Support Services at 11 Tracy Drive, Avon, MA 02322.

The submitted forms are audited in order to verify that the candidate performed the required home ignition zone assessments. Once the audit of the forms is complete, and all certification program requirements are met, you will then receive your certification by mail from NFPA.

The home ignition zone assessment form and verification form are available on the following pages of this handbook and also online at [www.nfpa.org/cwms](http://www.nfpa.org/cwms).

### HOME IGNITION ZONE ASSESSMENT FORM (1 of 2)

Assessor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. OVERVIEW OF SURROUNDINGS (Include supporting images)

*Possible considerations: structure position in relation to severe fire behavior and type of construction*

*Items Assessed:*

*Mitigation Recommendations:*

#### 2. CHIMNEY TO EAVES (Include supporting images)

*Possible considerations: the roof, and gutters*

CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

<i>Items Assessed:</i>	<i>Mitigation Recommendations:</i>
------------------------	------------------------------------

**3. TOP OF THE EXTERIOR WALL TO FOUNDATION (Include supporting images)**  
*Possible considerations: attic; eaves; soffit vents; crawl spaces; windows; decks; fences; flammable and combustible materials stored on, under, or near structure; nooks and other small spaces*

<i>Items Assessed:</i>	<i>Mitigation Recommendations:</i>
------------------------	------------------------------------

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**HOME IGNITION ZONE ASSESSMENT FORM (2 of 2)**

**4. IMMEDIATE ZONE 0-5 feet from structure (Include supporting images)**  
*Possible considerations: landscaped vegetation – hardscape materials, plant selection, propane tanks, vehicles, lawnmowers*

<i>Items Assessed:</i>	<i>Mitigation Recommendations:</i>
------------------------	------------------------------------

**5. INTERMEDIATE ZONE 5 – 30 feet (Include supporting images)**  
*Possible considerations: ladder fuels and crown separations, lawns mowed and watered*

CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

<i>Items Assessed:</i>	<i>Mitigation Recommendations:</i>
<b>6. EXTENDED ZONE 30 – 100 feet (Include supporting images)</b> <i>Possible considerations: ladder fuels and crown separations, accumulation of litter/debris and dead plant and tree material</i>	
<i>Items Assessed:</i>	<i>Mitigation Recommendations:</i>

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*Copy as needed and submit with the corresponding verification form*

CWMS Practicum Phase Verification Form



NFPA Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist Program

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_ Property address: \_\_\_\_\_

The National Fire Protection Association administers the NFPA Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist program. As part of this program, applicants are required to complete practical exercises. The above named applicant must provide verification that four home assessments were conducted as part of the certification program requirements.

You are not asked to verify the accuracy, quality, or comprehensiveness of the report or the underlying home assessment, nor will this be taken as any verification that you have read the report, as this is only an exercise for a certification program. By signing below, you are only providing the requisite verification that the above named applicant conducted a home assessment for the identified property and that the work performed was solely that of the candidate.

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Country Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

*Copy as needed and submit with the corresponding home ignition zone assessment*



Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist Program

NFPA Admin. & Support Services  
11 Tracy Drive  
Avon, MA 02322

Email: [adminsvcs@nfpa.org](mailto:adminsvcs@nfpa.org)  
Website: [www.nfpa.org/cwms](http://www.nfpa.org/cwms)