

Fire Hazard Assessment Ratings

LOW –

Characteristics of a Low Fuel Hazard rating would include little to no woody debris on the ground level. Grass components would be less than 2 feet tall, irrigated, grazed or cut regularly. Intermittent trees may be present, but no ladder fuels may be present within 20 feet of the ground and crown spacing of greater than 20 feet must exist. Wildland fires that originate on Low Fuel Hazard parcels should have little to no chance of forming a flaming front and spreading rapidly. The potential for an ember shower originating on adjacent forested lands is a consistent possibility throughout Missoula County. In areas of Low Fuel Hazard ratings, the result of an ember shower would result in small spot fires with no spread potential. The effects of slope should be minimal to fire risk due to the sparse nature of the fuels. In general, Low Fuel Hazard areas should have little to no probability of wildland fires starting or spreading.



MODERATE –

Characteristics of a Moderate Fuel Hazard would include some accumulation of woody debris and duff on the ground level. Grass and Brush fuels present at the surface level would produce flame lengths between 2 and 4 feet, resulting in a rapidly moving flame front under high to extreme fire conditions. If trees are present, the ladder fuels could lead to group torching, but not support a running crown fire. Trees may be thick in places but breaks in crown spacing should be wide enough to prevent fire spread independent of the ground fire. The impact from an ember shower originating on adjacent forested lands would result in spot fires that may grow and spread. The effects of slope would be significant in Moderate Fuel Hazard areas, resulting in convective heat that may make it dangerous to responders. In general, Moderate Fuel hazard areas would be susceptible to wildland fire, with initial attack efforts having a high probability of successful and safe suppression efforts.



HIGH –

Characteristics of a High Fuel Hazard would include a heavy accumulation of woody debris on the ground level. Grass and brush fuels are contiguous and would result in flame lengths above 4 feet, resulting in a rapidly moving flame front with a high probability of spotting. If trees are present, ladder fuels would result in torching and have the potential to spread through the canopy independently. The impact from an ember shower originating on adjacent forested lands would result in spot fires that would grow and spread rapidly, producing further spotting and suppression difficulties. The effects of slope would be extreme in High Hazard fuel areas, resulting in convective heat columns that would be dangerous to first responders, produce rapid fire growth and spotting. In general, High Fuel Hazard areas would be highly susceptible to wildland fire starts with a low probability of initial attack efforts being successful.

