

The Effects of Risk Perception and Adaptation on Health and Safety Interventions

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ABSTRACT

Human habitation has made significant intrusions into forested lands, necessitating the need for the management of risk to those who live in close proximity to such lands. However, members of the public who are exposed to the risks of wildland fire do not consistently abide by the recommendations of fire management professionals to protect their homes and property through self-protective actions, such as defensible space. Interventions to improve participation of the public in self-protection with regard to wildland fire risk are potential means for risk reduction, but interventions to be effective require a careful design process that takes into considerations how people perceive risks and what motivates self-protective behavior. This paper draws upon research in health and safety risk perception and behavior change to discuss the concept of interventions and the factors that influence their effectiveness, including cognitive and affective influences, as well as sociocultural influences.

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