**WHAT IS DEFENSIBLE SPACE?**

Defensible space refers to that area between a house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been modified to reduce the wildfire threat and which provides an opportunity for fire fighters to effectively defend the house.

Oftentimes, a defensible space is simply a homeowner's own yard.

**DOES CREATING DEFENSIBLE SPACE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?**

**YES**. Investigations of homes threatened by wildfire indicate that houses with an effective defensible space are much more likely to survive a wildfire. Furthermore, homes that created defensible space and implementation of a few simple preventive steps are many more times likely to survive a wildfire than those without.

***Reduce the potential impact of a wildfire by Being Firewise!***

The following are recommendations for Creating Defensible Space:

**ZONE 1 (IMMEDIATE ZONE: 0-5 ft): Intensive Fuel Reduction Zone**

This is an area of maximum modification and treatment. It consists of the first 5 feet around the structure. Flammable materials and vegetation are removed and replaced with non-flammable decking or decorative stone, well-spaced fire-resistant plants, and groundcover. This distance is measured from the outside edge of the home’s eaves and any attached structures such as decks or stairways.

* Trees here are considered part of the structure (the fewer the better).
* Choose deciduous trees over conifers or other fire-prone varieties.
* Remove branches overhanging the roof (prefer 6 feet of space) and remove branch from chimney area (at least 12 feet of space)
* Remove “ladder fuel” from beneath trees (ground cover is acceptable).
* Keep plantings to a minimum. Decorative gravel, flagstone, or concrete decking is recommended in this area.
* Remove dry grass next to flammable structural components (ignite easily)
* Do not stack firewood or store combustibles (like propane tanks) in this zone.

The effectiveness of defensible space increases

when multiple property owners work together.

**ZONE 2 (INTERMEDIATE ZONE: 5-30 ft): Moderate Fuel Reduction Zone**

Zone 2 extends beyond 30 feet IF the structure is surrounded by steeply sloped ground. Within this zone, the vegetation is selectively thinned to reduce the fuel load. Remove stressed, diseased, dead or dying trees and shrubs. Selectively thin the remaining brush and trim/prune the remaining larger trees. Be sure to extend thinning along either side of the driveway all the way to the main access road. These actions help enhance fire safety and the aesthetic of the property.

* Thin trees and shrubs at least 12 feet between crowns, and more if on a steep slope. Crown separation is measured between canopies (outermost branches of a plant), not between stems.
* Prune under large trees to height of 2-10 feet from under trees (not more than 1/3 of height).
* Remove ladder fuels from under the tree (landscape ground cover is acceptable, or at least 6 feet of space between ground plant and tree limbs).
* Propane tanks should be at least 30 feet from any structures, preferably on the same elevation as the house. Keep flammable vegetation at least 12 feet away from tanks. Use non-flammable fencing for screening if desired.
* Stack firewood and woodpiles at least 30 feet away and uphill from structure. Keep flammable vegetation at least 12 feet from woodpiles.
* Dispose of slash (limbs, branches, and other woody debris) from trees and shrubs by removing (piling and burning is not recommended).

**ZONE 3 (EXTENDED ZONE: 30-100 ft): The Managed Wildland Zone.**

This is an area of native vegetation. This zone may extend at least 100 feet from the structure (up to 300 feet on steep slopes).

* Typical management objectives for areas surrounding home sites or subdivisions are: aesthetics; recreational use; ecological health; barriers for wind, noise, dust, and visual intrusions.
* Specific thinning requirements depends on species and land objectives. Thinning improves the forest and wildland by removing trees/brush that are damaged, attacked by insects, infected by disease, or are of poor form or low vigor. The remaining trees/brush should be the larger and healthier trees in the stand.
* Provide at least 6 feet of spacing between canopies or stands of brush.
* Make sure dead trees pose no threat to power lines or fire access roads
* A limited number of trees and brush are appropriate in Zone 3.