

**Attachment 2 - Defensible Space - CAL FIRE**

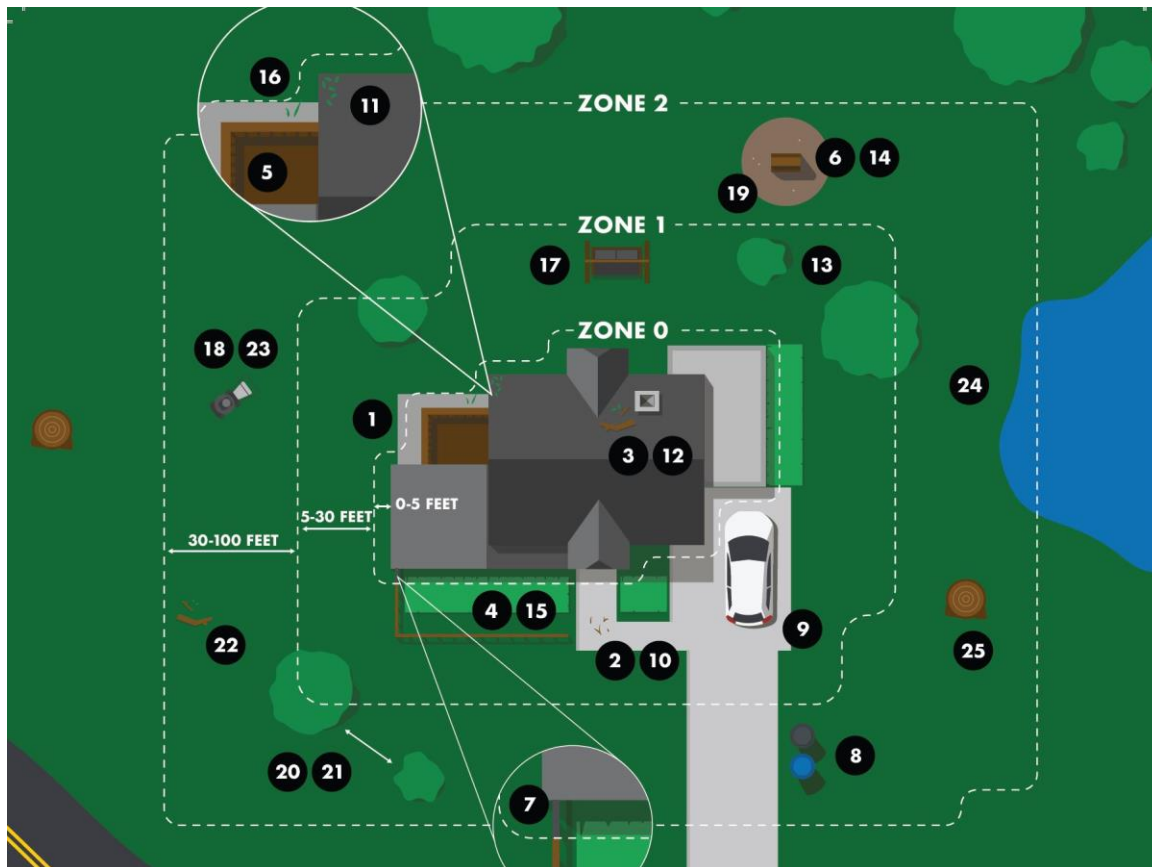
<https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/get-ready/defensible-space/>

**Keep your property lean and green to help protect your family and home.**

Defensible space, coupled with home hardening, is essential to improve your home’s chance of surviving a wildfire. Defensible space is the buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and it helps protect your home from catching fire—either from embers, direct flame contact or radiant heat. Proper defensible space also provides firefighters a safe area to work in, to defend your home.

**Defensible Space Zones**

Zones 1 and 2 currently make up the 100 feet of defensible space required by law. Assembly Bill 3074, passed into law in 2020, requires a third zone for defensible space. This law requires the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to develop the regulation for a new ember-resistant zone (Zone 0) within 0 to 5 feet of the home. This regulation is currently in process with the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. The intensity of wildfire fuel management varies within the 100-foot perimeter of the home, with more intense fuels’ reduction occurring closer to your home. Start at the home and work your way out to 100 feet or to your property line, whichever is closer.



**Zone 0 extends from zero to five feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc.**

1. Use hardscape like gravel, pavers, concrete, and other noncombustible mulch materials. No combustible bark or mulch.
2. Remove all dead and dying weeds, grass, branches, and vegetative debris. Check your roofs, gutters, decks, porches, stairways, etc.
3. Remove all branches within 10 feet of any chimney or stovepipe outlet.
4. Limit combustible items (outdoor furniture, planters, etc.) on top of decks.
5. Relocate firewood and lumber to Zone 2.
6. Replace combustible fencing, gates, and arbors attached to the home with noncombustible alternatives.
7. Consider relocating garbage and recycling containers outside this zone.
8. Consider relocating boats, RVs, vehicles, and other combustible items outside this zone.

**Zone 1 extends five to 30 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures.**

9. Remove all dead plants, grass, and weeds (vegetation).
10. Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof, and rain gutters.
11. Remove branches that hang over your roof and keep dead branches 10 feet away from your chimney or stovepipe outlet.
12. Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
13. Relocate exposed wood piles outside of Zone 1.
14. Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
15. Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
16. Create a separation between trees, shrubs, and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.

**Zone 2 extends from 30 feet to 100 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc.**

17. Cut or mow annual grasses to a maximum height of four inches.
18. All exposed wood piles must have a minimum of 10 feet clearance around them, down to bare mineral soil, in all directions.
19. Create horizontal space between shrubs and trees. (See diagram on page 9)
20. Create vertical space between grass, shrubs, and trees. (See diagram on page 9)
21. Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of three inches.

**All zones**

22. Mow before 10 a.m., but never when it's windy or excessively dry.
23. Protect water quality. Do not clear vegetation near waterways to bare soil. Vegetation removal can cause soil erosion—especially on steep slopes.
24. Logs or stumps embedded in the soil must be removed in Zone 0. In Zones 1 and 2 they need to be removed or isolated from other vegetation.

**Zone 0 – Ember-Resistant Zone**

Zone 0 extends 5 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

The ember-resistant zone is currently not required by law, but science has proven it to be the most important of all the defensible space zones. This zone includes the area under and around all attached decks, and requires the most stringent wildfire fuel reduction. The ember-resistant zone is designed to keep fire or embers from igniting materials that can spread the fire to your home. The following provides guidance for this zone, which may change based on the regulation developed by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

- Use hardscape like gravel, pavers, concrete and other noncombustible mulch materials. No combustible bark or mulch
- Remove all dead and dying weeds, grass, plants, shrubs, trees, branches and vegetative debris (leaves, needles, cones, bark, etc.); Check your roofs, gutters, decks, porches, stairways, etc.
- Remove all branches within 10 feet of any chimney or stovepipe outlet
- Limit combustible items (outdoor furniture, planters, etc.) on top of decks
- Relocate firewood and lumber to Zone 2
- Replace combustible fencing, gates, and arbors attach to the home with noncombustible alternatives
- Consider relocating garbage and recycling containers outside this zone
- Consider relocating boats, RVs, vehicles and other combustible items outside this zone

**Zone 1 – Lean, Clean and Green Zone**

Zone 1 extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. or to your property line, whichever is closer.

- Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds (vegetation).
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Remove branches that hang over your roof and keep dead branches 10 feet away from your chimney.
- Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
- Relocate wood piles to Zone 2.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.

- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks, balconies and stairs.
- Create a separation between trees, shrubs and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.

### ***Zone 2 – Reduce Fuel Zone***

Zone 2 extends from 30 feet to 100 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc. or to your property line, whichever is closer.

- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- Create horizontal space between shrubs and trees. (See diagram)
- Create vertical space between grass, shrubs and trees. (See diagram)
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of 3 inches.
- All exposed wood piles must have a minimum of 10 feet of clearance, down to bare mineral soil, in all directions.

### ***Zone 1 and 2***

- “Outbuildings” and Liquid Propane Gas (LPG) storage tanks shall have 10 feet of clearance to bare mineral soil and no flammable vegetation for an additional 10 feet around their exterior.

### ***Local Ordinance***

Many local government agencies have local ordinances for defensible space or weed abatement. These local ordinances will often be more stringent than the State’s minimum requirements listed above (e.g., San Diego County requires 50 feet of clearance in Zone 1). Check with your local fire department or fire protection district for any additional defensible space or weed abatement ordinance requirements.

### ***Plant and Tree Spacing***

The spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees is crucial to reduce the spread of wildfires. The spacing needed is determined by the type and size of brush and trees, as well as the slope of the land. For example, a property on a steep slope with larger vegetation requires greater spacing between trees and shrubs than a level property that has small, sparse vegetation.

### ***Vertical Spacing***

Remove all tree branches at least 6 feet from the ground.

Allow extra vertical space between shrubs and trees. Lack of vertical space can allow a fire to move from the ground to the brush to the treetops like a ladder. This leads to more intense fire closer to your home.

To determine the proper vertical spacing between shrubs and the lowest branches of trees, use the formula below.

## MINIMUM VERTICAL CLEARANCE



*Example:* A five-foot shrub is growing near a tree.  $3 \times 5 = 15$  feet of clearance needed between the top of the shrub and the lowest tree branch.

### ***Horizontal Spacing***

Horizontal spacing depends on the slope of the land and the height of the shrubs or trees. Check the chart below to determine spacing distance.

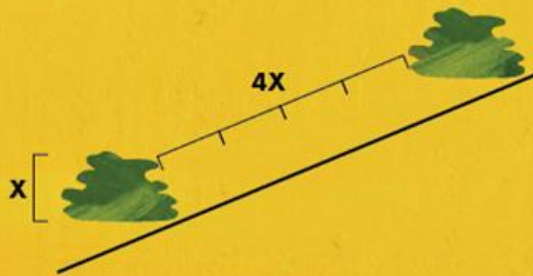
**MINIMUM HORIZONTAL CLEARANCE**

**SHRUBS**

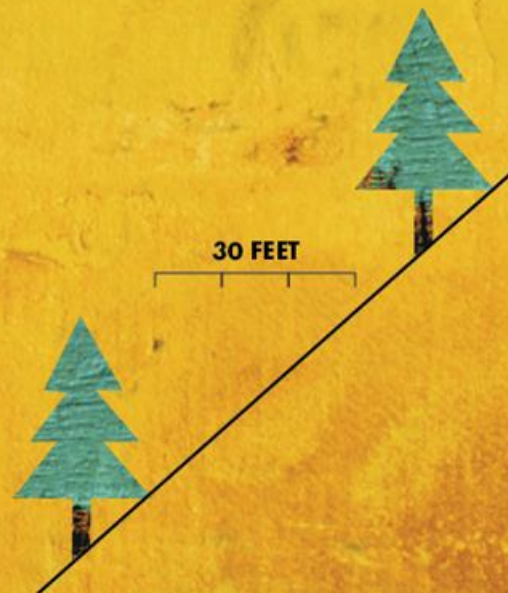
**TREES**



**FLAT TO MILD SLOPE (LESS THAN 20%)**



**MILD TO MODERATE SLOPE (20%-40%)**

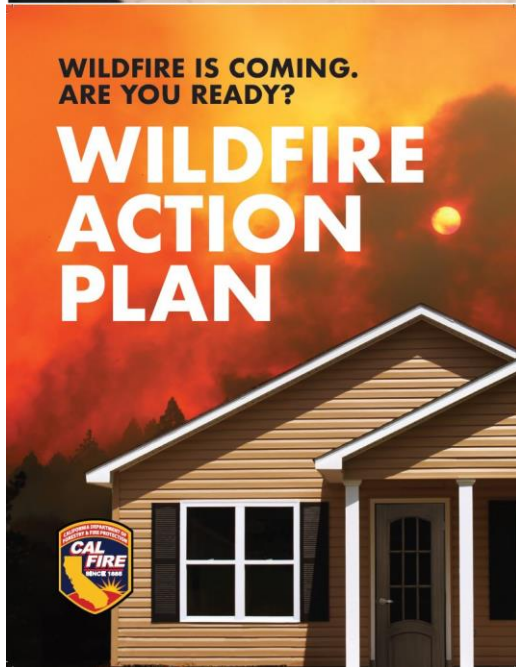


**MODERATE TO STEEP SLOPE (GREATER THAN 40%)**

### Fire Smart Landscaping

Proper landscaping for wildfire isn't necessarily the same thing as a well-maintained yard. This type of landscaping focuses on plant characteristics, properties and maintenance to resist the spread of fire to your home.

The good news is that you don't need to spend a lot of money to make your landscape wildfire resilient and reduce the risk to your home. Through proper planning and routine maintenance, you can conserve water and create a beautiful landscape.





Download the [Defensible Space flyer](#) for a action checklist.  
**HOMEOWNER'S CHECKLIST**



Download [Homeowner's Checklist](#) to make your home fire-resistant inside and out.  
**CONNECT WITH US**