



## OREGON OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

# HOW DOES DEFENSIBLE SPACE REALLY WORK?

Defensible space can make a significant difference during a wildfire. It can offer your home or business protection from embers that can travel several miles from the actual fire front and the fire itself.

Embers are the leading cause of home loss during a wildfire. They can travel up to three miles ahead of the large flame front.

Defensible space is the buffer you create between your home or business and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surrounds it. Items to consider are plants, landscape arrangement, and outdoor furniture. This gives embers or flames fewer options to latch onto and ignite. **Studies show that well-maintained defensible space can give your home an increased chance of surviving a wildfire\***, even if firefighters cannot reach your home.

To start, look at your home to ensure combustible materials like dried pine needles and leaves are removed from gutters, eaves, and around your chimney. Limb trees several feet off the ground to help avoid fire from getting into the tree crowns. Keep patios clean of dry combustible materials during times of high fire danger. Remove flammable items like outdoor furniture cushions. Keep dry wood piles and construction debris 30 feet away from your home. Make sure bushes around your home are limbed and not touching the siding.



Creating a defensible space plan for your home and business does not mean creating a moonscape. These plans can include trees, bushes, and other plants, if they are limbed and trimmed properly. Fire-resistant plants can also be a great addition to your yard. These plants are high in moisture content and low in oils. Fire-resistant plants range from ground covers to trees that can bring a beautiful, healthy landscape without sacrificing safety. Trees don't have to be off-limits; be thoughtful about where they are planted in your yard and what is growing underneath them.

The OSFM offers a wide range of tips. Learn more by visiting the OSFM's website or by scanning the QR code.

**SCAN TO  
LEARN MORE.**





## DO YOU KNOW



## DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

# DEFENSIBLE SPACE TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM WILDFIRE

- 1 **Remove** dead and combustible vegetation, mulch, and other materials, especially within the first several feet from the home. Replace with decorative rock or gravel.
- 2 **Remove** leaves, pine needles, and other debris from the roof, gutters, and on and under the deck to help prevent embers from igniting the home.
- 3 **Cover** exterior attic vents, soffit vents, and areas below decks and patios with 1/8" metal wire mesh to help prevent sparks from entering the home.
- 4 **Replace** combustible plants, furniture, and cushions on decks with non-combustible types.
- 5 **Enclose** eaves to help prevent ember entry. Remove any vegetation growing directly under your eaves.
- 6 **Inspect** the roof and replace missing shingles or tiles, make sure the valleys are in good repair.
- 7 **Keep** lawns mowed and all plants **watered**. Keep it "Lean and Green".
- 8 **Move** construction material, trash, and woodpiles at least 30 feet away from the home and other outbuildings.
- 9 **Trim** trees and remove or trim brush/bushes and ground cover plants under trees or next to structures or decks.
- 10 **Chip, compost, or haul** yard debris to a recycling center. Follow local fire regulations if burning yard debris.

For questions or more information about defensible space, contact the **Office of State Fire Marshal** at [oregon.sfm@osp.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.sfm@osp.oregon.gov).