

# OREGON

## DEFENSIBLE SPACE FOR HOMEOWNERS & RENTERS

Creating defensible space can help all Oregonians be prepared for wildfire.

Defensible space is the buffer you create between your business or home and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surrounds it. Proper defensible space can slow or stop the spread of wildfire and help protect your home or business. This checklist provides recommendations for getting started and includes actions you can take in the short term, such as over a weekend, and options to consider when upgrading your home or landscape.

Defensible space can offer protection from firebrands and embers that can travel several miles from the firefront. Studies show that well-maintained defensible space can increase structures' chances of surviving a wildfire, providing protection even if firefighters cannot reach it.

Following these recommendations can increase the likelihood your home or business will survive a wildfire, but they may not eliminate wildfire threat, so it is important to follow all evacuation orders in the event of a wildfire.

If you have questions about this tool, request assistance with completing your assessment, or want to learn more about defensible space, please contact your local fire agency or the Oregon State Fire Marshal online at [oregondefensiblespace.org](https://oregondefensiblespace.org).

### MORE INFORMATION

#### DEFENSIBLE SPACE PROGRAM

Oregon State Fire Marshal  
[oregondefensiblespace.org](https://oregondefensiblespace.org)



#### INSURANCE

Division of Financial Regulation  
503-947-7980  
[DFR.InsuranceHelp@oregon.gov](mailto:DFR.InsuranceHelp@oregon.gov)

#### LOCAL BURN RESTRICTIONS

Contact your local fire agency

#### EVACUATION INFORMATION

Oregon Wildfire Response & Recovery  
503-378-2911  
[oem\\_publicinfo@oem.oregon.gov](mailto:oem_publicinfo@oem.oregon.gov)

#### FIREWISE USA®

Scan the QR code to learn more.



#### FIRE-RESISTIVE PLANTS

Oregon State University's plant guide:



# OREGON

## DEFENSIBLE SPACE & BEST PRACTICES



1 Trees and vegetation should be 10 feet from powerlines.

2 Trees and vegetation should be 10 feet from buildings and chimneys.

3 For trees and vegetation more than 18 feet tall, remove branches six feet from the ground.

For trees and vegetation less than 18 feet tall, remove branches up to 1/3 the height of the tree.

4 Trees and vegetation should be 10 feet from other trees.

### LIMBING TREES



Trees and vegetation more than 18 feet, remove limbs up to six feet.

Trees and vegetation less than 18 feet, remove limbs up to 1/3 height.

### POWER LINES



*Removing or trimming trees near powerlines is dangerous. Only use an experienced, licensed contractor to perform this work.*

# CHECKLIST

## DEFENSIBLE SPACE & BEST PRACTICES

### DEFINITIONS

**DEFENSIBLE SPACE:** Any area where combustible materials are treated, cleared, or modified to slow and reduce intensity of wildfire and allow space for fire suppression operations to occur.

**FIRE-RESISTIVE PLANTS:** Plants that can be used to reduce the likelihood of fire spread. See OSU's guide on page 1 for characteristics of fire-resistive plants.

**LADDER FUEL:** Low-hanging branches, leaves, needles, and other combustible plant matter that may allow wildfire to spread from low-growing plants to high-growing plants.

### STRUCTURE

- Roofs and gutters are clean from leaves, conifer needles, and other debris.
- Flammable vegetation is removed from growing directly under the eaves. A minimum of five feet from the structure is recommended.
- Exterior attic vents, soffit vents, and areas below decks and patios are covered with 1/8" metal wire mesh.
- Siding and skirting are in good condition.
- Leaves, conifer needles, deadwood, bark mulch, and other debris removed from the surface of, around, and below decks and fences.
- Fence attachments to the structure have a noncombustible alternative such as a metal gate or fence.

### DEFENSIBLE SPACE *(within 100 ft of structures OR to property line, whichever is closer)*

- Trees are spaced and pruned following the example of the figure on page 2.
- Leaves, conifer needles, dead wood, bark mulch, and other debris removed from within 100 feet of the structure or to the property line.
- Fire-resistive plants are spaced within the designated defensible space area. Grass is mowed to less than four inches.
- Debris is taken to a recycling center or chipped, composted. Local regulations are followed if burning yard debris.
- Firewood piles and lumber at least 30 feet from any structure.
- Combustible vegetation 10 feet away from permanent propane tanks.
- Small BBQ tanks, not in use, are stored at least 30 feet away or in an outbuilding.

# CHECKLIST

## DEFENSIBLE SPACE & BEST PRACTICES

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- The driveway is accessible to first responders (e.g., clear of debris and obstructions; meets local height and width requirements; has clearly marked road signs, bridges, & culverts).
- The home has an address sign at the entrance to the property.
- Roof:** Install a fire-resistant or noncombustible roof made of materials such as asphalt, metal, clay tile, slate, or concrete products.
- Siding:** Install noncombustible or ignition-resistant siding such as brick, stone, fiber cement, plaster, or metal.
- Fencing:** Install a 5-foot fire-resistant buffer such as metal fencing or other non-flammable material when replacing fencing within five feet of a home or structure.

### NOTES

**CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:** OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL, OREGON FIRE MARSHALS ASSOCIATION, OREGON FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION, OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL, DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND BUSINESS SERVICES, OREGON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, & OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY.

