

# Creating Defensible Space



Creating a buffer between a building on your property and the grass, trees and shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it is essential to improve your home's chance of surviving a wildfire.

Follow the guidelines in this **Demonstration Garden to create defensible space on your property.**

All properties are inspected by the Oakland Fire Department for compliance on a continual basis throughout the year.

**ZONE 1 NO FIRE ZONE** to reduce the chance of wind-blown embers from a nearby fire landing near the home, igniting combustible debris or materials and exposing the home to flames.

*Extends 5 feet from your structure*

- Use rock, gravel, crushed granite or other non-flammable materials adjacent to structure.
- Plant succulents/low growing groundcover no more than 6" tall at least two feet from windows. Keep them well-spaced and free of dead wood.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Throughout your property, use non flammable mulch such as rocks, stones or wood chips 3" or larger. Mulch should be no deeper than 3". Gorilla Hair mulch (shredded redwood bark) is not firesafe.

**ZONE 2 DEFENSIBLE SPACE** to create and maintain a landscape that, if ignited, will not readily transmit fire to the home.

*Extends 5 to 30 feet from your structure*

- Shorter plants (less than 2 feet) are safer than taller plants. If kept green, herbaceous plants (lawn and non-woody plants) are better choices than shrubs or trees.
- Separate trees, shrubs and vegetation both vertically and horizontally to avoid spreading flames. Well-pruned, maintained trees and shrubs cleared of dead and dying foliage are safest.
- Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees, your roof, or side of home.
- Remove dead or dry leaves/pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.

**ZONE 3 LARGER LOT DEFENSIBLE SPACE** to reduce the energy and speed of wildfire.

*Extends 30 to 100 feet from your structure*

- Space trees/shrubs 4–40 feet, depending on the slope of your property to reduce fire spread.
- Prune lower tree limbs at least 6 feet from the ground.
- Maintain a clearance of 3x the height of shrubs to the lowest branches of trees as the vertical clearance.
- Remove all ground fuels greater than 4" in height. Single specimens are okay if well-spaced, well-pruned and green.

