



OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

HOW DEFENSIBLE SPACE WORKS

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. By choosing fire-resistant plants, removing needles and leaves, and keeping your deck clear, you give embers or flames fewer options to ignite your home or yard. **Studies show that well-maintained defensible space can increase your home's chance of surviving a wildfire***, even if firefighters cannot reach your home.



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*Source: [Dr. Jack Cohen, Preventing Disaster, Home Ignitability in the Wildland Urban Interface](#)



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- To start, look at your home to ensure combustible materials like needles, and leaves are removed from gutters, eaves, and around your chimney.
- Make sure bushes around your home are limbed and not touching the siding. Limb trees several feet off the ground to help avoid fire from getting into the tree crowns.
- Keep patios clean of combustible materials like outdoor furniture cushions 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.

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.

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