

Take the YOSEMITE WEST DEFENSIBLE SPACE REALITY CHECK.
Dispel any myths you may have.

YOSEMITE WEST DEFENSIBLE SPACE REALITY CHECK		
Your Excuse?	Myths About Defensible Space	Facts About Defensible Space
MOTIVATE YOURSELF:		
Unaware	"I didn't know there was a wildfire threat to my neighborhood."	Cal Fire classifies Yosemite West in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Yosemite and the Central Sierra have a severe drought condition for the third consecutive year, which dramatically increases the risk from wildland fire.
Denial	"It won't happen to me. I don't believe it."	Every property owner is at risk. The threat of wildland fire is real, likely and not exaggerated. In 2008, the Telegraph Fire burned 55 square miles and was roaring towards Yosemite West at 30 miles per hour.
Fatalism	"It's all fate. When your number is up, it's up."	Whether your house burns or not is not a matter of luck.
Futility	"It won't make a difference."	Research proves that creating defensible space increases the likelihood of a house surviving a wildland fire or being destroyed. Many property owners have gotten the message, but many have either not acted on it or are slow to adopt defensible space practices. Having defensible space promotes firefighter and public safety.
Irresponsibility	"It's not my job."	It is <i>your</i> responsibility to protect your home, not that of the fire department. Public officials are not solely responsible for minimizing wildfire threat.
No Incentives	"If it was really important, my insurance company would give me a break on my premium."	The costs of implementing defensible space is not offset by lower insurance rates. State law allows insurance carriers to require more restrictive defensible space criteria than the criteria in PRC§4291. Many of your neighbors' homeowners' insurance policies have been canceled in recent years.
Insurance	"So what, my insurance carrier will build me a new and better house. I don't care if the house burns down."	Your house may not be adequately insured with new construction costs starting at more than \$300/sq.ft. Why find secure places for your valuables like pictures and things that can't be replaced, and ignore the house. Your burning property may pose a threat to your neighbor who may care more about their house.

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Unnatural	"It's wrong to cut trees."	You can selectively remove specific trees and native vegetation while retaining the naturalness and wildland look of the landscape, minimizing disturbance to the natural setting, enhancing wildlife habitat, and promoting a more healthy forest. The current forest has up to 1,000 tree stems per acre, yet should only have about 50 large trees per acre. This unnatural density has made the forest more susceptible to disease.
Aesthetics	"It won't look good."	Effective defensible space results in an attractive landscape that compliments your home, and contributes to your property value.
Discomfort	"I don't want to because of scorpions, lizards, snakes."	Working outdoors in a wildland setting is not hazardous. If you're concerned about risks, ask for help.
TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY:		
Illegal	"It's against the law."	No federal laws or local ordinances prevent the creation of defensible space. In fact, California state law requires 100-foot defensible space; visit Cal Fire's website at http://www.fire.ca.gov . Some insurance carriers require more than 100 feet.
Lack of Ownership	"The problem is on my neighbor's property."	The presence of hazardous fuels on a vacant lot poses a serious threat to adjacent property owners' houses. A homeowner cannot create effective defensible space without the cooperation of their adjacent neighbors. Everyone must act now to help build community-wide defensible space in Yosemite West. Inaction is irresponsible. Please cooperate with a neighbor who is willing to help you work on your property.
HERE'S HOW:		
Lack of Knowledge	"I don't know what to do. I don't want to learn new things about landscaping."	You can easily learn about wildfire threat reduction practices by visiting Cal Fire's website at http://www.fire.ca.gov and also visiting the YWPHI website at http://www.yosemitewest.org/firesafe.htm .
Cost	"I don't have the time or money to do it."	The benefits of reduced fire threat outweigh the monetary expense, volunteer labor, and time requirements. In 2009, YWPHI has been awarded a National Fire Plan grant from the USDA Forest Service through the California Fire Safe Council that funds the YOSEMITE WEST DEFENSIBLE SPACE PROJECT . Everyone can participate in the project.
Disposal	"I don't have an easy way to get rid of that stuff."	Participate in the YOSEMITE WEST DEFENSIBLE SPACE PROJECT and the debris generated from hazard fuel reduction services will be chipped.

100' DEFENSIBLE SPACE Make Your Home FIRE SAFE

Why 100 Feet?

Following these simple steps can dramatically increase the chance of your home surviving a wildfire!

A **Defensible Space** of 100 feet around your home is required by law.¹ The goal is to protect your home while providing a safe area for firefighters.

1 "Lean, Clean and Green Zone."

– Clearing an area of 30 feet immediately surrounding your home is critical. This area requires the greatest reduction in flammable vegetation.

2 "Reduced Fuel Zone."

– The fuel reduction zone in the remaining 70 feet (or to property line) will depend on the steepness of your property and the vegetation.

Spacing between plants improves the chance of stopping a wildfire before it destroys your home. You have two options in this area:

- a Create horizontal and vertical spacing between plants. The amount of space will depend on how steep the slope is and the size of the plants.
- b Large trees do not have to be cut and removed as long as all of the plants beneath them are removed. This eliminates a vertical "fire ladder."

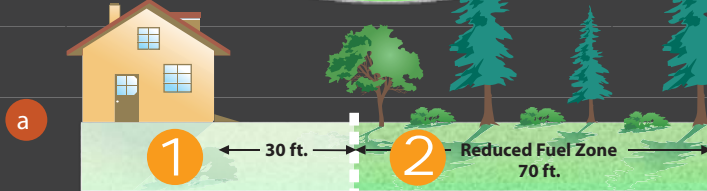
When clearing vegetation, use care when operating equipment such as lawnmowers. One small spark may start a fire; a string trimmer is much safer.

Remove all build-up of needles and leaves from your roof and gutters. Keep tree limbs trimmed at least 10 feet from any chimneys and remove dead limbs that hang over your home or garage. The law also requires a screen over your chimney outlet of not more than ½ inch mesh.

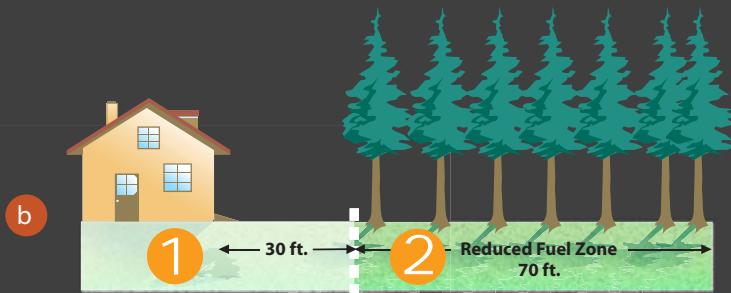
1. These regulations affect most of the grass, brush, and timber-covered private lands in the State. Some fire department jurisdictions may have additional requirements. Some activities may require permits for tree removal. Also, some activities may require special procedures for, 1) threatened and endangered species, 2) avoiding erosion, and 3) protection of water quality. Check with local officials if in doubt. Current regulations allow an insurance company to require additional clearance. The area to be treated does not extend beyond your property. The State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has approved Guidelines to assist you in complying with the new law. Contact your local CAL FIRE office for more details.



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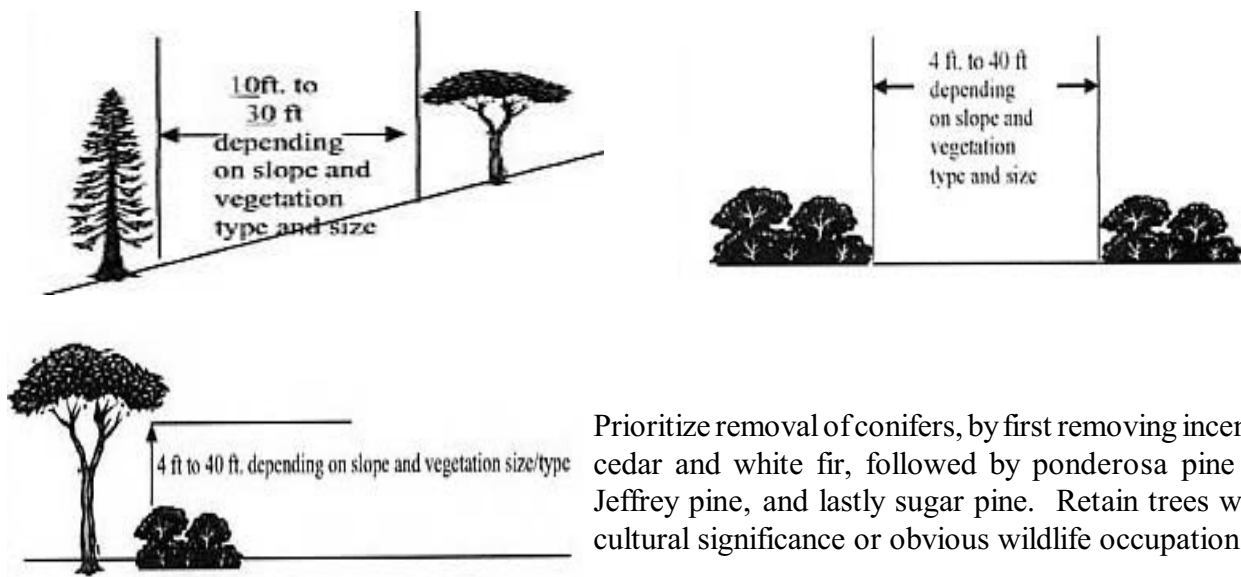


Contact your local CAL FIRE office, fire department, or Fire Safe Council for tips and assistance.

www.fire.ca.gov

Reduced Fuel Zone 30ft-100ft Option (a) - Defensible Space with Fuel Separation

Horizontal Clearance Requirements		
Slope	Trees	Shrubs
0-20%	10ft	2x height of shrub, eg, 3ft shrub x 2 = 6ft space
20-40%	20ft	4x height of shrub
> 40%	30ft	6x height of shrub
Vertical Clearance Requirements		
all %	Minimum vertical space between the top of a shrub and the bottom of the lowest tree limbs is 3x the height of the shrub (eg, 3ft shrub = 9ft vertical space between the top of the shrub and the lowest tree limbs).	



Prioritize removal of conifers, by first removing incense cedar and white fir, followed by ponderosa pine or Jeffrey pine, and lastly sugar pine. Retain trees with cultural significance or obvious wildlife occupation.

Reduced Fuel Zone 30ft-100ft Option (b) - Defensible Space with Continuous Canopy

Retain a continuous stand of larger trees with little or no horizontal spacing between aerial fuels or canopies while creating defensible space.

- Create vertical spacing by removing all surface and ladder fuels greater than 4 inches in height.
- Remove lower limbs of trees to at least 15 feet above ground, higher on steeper slopes.

