



# OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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## MINUTES

### Oregon Fire Code Advisory Board

February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
MS Teams

#### Welcome

Asst Chief Deputy Chad Hawkins

#### Call to Order – Chair Chris Wong

Chair Wong called the meeting to order at 11:02 am by Robert's Rules of Order.

#### Board members in attendance:

Chris Wong      Eric McMullen  
Scott Goff      Deric Weiss  
Ty Darby      Joe Ripp

#### Board members absent:

Amy Williams

#### OSFM in attendance:

Chad Hawkins      Larry Medina  
Sean Condon      Glenn Geiger  
Alison Green      Shari Barrett

#### No public present

#### New business

##### Agency and Legislative Update

Chief Hawkins stated that the legislative session is ongoing, with a few bills as they relate to this board. “1540” is a wildfire kind of reform bill that will potentially look at insurance, home hardening, and defensible space opportunities to require insurers to provide policy premium reductions. It is still working its way through the process. The focus for this meeting is the Defensible Space Rules Advisory Committee (DS RAC). OSFM completed 3 stakeholder meetings with a lot of good commentary and productive conversation. DS code began in 2021 with SB762 and has evolved through pieces of legislation, culminating in SB 83 in July 2025, which finalized how the code will look and how it will be applied.

##### Oregon Defensible Space Code OFCAB Review

Chad Hawkins outlined the history of the Oregon Defensible Space Code (ODSC): legislators designated OSFM to develop the ODSC, which has completed the RAC review, and the next step is to consult the OFCAB when the code is finalized. The ODSC will be available for local adoption by a local jurisdiction across many disciplines. If a local authority wants to adopt the ODSC, they can make amendments on application at the local level. Adoption would require them to have a local enforcement strategy, including how the ODSC will apply and where it will apply, and for the local authority to establish.

The 6-page ODSC has been vetted by several hundred people over 5 years. The draft code has been available on the OSFM website for review for 3 and a half years. The code is intended to allow flexibility at the local level.

Alison Green, Oregon Defensible Space Program Coordinator, facilitated a review of the code for the OFCAB.

- OSFM cannot require local jurisdiction to adopt at the local level.
- Local jurisdiction has to make sure that (their adoption) matches the legislative intent, which essentially is the International Code Council Wildland Urban Interface chapter 603 and 604, as well as any best practices.

A line-by-line review of the 6-page document was completed.

- Legislation does ask local jurisdictions, if they choose to adopt (the ODSC), to determine the wildfire hazard and where this code will apply; it does not mean that they have to develop a map, but somehow they have to delineate the hazard for where their defensible space code will apply.
- Addition was a 5-foot non-combustible zone in line with the most recent science showing as key for home surviving wildfire. When the first 5 feet had more than 25% coverage, home destruction was almost assured, so this was a piece that was added as an Oregon-specific best practice that is in here to make sure that we have this best practice. The non-combustibility zone shall be measured from the external wall or the furthest extent of a deck.
- Language around tree size and tree language.
  - Trees greater than 18 feet limbing lower 6 feet.
  - Fruit-bearing, newly planted, immature to limb no more than one-third the height of the tree.
  - Yard exception for newly planted or immature trees (seedlings, newly sprouted), cultivating to become mature trees.
- Referenced Standards. Addition to include the Oregon Structural Specialty Code and the ICC WUI code.
- Appendix F. Characteristics of fire-resistant vegetation includes a reference to the Pacific Northwest Guide for resistant plants.

### **No public comments (no public present)**

#### **Chair Wong opened a discussion with the OFCAB members on the ODSC.**

Derec Weiss asked if local jurisdictions do not have to use a map, however can they use a map if they desire?

Alison Green clarified that the requirement of (a map) was removed and the jurisdiction needs has to identify the hazard through their community development plan, maybe a community says it's all wildfire high hazard and we want to identify everyone within the city limits is required to and maybe not separate high from moderate. A jurisdiction may take a tiered approach (with none, high, moderate, low – similar to a map), again, this would be the specific local jurisdiction to develop what and where that is.

Chris Wong's follow-up question: are local jurisdictions allowed to modify or must they adhere to the model code language, meaning the moderate, high, and extreme? That is not allowed to change from the model code. Chad Hawkins answered, legislation states the language adopted has to be within the framework of the ICC WUI code, specifically sections 603 and 604. Oregon's model code is sections 603 and 604, with Oregon best management practices that reflect local jurisdictions' ability to implement at the local level, so there is some flexibility in using more stringent standards if a community chooses to be more stringent. There is a framework to stay within the WUI code that allows some flexibility but still has guidelines.

When a local jurisdiction adopts the model code, the enforcement will be theirs. Adopt through their local municipal process, apply the code (phase-in period, progressive compliance). OSFM authority is to maintain the ODSC model code, which will be on a 3-year cycle similar to fire and building codes. And yes, the local jurisdiction will have to submit to OSFM to basically say they are adopting the ODSC, including their amendments to the code. Can be locally adopted, similar to the fire code, through their county, council, or city council (their local process).

Chris Wong questioned Section 301.4.2 ground cover, which indicated fire-resistant plants as the definition, clarifying if this should be fire-resistant vegetation to align with the definition. As this is editorial clean-up, Alison made the notation.

### **Next Step**

RAC went through the review process. OFCAB review, discuss (if revisions requested, send back to RAC for review, then OFCAB to review), OFCAB recommendation of support to State Fire Marshal. The rule adoption hearing and the rule will then be filed with the Secretary of State. The state filing notice is codified as a rule and assigned an OAR number. The code will then be officially available to the local jurisdiction for adoption of the rule.

Chair Wong asks for additional discussion, hearing/seeing none, closes the discussion. Chair Wong asks for clarification on the minor change (fire-resistant plant/fire-resistant vegetation), if entertaining the motion to adopt as presented? Alison stated that the simple change does not have a substantive change to the content and clarifies the description (housekeeping). This would not warrant sending back to RAC for review.

Chair Wong asks the Board for a motion to adopt the Oregon Defensible Space Code as presented. Scott Goff seconds the motion. Chair Wong asked for additional discussion on the motion on hand, seeing none, then called for a vote. "Aye's" were unanimous. Motion passed.

### **Next meeting TBD**

**Chair Wong adjourned the meeting at 11:31 am**