



## Oregon Defensible Space – Model Code Agenda

December 22, 2025

9:00 am to 10:30 am

Welcome & Minutes review

Chad Hawkins, Assistant Chief Deputy

Alison Green, Program Coordinator, Process  
Facilitator

Public Comment Review

Alison Green, Process Facilitator

Model Code Language Review and Edits

Alison Green, Process Facilitator

Questions/Public Comment

Closing

Chad Hawkins, Assistant Chief Deputy

For additional information, contact Alison Green at [Alison.Green@osfm.oregon.gov](mailto:Alison.Green@osfm.oregon.gov)  
For meeting materials and scheduling information, contact Shari Barrett [osfm.ofc@osfm.oregon.gov](mailto:osfm.ofc@osfm.oregon.gov) or  
(503) 934-8256

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# **2026 OREGON DEFENSIBLE SPACE MODEL CODE (Model - ODSC)**

**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**OREGON DEFENSIBLE SPACE MODEL CODE DEVELOPMENT**

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## OREGON DEFENSIBLE SPACE CODE DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS

### CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS

1000 Friends  
Association of Oregon Counties  
Insurance Industry  
Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development  
Governors' Fire Service Policy Council Chair  
Governor's Office  
Oregon Property Owners Assoc  
Governors' Wildfire Programs Advisory Council  
Keep Oregon Green  
American Planners Association, Oregon Chapter  
League of Oregon Cities  
Oregon Building Code Division  
Oregon Building Officials Association  
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality  
Oregon Department of Forestry  
Oregon Emergency Management  
Oregon Emergency Management Association  
Oregon Farm Bureau  
Oregon Fire Chief's Association  
Oregon Fire Code Advisory Board  
Oregon Fire Marshals Association  
Oregon Forest Industries Council  
Oregon Home Builders  
Oregon Small Woodlands Association  
Oregon State University  
Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association  
Special Districts Association  
Sustainable Northwest  
The Nature Conservancy  
USFS/BLM  
Western Environmental Law Center  
Environment Seat -WPAC  
Douglas County Rural Fire Protection Association  
Coos Forest Protection Association  
Walker Range  
DCBS Insurance Commissioner  
IBHS  
Cattleman's Association  
ICC  
Consumer-Owned Utility- Consumers Power

# OREGON DEFENSIBLE SPACE

**Name of Team:** Model Oregon Defensible Space Code (ODSC) Development Committee

**Date:** 11/2025

Sponsor	Kick Off Date	Committee Administrator/Facilitator	Proposed Team Sunset Date
Oregon State Fire Marshal	November 2025	Assistant Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal Chad Hawkins	January 2026
<b>Background</b>	Senate Bill 83 requires the Department of the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to create and make available to local governments a model code for defensible space, in consultation with the Oregon Fire Code Advisory Board (OFCAB). The model code shall include standards that are consistent with, and do not exceed, the standards in the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (2024 ed.), that pertain to defensible space, including the standards in sections 603 and 604 of the code.		
<b>Mission Statement</b>	To develop the Model Oregon Defensible Space Code (ODSC) through an open and collaborative process whereas stakeholders, committee members, and persons from the public may provide input, recommendations, and guidance to establish model minimum defensible space requirements for wildfire risk reduction.		
<b>Goals &amp; Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a model code that aligns with the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code and best practices for Oregon for local governments to adopt if desired.</li> <li>2. Consult with and make recommendations to the Oregon Fire Code Advisory Board (OFCAB) in establishing the model ODSC.</li> </ol>		
<b>Committee Members</b>	Committee members include but not limited to; the Oregon Fire Service, Associations and Groups that have a vested interest in defensible space, Members of the public are encouraged to attend. OFCAB members are encouraged to attend as Ex-Officios.		
<b>Feedback Plan</b>	Agendas, minutes, and meeting information will be posted to the public meeting webpage <a href="https://www.oregon.gov/osfm/about-us/Pages/public-meetings.aspx">https://www.oregon.gov/osfm/about-us/Pages/public-meetings.aspx</a>		
<b>Scope</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IWUIC Chapter 6, section 603 and 604</li> <li>2. IWUIC sections needed to support scope and definition of sections 603 and 604; or any relevant sections relating to defensible space.</li> <li>3. Oregon best management practices related to vegetation management around structures.</li> </ol>		
<b>Procedures/ Meeting Frequency</b>	Hold at least three (3) meetings to discuss, review, and finalize the model code language November 19th, 2025 December 22nd, 2025 January 7, 2026		
<b>Recommendation Making Process</b>	The committee should strive to meet general consensus but majority rule shall prevail to provide final recommendation to OFCAB.		
<b>Recommendation Ratifying Body</b>	The State Fire Marshal through recommendation provided by the OFCAB.		
<b>Boundary Conditions to Decisions Made</b>	This committee can make recommendations, suggestions, and provide information to the OFCAB; however, the final decision on adoption of the code will be made by the State Fire Marshal.		
<b>How Decisions Are Communicated</b>	Approved recommendations will be communicated to the OFCAB by the OFCAB committee administrator through a variety of means including but not limited to: e-mail, office memorandum, website, conference calls and committee meetings.		
<b>Sunset Clause</b>	3 months from the first meeting, unless extended in writing by the OFCAB and the State Fire Marshal.		

11/4/2025

## CHARTER

## OREGON DEFENSIBLE SPACE CODE DEVELOPMENT HISTORY AND TIMELINE

<b>JUL 2021</b>	SB 762 signed into law, requiring OSFM to adopt a Statewide Defensible Space Code
<b>FEB 2022</b>	First Defensible Space Code stakeholder kickoff meeting
<b>MAR 2022</b>	OSFM Listening Tours
<b>APR 2022</b>	Defensible Space Code Development Committee (Focus Section 603)
<b>APR 2022</b>	Defensible Space Code Development Committee (Focus Section 604)
<b>MAY 2022</b>	Defensible Space Code Development Committee (Finalize Draft Language)
<b>AUG 2022</b>	Townhall tours in 17 Oregon cities begins
<b>AUG 2022</b>	First version of the Oregon Wildfire Risk Map paused – Code adoption paused
<b>MAY 2023</b>	OSFM's educational assessment program begins offering free one-on-one property visits.
<b>JUL 2023</b>	Senate Bill 80 signed into law, changing the risk classifications to 5 to 3 <b>hazard</b> classifications.
<b>MAR 2024</b>	OSFM launches year long pilot offering incentive payments for qualifying assessments.
<b>JUL 2024</b>	Second townhalls or community meetings begin in Oregon cities.
<b>JAN 2025</b>	Second version of hazard map is released.
<b>APR 2025</b>	Incentive program finishes, awarding \$250,000 to qualifying property assessments.
<b>JUL 2025</b>	Senate Bill 83 signed into law changing the defensible space code requirements.
<b>NOV 2025</b>	Model code language development begins

## Background:

**SB 762 (2021)** Defensible Space Provisions SB 762, passed in 2021, established a comprehensive framework for defensible space to reduce wildfire risk in Oregon, particularly in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Key provisions include:

### Mandatory Defensible Space Code

- The Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) was required to establish a statewide minimum defensible space code for properties in high or extreme wildfire risk areas within the WUI, as identified on the statewide wildfire hazard map (ORS 477.490).
- The code was required to include the standards relating to defensible space only in Sections 603 and 604 of the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC),
- OSFM may consider best practices specific to Oregon to establish the requirements.
- **NOTE:** The five (5) risk categories from the original legislation were changed to three (3) hazard classifications in the 2023 legislative session in SB 80. Defensible space provisions and the mandatory code would apply to lands that were classified as high and mapped within the WUI.

**SB 83 (2025)** Defensible Space Provisions (Proposed Amendment) The provided amendment to SB 83 significantly alters the defensible space framework established by SB 762, shifting from a mandatory statewide code to a voluntary model code. Key provisions include:

### Repeals:

- Repeals ORS 476.390 (defining defensible space), ORS 476.394 (local government enforcement of defensible space), and ORS 477.490 (statewide wildfire hazard map), among others (SECTION 1).
- Repeals sections 12a, 12b, and 12d which relates to BCD's home hardening code.
- Section 29 of chapter 592, Oregon Laws 2021 (SB 762), which relates to mapping and protected areas within Oregon.

Removes the requirement for OSFM to establish a mandatory statewide defensible space code (deletes ORS 476.392(1)(4)).

Local governments are not required to adopt the model code, and OSFM cannot require local governments to adopt the model code (ORS 476.392(4)).

# OREGON DEFENSIBLE SPACE - MODEL



## [Jurisdiction Name] Defensible Space Code

### **About this appendix:**

*Appendix DS adopts the Oregon Department of the State Fire Marshal's Model Defensible Space Code, establishing minimum standards for vegetation management, fuel modification, and defensible space maintenance. The authority having jurisdiction may amend Appendix X to address local conditions, consistent with Oregon Senate Bill 83 (2025). Where Appendix X is not adopted, vegetation clearance in wildland-urban interface areas shall comply with the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code.*

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### **Section 101**

#### **Definitions**

**101.1 Scope.** Unless otherwise expressly stated, the following words and terms shall, for the purposes of this code, have the meanings shown in this section.

**101.2 Referenced Standards** Terms not defined here [shall have the meanings ascribed in the Oregon Fire Code, IWUIC (2024 edition), or ORS Chapter 476, as applicable] [shall have their ordinarily accepted meanings, such as the context implies].

#### **102 Definitions.**

**Code official.** The local government entity, such as the planning department, or city, county, or rural fire protection district, whose function includes regulating building use and occupancy or administering fire safety laws, ordinances, and regulations, including the provisions of this code.

**Defensible Space.** An area, either natural or man-made, where material capable of allowing a fire to spread unchecked has been treated, cleared or modified to slow the rate and intensity of an advancing wildfire and to create an area for fire suppression operations to occur.

**Fire-Resistive Vegetation.** Plants with the characteristics compiled in Appendix F of this code can be used to reduce the likelihood of fire spread.

**Fire-Resistive Vegetation, Non.** Flammable plants, including *vegetative fuels*, that ignite readily, can add to the intensity of a wildfire and may increase its spread. Generally, these fuels have fine dry material such as twigs, leaves, and needles, or have high oil and resin content.

**Fuel Modification.** A method of modifying fuel load by reducing the amount of *nonfire-resistant vegetation* or altering the vegetation type to reduce the fuel load.

**Ladder Fuel.** Branches, leaves, needles, and other combustible vegetation may spread a wildfire from lower-growing to higher-growing vegetation.

**Fuel Break.** A natural or constructed barrier designed to slow or stop the progress of a wildfire, including cleared areas, roads, or non-combustible landscaping.

**Other human development.** Essential facilities, special occupancy structures, or hazardous facilities as defined in ORS 455.447 that support community functions, public communication, energy, or transportation.

**Owner.** The responsible party owning, leasing, controlling, operating, or maintaining buildings or structures on the property subject to this code and is responsible for modifying or removing



*nonfire-resistant vegetation.*

**This code.** The [jurisdiction name] Defensible Space Code, legally adopted through a local process, shall be known hereafter as “this code”.

**Vegetative fuels.** Plants that constitute a wildfire hazard.

**Wildfire Hazard.** A numerical value or local determination considering relevant conditions, describing the likelihood and intensity of a wildfire, based on specific factors or conditions of weather, climate, topography, and vegetation.

**Wildland.** Forestland, as defined in ORS 477.001, or an unimproved area that contains enough unmanaged vegetation, at any time of the year, to constitute a fire hazard, in the judgment of the forester, regardless of how the area is zoned or taxed.

**Wildland fuels.** Natural vegetation occurs in areas where development is essentially non-existent, including grasslands, brushlands, rangelands, woodlands, timberlands, or wilderness. Wildland fuels are a type of *vegetative fuel*.

**Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Area.** A geographical area identified by the adopting local jurisdiction, or local plans, where structures and other human development meets or intermingles with wildland or vegetative fuels.

## **Section 201**

### **Defensible Space Requirements**

**201.1 General Requirements.** The owner shall establish and maintain a defensible space around all buildings, decks, and other human development in locally designated WUI areas in accordance with this section to reduce wildfire fuel loads and create a buffer zone for potential firefighter use.

**201.1.1 5-foot noncombustible space.** All buildings, decks, and *other human development* shall include a space of at least 5 feet that is free of all *combustible vegetation*, including grass, weeds, bark dust, *ladder fuel*, and shrubs. Non-combustible materials (e.g., gravel, concrete) or *fire-resistant vegetation* shall be used. No firewood, lumber, or other combustible materials shall be stored in this zone.

**201.2 Defensible space distances.** Combustible fuels around buildings, decks, and *other human development* shall be modified to create a defensible space perimeter based on hazard levels determined by the *local government*. The levels are:

<b>Wildland Urban Interface Area</b>	<b>Fuel Modification Distance (feet)<sup>a</sup></b>
Moderate Hazard	30
High Hazard	50
Extreme Hazard	100

- a. Distances are allowed to be increased due to site-specific analysis based on local conditions and the fire protection plan.

**201.3 Fuel Modification.** The following modifications shall be established and maintained with the perimeters established in Section 301.2

**201.3.1 Trees.** Trees are allowed within the defensible space, provided that the horizontal distance between the crowns of adjacent trees and the crowns of trees and structures, overhead electrical facilities, or unmodified fuel is not less than 10 feet (3048 mm).

**201.3.2 Groundcover.** Deadwood and litter shall be regularly removed from trees. Where ornamental vegetative fuels or cultivated ground cover, such as green grass, ivy, succulents, or similar plants, are used as ground cover, they are allowed to be within the designated defensible space, provided they do not form a means of transmitting fire from the native growth to any structure.

**201.4 Best Management Practices.** The *code official* is authorized to enforce local best management practices locally relevant to their jurisdiction. Each section must be specifically adopted by reference by the *code official*, based on area conditions, as part of *this code*.

## **Section 301**

### **Maintenance of Defensible Space**

**301.1 General Maintenance.** The owner shall maintain the requirements in Section 301 and Sections 301.1.1 through 301.1.4 to provide a clear area for fire suppression operations.

**301.1.1 Trees.** Tree crowns extending to within 10 feet (3048 mm) of any structure shall be pruned to maintain a minimum horizontal clearance of 10 feet (3048 mm). Tree crowns within the *defensible space* shall be pruned to remove limbs located less than 6 feet (1829 mm) above the ground surface adjacent to the trees.

**301.1.2 Chimney clearance.** Portions of tree crowns that extend to within 10 feet (3048 mm) of a chimney outlet shall be pruned to maintain a minimum horizontal clearance of 10 feet (3048 mm).

**301.1.3 Deadwood removal.** Deadwood and vegetative litter (*ladder fuel*) shall be regularly removed from trees.

**302.1 Inspection and Compliance.** The *code official* may conduct periodic inspections to verify compliance with Sections 201 and 301.

**303.1 Maintenance Plan.** Property owners meeting the local criteria for WUI, as identified by the authority having jurisdiction, should have a plan to maintain the zone in accordance with *this code*.

**Appendix F. Characteristics of fire-resistive vegetation.**

All plants will burn under extreme fire weather conditions, such as drought. However, plants burn at different intensities and rates of consumption. Fire-resistive plants burn at a relatively low intensity, slow rates of spread and with short flame lengths. The following are characteristics of fire-resistive vegetation:

1. Growth with little or no accumulation of dead vegetation (either on the ground or standing upright).
2. Nonresinous plants (willow, poplar, or tulip trees).
3. Low volume of total vegetation (for example, a grass area as opposed to a forest or shrub-covered land).
4. Plants with high live fuel moisture (plants that contain a large amount of water in comparison to their dry weight).
5. Drought-tolerant plants (deeply rooted plants with thick, heavy leaves).
6. Stands without ladder fuels (plants without small, fine branches and limbs between ground and the canopy of overtopping shrubs and trees).
7. Plants requiring little maintenance (slow-growing plants that, when maintained, require little care).
8. Plants with woody stems and branches that require prolonged heating to ignite.



# OREGON DEFENSIBLE SPACE MODEL CODE

RULES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC)

November 19, 2025



# MEETING LOGISTICS

- Roles and responsibilities
- Hybrid meeting flow
- Public comment period



# AGENDA

Welcome & Introductions	Chad Hawkins, Assistant Chief Deputy Alison Green, Program Coordinator
Agency Update and Committee Intent	Mariana Ruiz-Temple, State Fire Marshal
Legislative Background and Review (Senate Bill 83)	Chad Hawkins, Assistant Chief Deputy
Model Code Development Process Charter Review Meeting Frequency and Schedule	Chad Hawkins, Assistant Chief Deputy
Questions/Public Comment	
Closing	Chad Hawkins, Assistant Chief Deputy





# BACKGROUND

- Wildfire is not a new risk to Oregon
- Increase in population and fire impacts to communities
- More intense wildfires near communities
- Urgency to protect communities







# BACKGROUND

- **Defensible space**
  - Reducing fire intensity around what we value most
  - Life safety of public and first responders
- **Three main ways homes can ignite during a wildfire**
  - Embers
  - Radiant heat
  - Direct flame contact







# TIMELINE

<b>JUL 2021</b>	SB 762 required the OSFM to adopt a statewide defensible space code
<b>FEB 2022</b>	First defensible space code stakeholder kickoff
<b>MAR 2022</b>	OSFM listening tours
<b>APR 2022</b>	Defensible Space Code Development Committee (Focus Section 603)
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<b>NOV 2025</b>	Model code language development begins



# BACKGROUND AND TIMELINE

## **Senate Bill 762 (2021)**

- Established a comprehensive framework for defensible space to reduce wildfire risk in Oregon, particularly in the wildland-urban interface.
- Key provisions included a mandatory defensible space code.

## **Senate Bill 83 (2025)**

- Significantly changed the defensible space framework established by Senate Bill 762
- Shifted from a mandatory statewide code to a voluntary model code



# OREGON FIRE CODE

## ADVISORY BOARD

### **OAR 837-042-1000**

- Oregon defensible space code development committee will review Senate Bill 83 framework & model code draft language
- Final recommendation will be submitted to Oregon Fire Code Advisory Board
- Oregon Fire Code Advisory Board will consult & review recommendations
  - Board may modify as needed before final recommendation is sent to the state fire marshal
- The state fire marshal will approve recommendations
- Final rulemaking will happen



# INTERNATIONAL WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE CODE

## SECTIONS 603, 604

### SECTION 603 DEFENSIBLE SPACE

**603.1 Objective.** Provisions of this section are intended to modify the fuel load in areas adjacent to structures to create a *defensible space*.

**603.2 Fuel modification.** Buildings or structures, constructed in compliance with the conforming *defensible space* category of Table 503.1, shall comply with the *fuel modification* distances contained in Table 603.2. For all other purposes the *fuel modification* distance shall be not less than 30 feet (9144 mm) or to the lot line, whichever is less. Distances specified in Table 603.2 shall be measured on a horizontal plane from the perimeter or projection of the building or structure as shown in Figure 603.2. Distances specified in Table 603.2 are allowed to be increased by the *code official* because of a site-specific analysis based on local conditions and the *fire protection plan*.

**603.2.1 Responsible party.** Persons owning, leasing, controlling, operating or maintaining buildings or structures requiring defensible spaces are responsible for modifying or removing nonfire-resistive vegetation on the property owned, leased or controlled by said person.

### FIRE PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

TABLE 603.2  
REQUIRED DEFENSIBLE SPACE

WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE AREA	FUEL MODIFICATION DISTANCE (feet) <sup>a</sup>
Moderate hazard	30
High hazard	50
Extreme hazard	100

For SI: 1 foot = 304.8 mm.

- a. Distances are allowed to be increased due to site-specific analysis based on local conditions and the fire protection plan.

**603.2.2 Trees.** Trees are allowed within the *defensible space*, provided that the horizontal distance between crowns of adjacent trees and crowns of trees and structures, overhead electrical facilities or unmodified fuel is not less than 10 feet (3048 mm).

**603.2.3 Ground cover.** Deadwood and litter shall be regularly removed from trees. Where ornamental vegetative fuels or cultivated ground cover, such as green grass, ivy, succulents or similar plants are used as ground cover, they are allowed to be within the designated *defensible space*, provided that they do not form a means of transmitting fire from the native growth to any structure.

### SECTION 604 MAINTENANCE OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE

**604.1 General.** Defensible spaces required by Section 603 shall be maintained in accordance with Section 604.

**604.2 Modified area.** Nonfire-resistive vegetation or growth shall be kept clear of buildings or structures, in accordance with Section 603, in such a manner as to provide a clear area for fire suppression operations.

**604.3 Responsibility.** Persons owning, leasing, controlling, operating or maintaining buildings or structures are responsible for maintenance of *defensible spaces*. Maintenance of the *defensible space* shall include modifying or removing nonfire-resistive vegetation and keeping leaves, needles and other dead vegetative material regularly removed from roofs of buildings and structures.

**604.4 Trees.** Tree crowns extending to within 10 feet (3048 mm) of any structure shall be pruned to maintain a minimum horizontal clearance of 10 feet (3048 mm). Tree crowns within the *defensible space* shall be pruned to remove limbs located less than 6 feet (1829 mm) above the ground surface adjacent to the trees.

**604.4.1 Chimney clearance.** Portions of tree crowns that extend to within 10 feet (3048 mm) of the outlet of a chimney shall be pruned to maintain a minimum horizontal clearance of 10 feet (3048 mm).

**604.4.2 Deadwood removed.** Deadwood and litter shall be regularly removed from trees.





# DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CHARTER

- Background
- Mission
- Goals and objectives
- Scope
- Meeting schedule
- Identify lead and alternate committee members
- Public comment form



# MEETING SCHEDULE

## DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- November 19, 2025, 1 – 2:30 p.m.
- December 22, 2025, 9 – 10:30 a.m.
- January 7, 2026, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 pm



# NEXT STEPS

- Review charter and draft model language
- Provide comments by December 15
- **Next meeting:** December 22, 9 - 10:30 a.m.





# LEARN MORE ABOUT DEFENSIBLE SPACE

[Oregondefensiblespace.org](http://Oregondefensiblespace.org)







# MEETING ADJOURNED

## **Alison Green**

Defensible Space Coordinator  
Fire and Life Safety Division  
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## **Chad Hawkins**

Assistant Chief Deputy  
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