



Oregon Defensible Space – Model Code Agenda

January 15th, 2026

9:00 am to 10:30 am

Welcome	Chad Hawkins, Assistant Chief Deputy
Fire Resistant Plant (Appendix F) Review	Alison Green, Program Coordinator, Process Facilitator
Model Code Language Final Review	Alison Green, Process Facilitator
Public Comment – Code Language	Alison Green, Process Facilitator
Approximately - 3 minutes per comment	
Rulemaking Process & RAC Role	Chad Hawkins, Assistant Chief Deputy
Discussion – Review Draft Rules	Alison Green, Process Facilitator
Discussion – Review Draft Rules Impact Statements	Alison Green, Process Facilitator
Public Comment Period – Rules	
Approximately - 3 minutes per comment	
Next Steps and Close	Chad Hawkins, Assistant Chief Deputy

For additional information, contact Alison Green at Alison.Green@osfm.oregon.gov

For meeting materials and scheduling information, contact Shari Barrett osfm.ofc@osfm.oregon.gov or (503) 934-8256

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 239 145 173 272 07

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-OR-

Dial in by phone

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Phone conference ID: 410 856 316#

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
Background	<p>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).</p> <p>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.</p>		
Mission Statement	<p>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.</p>		
Goals & Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 2. Consult with and make recommendations to the Oregon Fire Code Advisory Board (OFCAB) in establishing the model ODSC. 		
Committee Members	<p>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.</p>		
Feedback Plan	<p>Agendas, minutes, and meeting information will be posted to the public meeting webpage https://www.oregon.gov/osfm/about-us/Pages/public-meetings.aspx</p>		
Scope	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IWUIC Chapter 6, section 603 and 604 2. IWUIC sections needed to support scope and definition of sections 603 and 604; or any relevant sections relating to defensible space. 3. Oregon best management practices related to vegetation management around structures. 		
Procedures/ Meeting Frequency	<p>Hold at least three (3) meetings to discuss, review, and finalize the model code language</p> <p>November 19th, 2025</p> <p>December 22nd, 2025</p> <p>January 7, 2026</p>		
Recommendation Making Process	<p>The committee should strive to meet general consensus but majority rule shall prevail to provide final recommendation to OFCAB.</p>		
Recommendation Ratifying Body	<p>The State Fire Marshal through recommendation provided by the OFCAB.</p>		
Boundary Conditions to Decisions Made	<p>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.</p>		
How Decisions Are Communicated	<p>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.</p>		
Sunset Clause	<p>3 months from the first meeting, unless extended in writing by the OFCAB and the State Fire Marshal.</p>		

11/4/2025

CHARTER

OREGON DEFENSIBLE SPACE CODE DEVELOPMENT HISTORY AND TIMELINE

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

[Jurisdiction Name] Defensible Space Code

About this model code:

This code, and the provisions contained herein, must be adopted by local governments as required under ORS 476.392.

Section 101 **General**

101.1 Background. In 2021, the Oregon Legislature enacted Senate Bill 762, establishing comprehensive wildfire initiatives intended to enhance wildfire response and to promote fire-adapted communities by establishing and educating about *defensible space* around homes. In 2023, Senate Bill 80 made legislative changes.

102.1 Authority: In 2025, the Oregon Legislature amended provisions of Senate Bill 762 and 80 through Senate Bill 83 to reflect local flexibility rather than statewide enforcement and directed the State Fire Marshal, pursuant to ORS 476.392, to develop a model *defensible space* code. Adoption of the model code by local governments is voluntary and must occur through each jurisdiction's applicable local or municipal legislative process. Education, enforcement, conflict resolution, and appeals related to an adopted *defensible space* code must be administered by the local jurisdiction.

103.1 Best Practices. Consistent with statute, *this code* incorporates Oregon-specific best practices for *defensible space*, including the non-combustible zone around structures.

104.1 Scope. *This code* applies to buildings, structures, and *other human development* located within areas designated by the local authority as *wildland-urban interface*. The local authority may amend *this code* to address local conditions, where consistent with ORS 476.392.

Section 201 **Definitions**

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

201.2 Terms not defined. Terms not defined here shall have the meanings ascribed in the Oregon Fire Code, or the International Wildland Urban Interface Code, as applicable. All other terms shall have their ordinarily accepted meanings, as the context implies, according to Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition.

202 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. As defined in ORS 476.392, a natural or human-made area in which material capable of supporting the spread of fire has been treated, cleared or modified to slow the rate and intensity of advancing wildfire and allow space for fire suppression operations to occur.

FIRE-RESISTIVE VEGETATION. Plants contained in the “Fire-resistant Plants for Home Landscapes” (publication PNW 590), or plants with the characteristics compiled in Appendix F of *this code*, used to reduce the likelihood of fire spread.

FIRE-RESISTIVE VEGETATION, NON. Flammable plants, including vegetative fuels, that do not meet the definition for *fire-resistant vegetation* that ignite readily, add to the intensity of a wildfire and may increase its spread.

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 that may spread a wildfire from lower-growing to higher-growing vegetation.

OTHER HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. Buildings and structures classified as Risk Category IV in accordance with the Oregon Structural Specialty Code, Table 1604.5.

User note: OSSC Table 1604.5 is not part of *this code* but paraphrased for the reader's convenience.

OSSC Table 1604.5 Risk Category IV includes buildings and structures designated as “essential facilities” where the loss of function represents a substantial hazard to occupants or users. It includes hospitals, correctional facilities, fire and police stations, emergency shelters, public utilities, toxic material storage, aircraft control facilities, national defense structures, and water storage and fire suppression facilities.

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

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

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-URBAN INTERFACE. A geographic area, as defined in ORS 477.015, in which there is a concentration of dwellings in an urban or suburban setting near wildland.

Section 301

Defensible Space Requirements

301.1 General Requirements. The *responsible party* shall establish and maintain a *defensible space* to reduce wildfire fuel loads and create a buffer zone for potential firefighter use around all buildings, decks, and *other human development* in areas defined by the *code official* as a *wildfire hazard* in the *wildland-urban interface* in accordance with this section.

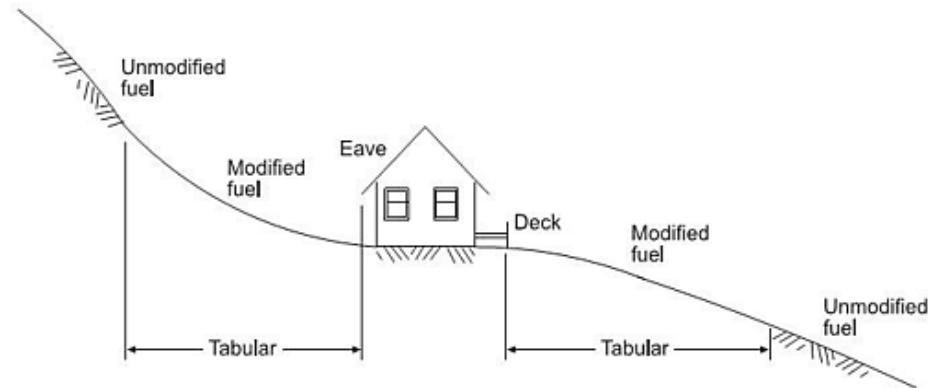
301.2 5-foot noncombustible space. A noncombustible space not less than 5 feet in width shall be provided around buildings, decks, and other structures. The space shall be maintained to reduce the likelihood of fire spread and shall be free of combustible vegetation and accumulations of combustible materials. Noncombustible materials (e.g., gravel, concrete, bare dirt) shall be permitted. Storage of firewood, lumber, or other combustible materials shall not be permitted within this space.

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

Wildland Urban Interface Area	Fuel Modification Distance (feet) ^a
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 Maintenance Plan in Section 401.1.

FIGURE 301.3
MEASUREMENTS OF FUEL MODIFICATION DISTANCE



301.4 Fuel Modification. The following *fuel modifications* shall be established and maintained with the perimeters established in Section 301.3.

301.4.1 Trees. Well maintained existing trees are encouraged 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). Deadwood shall regularly be removed from trees.

301.4.1.1 Trees greater than 18 feet tall. 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.

301.4.1.2 Trees 18 feet tall or less. To preserve the health of established trees no more than 18 (5486 mm) feet tall, lower limbs shall be removed to a height 1/3 of the tree's total height.

Exception: Newly planted trees or immature trees.

301.4.1.3 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).

301.4.2 Groundcover. Deadwood and litter shall be regularly removed. Where ornamental vegetation 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.

Section 401

Maintenance of Defensible Space

401.1 General Maintenance. The requirements of this section shall be maintained by the *responsible party* to provide a clear area for fire suppression operations.

401.1.1 Trees. Trees and tree crowns in the *defensible space* are to be maintained to the requirements in Sections 301.4.1 through 301.4.1.3.

401.1.2 Deadwood removal. Deadwood and *ladder fuel* shall be regularly removed from trees and in accordance with 301.4.1.

402.1 Inspection and Compliance. The *code official* or designee may conduct periodic inspections to verify compliance with Sections 301 and 401.

403.1 Maintenance Plan. Property responsible parties meeting the local criteria for *wildland-urban interface*, as identified by the authority having jurisdiction, should have an articulable plan to maintain the zone in accordance with *this code*.

Appendix F (International Wildland Urban Interface Code). Characteristics of *fire-resistant vegetation*.

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