



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DEFENSIBLE SPACE

What is defensible space?

Defensible space is the buffer you create between your business or home and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surrounds it. Proper defensible space can slow or stop the spread of wildfire and help protect your home or business.

How does defensible space help protect my home?

Defensible space offers your home or business protection from wildfire, and even small actions make a big difference. Embers are the leading cause of home loss during a wildfire. They can travel up to three miles ahead of the large flame front. Well-maintained defensible space can increase your home's chance of survival by 75%.

Where can I learn more about defensible space best practices?

The Office of State Fire Marshal has resources on our website for homeowners to get started with defensible space.

Defensible Space Tips: [English](#) & [Spanish](#)

Where do I start when creating my defensible space?

- We recommend breaking it up into small weekend projects in the spring, fall, and winter.
- First, start at your home and work out from there. Remove combustible materials like dry leaves and pine needles from your roof, gutters, and eaves.
- Next, move to the foundation of your home and make sure combustible landscaping like bark dust or mulch is not touching your home. Consider replacing combustible landscaping with bare dirt, gravel, or pavers.
- Next, trim and limb bushes and trees so they are not touching your home. This does not mean you need to remove all the plants from your yard. Instead, give plants some space from one another. Consider removing tall brush from under trees and some of the lower limbs so fire on the ground cannot get into the tree canopy.
- Continue moving outward from your home to give added protection from wildfire.



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Defensible space seems like a lot of work; how do I get all these projects done?

Much like preparing for any natural disaster, Oregonians can tackle these projects one at a time. Your defensible space does not need to be completed in a day. Instead, plan a weekend project like cleaning the gutters. The following weekend, move to the next project on the list. In small increments, a defensible space plan can come together. Your defensible space plan also does not have to encompass multiple acres of work. Instead, focus on the immediate area around your home to give it the best chance of surviving a wildfire.

Who can I talk to about defensible space recommendations?

The OSFM has resources available to discuss defensible space. We have field staff across the state working in local communities to answer questions. Your local fire department is also a great resource. Check if your community is participating in a voluntary neighborhood program like Firewise USA® or another program geared toward better protecting homes from wildfire.

Is there funding to help Oregonians with defensible space projects?

The Office of State Fire Marshal is working to develop grant programs to help with defensible space projects. To learn about our office's grant programs, visit our [website](#).