



FIRE ADAPTIVE COMMUNITIES

of Lincoln County

PREPARE FOR WILDFIRE • PREPARE FOR WILDFIRE • PREPARE FOR WILDFIRE • PREPARE FOR WILDFIRE



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FIRE ADAPTED?

A fire adapted community accepts fire as part of the natural landscape. The community understands its fire risk, and takes action before a wildfire to minimize harm to residents, homes, businesses, parks, utilities, and other community assets. These collective actions empower all residents to be safer in their environment. To help prepare your community, consider your role in making it fire adapted.

Start WITH YOUR HOME

WHERE DOING "LITTLE" THINGS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Many people see the large flame fronts on the news and figure that's what burned the homes. However, most homes are not destroyed by these huge walls of flames, but by the little embers. Wildfire embers can travel over a mile and you can control what happens when they land by employing a few safety measures.

- Use fire resistant door mats - no sisal or flammable natural fibers.
- Don't store extra wood material under or near the home.
- Don't store firewood on your deck during wildfire season. Try to use it all up in the winter, or move it in the spring.
- Keep your roof free of debris.
- Screen vent openings with an 1/8 inch screen or smaller.
- Replace fiberglass window screen with metal. Not only do they keep embers from burning through, they add another line of heat protection to your home.
- Ensure you have highly visible reflective address signs and that brush or trees are not blocking the view of them.
- Ensure your driveway is large enough for a fire truck to turn around.
- Be careful when mowing during wildfire season. Generally, mowing a lawn is fine, but when mowing a pasture there is a much greater possibility of hitting a rock and throwing a spark.
- Remove vegetation from around propane tanks.
- Encourage your local fire department to participate in the Ready, Set, Go Program.



Lawn mowers, weed-eaters, chain saws, tractors and trimmers can all spark a wildfire.

INDUSTRIAL FIRE PROTECTION LEVELS

By law, the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) uses two closure systems to reduce wildfire risk on 12.7 million acres of private and state forestland protected by the agency.

- **Level I** Fire equipment and fire watch service is required.
- **Level II** Limits certain activities to between 8 p.m. and 1 p.m.
- **Level III** Prohibits some activities and limits others to between 8 p.m. and 1 p.m.
- **Level IV** All operations are prohibited.

Summer Fire Rules:

From April 15 to October 15, Or later if the Fire danger warrants it, the following restrictions are activated:

- Cigarette smoking on forestland is only allowed on roads, cleared landings, gravel pits, or similar cleared areas.
- Fireworks may not be lit on forestland.
- Chainsaw use in nonindustrial work must follow IFPL requirements.

Call 800.406.5322 to check the IFPL for your area, or call the Lincoln County Sherriif Department at 509.725.3501. You can also call your local fire department.

FOR MORE INFO

Lincoln County Conservation District
1310 Morgan St. • Davenport, WA 99122
509.725.4181 x3 • www.lincolncd.com

Firewise Communities
www.firewise.org • 1.617.984.7486

Department of Natural Resources
www.dnr.wa.gov/ • 509.925.8510

Washington State Conservation Commission
<http://scc.wa.gov/> • 360.407.6200



WASHINGTON STATE DEPT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES



Frequently Asked Questions ABOUT DEFENSIBLE SPACE

WHAT IS DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

Defensible space is an area around your home or structures, which is either man-made or natural where the vegetation is modified and maintained to slow the rate and intensity of an advancing wildland fire. It also provides room for firefighters to work and helps protect the forest from becoming completely involved should a structure fire occur. It is frequently divided into zones. These zones are described in more detail on page 4.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VEGETATION AND WILDFIRE THREAT?

Many people do not view the plants growing on their property as a threat. But in terms of wildfire, the vegetation adjacent to their home can have considerable influence upon the survivability of their house. All vegetation, including plants native to the area, as well as ornamental plants, is potential wildfire fuel. If vegetation is properly modified and maintained, a wildfire can be slowed, the length of flames shortened, and the amount of heat reduced—all of which assist firefighters to defend the home against an oncoming wildfire.

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT IS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT MY HOUSE, SO WHY BOTHER WITH DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

Some individuals incorrectly assume that a fire engine will be parked in their driveway and firefighters will be actively defending their homes if a wildfire approaches. During a major wildfire, it is unlikely there will be enough firefighting resources available to defend every home. In these instances, firefighters will likely select homes they can most safely and effectively protect. This has been very apparent during our County's recent wildfires. It is important to remember many of our own firefighters might be mobilized on other fires outside our county. The key is to reduce fire intensity as wildfire nears the house. This can be accomplished by reducing the amount of flammable vegetation surrounding a home. Consequently, the most important person in protecting a house from wildfire is not a firefighter, but the property owner. It is the action taken by the owner before the wildfire occurs (such as proper landscaping) that is critical.

As the number of people living in and adjacent to the wildland urban interface grows, the likelihoods of homes being threatened by wildfire also grows.



DOES DEFENSIBLE SPACE REQUIRE A LOT OF BARE GROUND IN MY LANDSCAPE?

No. Unfortunately, many people have a misconception. While bare ground is certainly effective in reducing the wildfire threat, it is unnecessary due to appearance, soil erosion, and aesthetics. Many homes have attractive, well-vegetated landscapes that also serve as effective defensible space.

DOES CREATING A DEFENSIBLE SPACE REQUIRE SPECIAL SKILLS / EQUIPMENT?

No. For the most part, creating a defensible space employs routine gardening and landscape maintenance practices such as pruning, mowing, weeding, plant removal, appropriate plant selection, and irrigation. Equipment needed includes common tools like a chain saw, pruning saw, pruning shears, loppers, weed-eater, shovel, and a

rake. There are many resources in the county that can provide technical assistance. The WSU extension office, Master Gardeners, and even local nurseries should be able to give tips on fire resistant plants. There

is also a great reference guide "**Fire-Resistant Plants for Home Landscapes**" that can be viewed Online at: <https://pubs.wsu.edu>. Search: Fire Resistant Plants.

DOES HAVING A DEFENSIBLE SPACE GUARANTEE MY HOUSE WILL SURVIVE A WILDFIRE?

No. Under extreme conditions, almost any house can burn. Having a defensible space will significantly improve the odds of your home surviving a wildfire.

Examples **THE GOOD, BAD AND UGLY**

DO'S & DON'TS OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE



GOOD

Photo Above:

Using cement products for the steps to the deck takes away the wicking action. Wooden steps can become a wick to the rest of the house, and then a wooden deck can become kindling. Replace with fire resistant materials if possible.



GOOD

Photo Above:

Consider screening in your deck to keep embers from accumulating and causing the deck to become kindling for the house. Think of embers as snow—wherever a snowflake can go, an ember can too.

BAD

Photo Below:

This is the same home pictured on the far left after the Taylor Bridge fire that occurred in Kittitas County. The wood steps acted as a wick, starting the deck on fire which eventually led to the siding on the house. Luckily it was a fire resistant siding, so it burned very slowly and the firefighters were able to cut the burning materials out.



ZONES OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE

The zones of defensible space can vary depending on topography, but as a guide, it is generally divided into three zones. Zone 1 is the first 30 feet from your home. Firewise experts often add a 5 foot fire free element in this zone. Try to keep the first 5 feet near your home free of combustibles, then work out to 30 feet, paying extra attention to limbing and spacing trees, removing ladder fuels and other flammable items. Then extend out to 100 feet from the home. Trees can be closer, but ladder fuels should still be removed from under the canopies and fuel breaks are encouraged. The remaining zone is often measured at 200 feet, but can be considered the remainder of your property.

Many of these concepts include thinning and removing brush for forest health as well as defensible space.

**Call the Lincoln County
Conservation District
for a complete home
assessment.
509.725.4181 ex. 3**

GOOD

Photo Right:

Landowners can install additional water sources for firefighters. Most Forest Service and DNR personnel would appreciate a minimum of 2,000 gallons, but this landowner installed more than one source. Be sure to label them well so that firefighters know what and where they are.



BAD

Photo Middle Right:

Examples of highly flammable plants include ornamental juniper, Leyland Cypress, Italian Cypress, and arborvitae. It is suggested that these highly flammable plants not be used in landscaping, but if you must, make sure they are not in the first 30 feet near the home.

UGLY

Photo Below:

A home that almost burned due to an ember landing in an arborvitae. Luckily a helicopter with a bucket was overhead at the time and saved the home.



GOOD

Photo Right:

Organize a Firewise workshop or incorporate defensible space information into a Wildfire Preparedness Day. There are numerous entities who would participate – including the Red Cross, WA Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, WA Dept. of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Fire Districts to name a few. Lincoln County Conservation District would be happy to help organize an event



Planning and Preparation

THINK LEAN, CLEAN AND GREEN

A HANDY CHECKLIST

Part of the process of defensible space planning is creating a new consciousness about vegetation management and how the decisions you make now will influence your overall defensible space planning. The following “Lean, Clean and Green” checklist should be revisited periodically as part of your overall vegetation management plan.



✓ Emphasize use of hardscaping such as rock (gravels and decorative) and non-combustible hard surfaces (concrete sidewalks, brick patios and asphalt driveways). Placing gravel around the first 10 feet of your home is a much better alternative than bark and requires less maintenance.

✓ Emphasize the use of low growing herbaceous (non-woody) plants that are kept green during the fire season through irrigation if necessary. Herbaceous plants include maintained grass, a variety of ground-covers, bedding plants, bulbs, and perennial flowers.



✓ Tree limbs within 15 feet of a chimney, encroaching on power-lines or touching the house should be removed.

✓ Fuel reduction efforts are ongoing in Lincoln County. If you have an HOA, check on your community rules first. Then contact the Lincoln County Conservation District or the WA Department of Natural Resources to receive a free assessment and see if you qualify for a Cost-Share Program. Many programs are available that provide assistance to thin and limb trees and remove brush.

✓ Deciduous (plants that shed their foliage) trees and shrubs are acceptable if they are kept green and free of dead plant material, ladder fuels are removed and individual plants or groups of plants are arranged so that adjacent wildland vegetation cannot convey a fire through them to the structure. When it comes to shrubs, the shorter the better.

✓ Don't use ornamental coniferous shrubs and trees (such as juniper, arborvitae, and mugo pine) and tall exotic grasses (such as pampas grass).

✓ Where you do retain coniferous shrubs and trees, make sure they are healthy and free of dead wood, pruned to reduce the amount of fuel and height; and ladder fuels are removed.

Forest Health

INSECTS AND DISEASE

Being a Fire Adapted Community in a forested area also requires landowners to become familiar with forest health issues such as insects and disease. Some of the more common issues in Lincoln County are listed below.

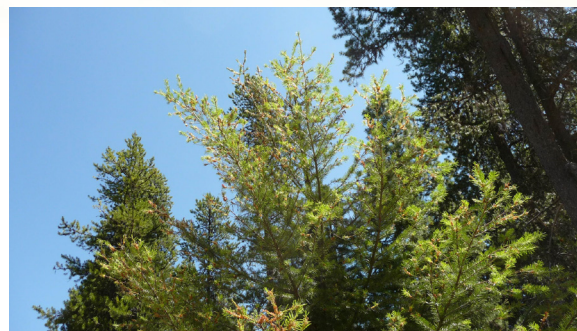


Photo by: Ladd Livingston, Idaho Department of Lands, Bugwood.or

PINE BUTTERFLY

The pine butterfly usually feeds on the foliage of ponderosa pine, but may also feed on other conifers, including the Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, western larch, western hemlock, and western white pine. Populations of the pine butterfly are usually regulated at lower numbers, but can have rare outbreaks at irregular intervals. Outbreaks are usually short-lived, spanning two to five years before declining, yet can cause severe defoliation over large areas. Tree mortality and growth loss are often dependent on the severity of the outbreak. Trees that survive a pine butterfly outbreak are often weakened and more susceptible to bark beetles. There are several factors that help regulate the pine butterfly population including natural predators, environmental conditions, larval starvation, and winter egg mortality.

WESTERN PINE BEETLE

The western pine beetle attacks and kills mature ponderosa pine throughout much of its range. Most of the time, the populations of these native insects are at low levels, and the beetles attack stressed, damaged, or weakened ponderosa pines. Western pine beetle populations often increase dramatically during periods of drought, and over-stocked stands are also subject to western pine beetle attack. Trees damaged mechanically or by lightning or fire are often targets of attack, as are diseased host trees. Thinning overstocked stands not only increase health, but also reduces the intensity of wildfires.



DWARF MISTLETOE

Douglas-fir dwarf mistletoe has 1/4- to 1/2-inch olive green shoots, while ponderosa pine dwarf mistletoe has 3- to 8-inch olive green to yellow shoots. Seeds are sticky and are forcibly shot from shoots growing on swellings. These seeds may travel up to 100 feet depending on the species and wind. When they land on the proper host, they sprout in the spring and penetrate the thin bark, forming a new infection. The dead limbs and brooms resulting from this disease adds to wildfire fuels.

WHEN WILDFIRE COMES *Emergency* A PLAN FOR **YOU AND YOUR PETS**

BE PREPARED

- ☐ **Monitor** fire weather conditions and fire status. Stay tuned to your TV or local radio stations for updates, or check the fire department website. A Yakima County Public Safety live audio feed is available to listen to on phone apps such as 5-0 Radio and on your computer at Broadcastify.com.
- ☐ **Evacuate** as soon as possible.
- ☐ **Alert** family and neighbors.
- ☐ **Dress** in appropriate clothing (e.g. clothing made from natural fibers, such as cotton, and work boots). Goggles, a dry bandana or particle mask are handy.
- ☐ **Ensure** that you have your emergency supply kit on hand that includes all necessary items, such as a battery powered radio, cell phone charger, spare batteries, emergency contact numbers, and ample drinking water.
- ☐ **Remain** close to your house, drink plenty of water and keep an eye on your family and pets until you are ready to leave.

INSIDE CHECKLIST, IF TIME ALLOWS

- ☐ Close all windows and doors, leaving them unlocked.
- ☐ Remove flammable window shades and curtains and close metal shutters.
- ☐ Move furniture to the center of the room, away from windows and doors.
- ☐ Turn off pilot lights and air conditioning.
- ☐ Leave your lights on so firefighters can see your house and other structures under smoky conditions.



Preparing for your pet makes sense.

Your pet is an important member of your household and survival in an emergency can largely depend on planning done today.

OUTSIDE CHECKLIST, IF TIME ALLOWS

- ☐ Bring combustible items from the exterior of the house inside or move away from the home (e.g. patio furniture, children's toys, door mats, etc). If you have a pool, place them inside.
- ☐ Turn off propane tanks and other gas at the meter.
- ☐ Leave exterior lights on.
- ☐ Back your car into the driveway to facilitate a quick departure. Shut doors and roll up windows.
- ☐ Have a ladder available.
- ☐ Cover attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial covers if time permits.

PLAN FOR YOUR PETS & LIVESTOCK

- ☐ **Prepare** a pet emergency supply kit. Keep at least three days of food and water in airtight containers. Pack an extra supply of medicine and a first aid kit. Include pet's registration information, medical records, and vaccination documents. If appropriate, include a pet litter box.
- ☐ **Be sure** your pet is wearing a collar with an ID Tag and have leashes ready to use.



WHEN TO LEAVE

Do not wait to be advised to leave if there is a possible threat to your home or evacuation route. Leave early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke or road congestion. If you are advised to leave by local authorities, do not hesitate!

- ☐ **Transport** your pet in it's crate or pet carrier. Have a trailer set up for evacuation of horses and other livestock, along with hay and grain.
- ☐ **Create** a buddy system. Plan with neighbors, friends, or relatives to make sure someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so.