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## FIRE FUEL REDUCTION GUIDE and INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Open spaces in Alpine and Highland are valued for their nature and beauty. Living within these areas means we must do our part to protect our homes and our community. Living within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) provides us with a sense of nature, yet there are dangers that must be mitigated and each of us should do our part.

### Wildland Urban Interface (WUI):

The wildland urban interface is any location where a fire can spread from vegetation (wildland fuels) to buildings (urban fuels), resulting in multiple house fires that overwhelm fire protection efforts. We may not be able to stop wildfires but we can mitigate that risk by planning and proper fuel management. Creating a defensible space around our homes may help to reduce risk to our lives, properties, community, and firefighters.

As a resident and/or owner of property near or adjacent to wildland areas, completing the following items increases the chances that your home will survive a wildfire, and will reduce the danger to firefighters, neighbors, and surrounding natural resources. The attached Defensible Space Checklist will help you determine what you need to do to reduce your vulnerability to the threat of wildfire.



## What is Defensible Space?

Defensible Space is a perimeter created around a structure where vegetation is treated, cleared or reduced to slow the spread of wildfire towards a structure, reduce the chance of a structure fire burning to the surrounding area, and provides a safe perimeter for firefighters to protect a structure.

A homeowner's clearing responsibility is limited to 100 feet away from their structure(s) or to the property line, whichever is less, and limited to their land. While individual property owners are not required to clear beyond 100 feet, groups of property owners are encouraged to extend clearances beyond the 100-foot requirement in order to create community-wide defensible spaces. Here are seven important steps:

**TWO ZONES MAKE UP THE REQUIRED 100 FEET OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE:**

**ZONE 1: 30 feet of Lean, Clean & Green**

- 1 Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds.
- 2 Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- 3 Keep tree branches 10 feet away from your chimney and other trees.

**ZONE 2: 30-100 feet of Reduced Fuel**

- 4 Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- 5 Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
- 6 Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs and trees.


**Use Equipment Properly to Keep from Sparking a Wildfire**

- 7 Mow before 10 a.m., and never on a hot or windy day. String trimmers are a safer option (vs. lawnmowers) for clearing vegetation.



**VERTICAL SPACING**

Large trees do not have to be cut and removed as long as all of the plants beneath them are removed. This eliminates a vertical "fire ladder."



**HORIZONTAL SPACING**

Create horizontal and vertical spacing between plants, the amount of spacing will depend on how steep the slope is and the size of the plants.

Once you have completed your assessment, you will have a better idea of the scope of your project, and you can prioritize your next steps. Don't be overly concerned if the size of the project seems daunting. The goal is to take this one step at a time. Your priorities should focus on making the most impact with the least amount of effort. Removing dead and dying vegetation including dry leaves, pine needles, limbs and small branches, brush parts, dead materials on the ground, unused timber, and debris piles.