
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit

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Defensible Space is Your Responsibility

San Andreas – Due to a warm, dry spring, local residents are urged to work on fire safety clearance around their homes while conditions are relatively safe. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF/CALFIRE) reminds property owners that Public Resources Code 4291 requires defensible space around all homes and other buildings. Clearing the required 100 feet (or to your property line, whichever is closest) involves three simple steps: 1) Remove dead vegetation, 2) Thin out live vegetation, and 3) Prune up your trees.

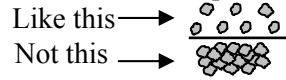
1. Remove Dead Vegetation:

- **The First 30 Feet:** Remove *everything that is DEAD*: dead trees, branches, brush, all dry grass, leaves, and pine needles within 30 feet of all buildings, on roofs, gutters, decks, porches, and ground - including spaces under decks, porches, buildings on pier blocks, RV's, vehicle parking areas, etc.
 - **Chimneys:** Remove *all* limbs within 10 feet of chimney. Install ½" screening on chimney outlets.
 - **Propane Tanks:** Provide 10' horizontal and vertical clearance. Very low, well-irrigated groundcover and lattice fencing within 10' is permissible. **No smoking or burn piles within 25 feet!**
- **The Next 70 Feet:** Remove *all* dead trees and brush. Dry, cut grass, leaves, and pine needles *may stay* on the ground, 3-4" deep. In grasslands without brush or trees, dry grass 18" tall is permitted in this zone.
- Clearing beyond 100 feet will increase the safety of your home and property.

2. Thin and Separate Live Vegetation:

- **Separate** trees and bushes from each other and from dry, dead ground fuels such as mowed dry grass, pine needles, or live ground covers, according to possible flame heights and lengths on next page.
- **Surround** clumps of vegetation with cleared areas, according to possible flame heights/lengths on next page.
- **Maintain** a vertical clear space of at least "**3 times the height of the shrub**" between any shrub and overhanging tree branches, or between grass and shrubs or tree branches.
- **Interrupt** fire's path by breaking up continuous shrub masses. Remove "ladder fuels" – the vegetation that lets fire climb from ground level to treetops and roofs.

- **Minimize** the number and size of plants beside your house. Avoid dense ‘privacy screens’ that could endanger your home. Separate plants using a diamond pattern to maintain privacy and fire safety;
- **Replace** highly flammable plants with fire resistive ones.



3. Prune Your Trees:

- Prune (remove limbs) at least 6 feet, more on slopes, if there is nothing but leaf litter or short, mowed grass under your trees. You should be able to walk freely under your trees.
 - For a *single* ornamental tree with branches to the ground, remove all dead fuels within, beneath and beside it.
- Prune to $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ the tree height, or 15 feet, whichever is less, if there is groundcover vegetation growing under the trees, **or** to retain a “continuous forest canopy” (limbs of one tree touching those of another).

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