



# Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc.

## Defensible Space: Compliance with 100-foot Requirements

Everyone who owns property in a wildland area in California needs to know about the laws regarding defensible space, which were revised in 2006. Key points to be aware of are:

- Defensible space clearance requirements around structures has been expanded from 30 feet to 100 feet, creating a new fuel treatment zone called the **REDUCED FUEL ZONE**. Property owners have a legal responsibility to treat all of their property up to 100 feet away from their structure or to their property line, whichever is less and limited to their land.
- State law or local ordinance, rule or regulation can specify requirements of greater than 100 feet. Property owners are not required to clear beyond 100 feet from their structure, but are encouraged to do so to create community-wide defensible space.
- Insurance companies can require homeowners to maintain firebreaks greater than 100 feet
- The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) has the authority to clear a property and then bill the property owner or lien the property.

Distance from Structures	Zone	Goal
0-30 feet	Hazard Clearance	Fuel Break
30-100 feet	Reduced Fuel	Fuel Separation

The intent of these defensible space regulations is to improve existing fuel breaks to reduce fire intensity, inhibit fire in crowns (tree tops), reduce the rate of fire spread, and provide a safer environment for firefighters to suppress a wildfire.

Please follow the guidelines, drafted by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, in this document for meeting the intent of the California Resource Code (PRC) 4291 (a) and (b) and California regulation 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR)1299, Defensible Space.

### Fire Hazard Clearance Inspection

CDF arranges with U.S. Forest Service (USFS) fire prevention officers from Sierra National Forest to conduct an **ANNUAL FIRE HAZARD CLEARANCE INSPECTION** in Yosemite West to evaluate property owners' compliance with CCR 1299 and PRC 4291. The fire prevention team completes a written checklist for residents noting any conditions that require the property owners' attention and may issue citations for noncompliance.

The Annual Fire Hazard Clearance deadline, which is around July 4th, will be posted on the USFS signboard along the entrance road to Yosemite West (between Wawona Road and the mailboxes). Please direct any questions you may have to the CDF, Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit (☎ 209-966-3622), 5366 Hwy 49 North, Mariposa, CA 95338.

## **Hazard Clearance Zone (0-30ft) Guidelines**

- ▣ Remove and clear all flammable vegetation and combustible material within 30 feet of each structure. (These are the same requirements under which we have been following for years.)
- ▣ You are not required to remove single specimens of trees, ornamental shrubbery, or similar plants used as ground cover, as long as they do not form a means of transmitting fire to any structure.
- ▣ Remove all dead and dying woody surface fuels (trees and shrubs) and aerial fuels (branches). You don't want to have any vegetation that can form a "ladder" for fire to climb into taller vegetation. Eliminate trees, bushes, shrubs and surface debris that are completely dead or with substantial amounts of dry or dead branches or leaves/needles that would readily burn.
- ▣ Remove loose surface litter, such as fallen leaves or needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches.
- ▣ Cut grass to a height of 3 inches within 30 feet adjacent to structures. Keep grass and other vegetation green by watering. If watering is not feasible, maintain a vegetation-free space between dry grass and any structure.
- ▣ Remove any portion of a tree that is within 10 feet of the outlet of any chimney or stovepipe.
- ▣ Maintain any tree adjacent to or overhanging any building free of dead or dying wood.
- ▣ Maintain the roof of any structure free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth.
- ▣ Provide and maintain at all times a screen (constructed of nonflammable material with openings of not more than half an inch in size) over the outlet of every chimney or stovepipe that is attached to any fireplace, stove, or other device that burns any solid or liquid fuel.

## **Reduced Fuel Zone (30-100ft) Guidelines**

- ▣ Remove dead and dying (with substantial amounts of dead branches or leaves/needles) woody surfaces and aerial fuels (trees, bushes, shrubs and surface debris). Leave no more than 1-3 dead and downed trees less than 15 inches in diameter per acre. Loose surface litter, normally consisting of fallen leaves or needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches are permitted to a depth of 3 inches.
- ▣ Retain downed logs or stumps embedded in the soil when isolated from other vegetation.
- ▣ Move woodpiles at least 30 feet away from any structure and protect piles from wind-driven embers by secure tarps or other means.
- ▣ **Implement one of the following two fuel treatments (options A or B) required by CCR 1299 and PRC 4291.** Properties with greater fire hazards will require greater clearing treatments. Combinations of the methods may be acceptable as long as the intent of these guidelines is met.

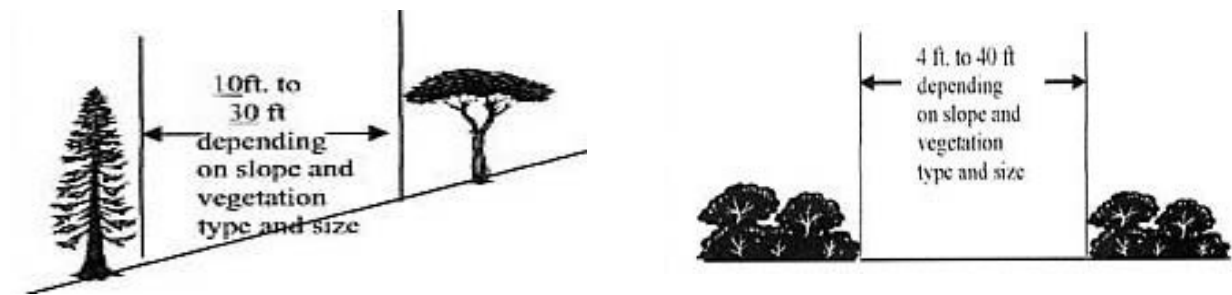
## ***Fuel Treatment Option A - Defensible Space with Fuel Separation (30ft-100ft)***

Fuel Treatment Option A is for more open areas with few trees.

➤ Grass should not exceed 4 inches in height. Where grass and other forbs are necessary to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion, they can be kept less than 18 inches in height above the ground when they are isolated from other fuels.

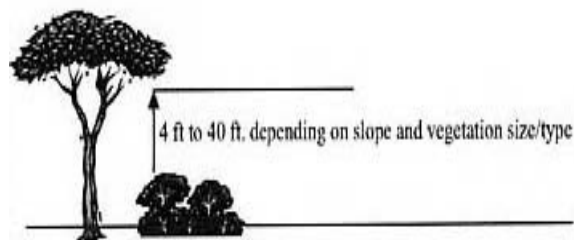
➤ Horizontal Clearance Requirements

<b>Slope</b>	<b>Trees</b>	<b>Shrubs</b>
0-20%	10ft	2x height of shrub eg, 3ft shrub = 6ft space
20-40%	20ft	4x height of shrub
> 40%	30ft	6x height of shrub



➤ Vertical Clearance Requirements

The minimum vertical space between the top of a shrub and the bottom of the lowest tree branches is 3x the height of the shrub (eg, 3ft shrub = 9 ft vertical space between the top of the shrub and the lowest tree limbs).



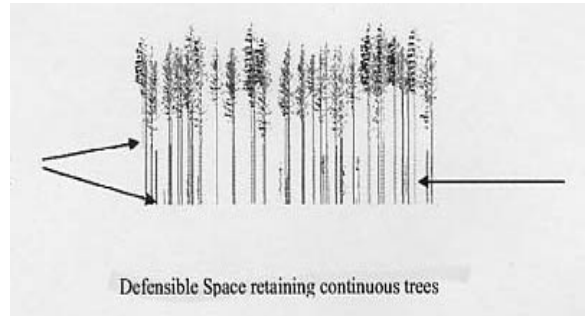
### **Learn More About Defensible Space**

Visit [www.yosemitewest.org/f100ft.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/f100ft.htm) to refer to an online version of these guidelines and to read related documents, and [www.yosemitewest.org/firesafe.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/firesafe.htm) for further information about defensible space with links to resources.

***Fuel Treatment Option B -  
Defensible Space with Continuous Tree Canopy (30ft-100ft)***

---

A vegetation removal option is available for those wanting to retain a continuous stand of larger trees with no space between tree canopies while creating defensible space. Spacing between aerial fuels is not required in a stand of larger trees.



In this situation:

- Remove all surface fuels greater than 4 inches in height.
- Remove lower limbs of trees (prune) to at least 6 feet up to 15 feet (or the lower half of branches of smaller trees).

Properties with greater fire hazards, such as steeper slopes or more severe fire danger, will require pruning heights in the upper end of this range.

**Additional Standards for Tree and Shrub Removal Recommended for Yosemite West by Yosemite Fire Management**

- Remove all trees 6 inches in diameter (measured 5 feet from the base) everywhere on your property, except:
  - Preserve hardwood trees (eg, big-leaf maple, dogwood, cottonwood, birch, willow, oak)
  - Prioritize removal of conifers, by first removing incense cedar and white fir, followed by ponderosa pine or Jeffrey pine, and lastly sugar pine.
  - Keep trees with cultural significance or obvious wildlife occupation (e.g., cavities or bird nests), or remove only with professional guidance.

For further information on healthy tree limbing and removal procedures, contact Yosemite National Park Forester Brian Mattos (☎ 209-379-1113).

- Vegetation removal can cause soil disturbance, soil erosion, the regrowth of new vegetation and introduction of nonnative, invasive plants. Always keep soil disturbance to a minimum, especially on steep slopes.
- Use safe methods. Chain saws and other small engines must have spark arresters. Be careful of sparks from metal blades striking rocks. Complete any work prior to high fire danger season.