

## Seven steps to creating a defensible space

*Defensible space refers to that area between a house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been modified to reduce the wildfire threat and which provides an opportunity for firefighters to safely defend the house. It is a key area that can make the difference between a house surviving a wildfire or being destroyed.*

1. If your parcel is one acre or less, your home, improvements, and forest vegetation all constitute your defensible space and need to be managed in order to protect your family, your investments, and your native forest trees.
2. For owners of parcels larger than an acre, your defensible space is the Forest-Woodland Protection Zone where you can practice defensible space techniques to enhance the forest health and protect your portion of the habitat.
3. Determine the amount of defensible space necessary (see table below), property boundaries, and ownership of adjacent parcels.
4. Evaluate the area surrounding your home in terms of being a defensible space. Ask the questions:

- Are there any dead fuels?
- Is there a continuous horizontal layer of vegetation?
- Are there ladder fuels?
- Does the height of surface fuels (shrubs, grasses, etc.) exceed 18"?

1. Develop a plan for correcting the problems identified in Step 2, coordinate with adjacent landowners if necessary, and incorporate existing formal landscape features.
2. Secure necessary permits and have trees marked for removal by a qualified forester if applicable.
3. Implement the plan developed in Step 3.
4. Remove all slash generated by fuel modification efforts as soon as possible.
5. Maintain the defensible space on a routine basis.

For more information and details on each of these steps, refer to the Defensible Space & Healthy Forest Handbook.

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For more information on the California Forest Stewardship Program, contact [Jeffrey Calvert](#), Forestry Assistance, [California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection](#), PO Box 944246, Sacramento, CA 94244-2460. (916) 653-8286.

