

STEP FIVE:

IS THERE AN AREA AT LEAST 30 FEET WIDE SURROUNDING YOUR HOUSE THAT IS “LEAN, CLEAN AND GREEN”?

The area immediately adjacent to a house is particularly important in terms of an effective defensible space. It is also the area that is usually landscaped. Within an area extending at least 30 feet from any structure, vegetation should be:

- Lean—small amounts of flammable vegetation.
- Clean—no accumulation of dead vegetation or other flammable debris.
- Green—plants are healthy and green during the fire season.

The “Lean, Clean and Green Zone Checklist” will help you evaluate the area immediately adjacent to your home.

STEP SIX:

IS VEGETATION WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED DEFENSIBLE SPACE AREA MAINTAINED ON A REGULAR BASIS?

Keeping your defensible space effective is a continual process. At least annually, review these defensible space steps and take action accordingly. An effective defensible space can be quickly diminished through neglect.



LEAN, CLEAN & GREEN CHECKLIST

- Emphasize the use of low growing herbaceous (non-woody) plants that are kept green during the fire season through irrigation as needed. Herbaceous plants include lawn, clover, a variety of groundcovers, bedding plants, bulbs, perennial flowers and native, perennial grasses.
- Emphasize use of mulches, rock and non-combustible hard surfaces (concrete sidewalks, brick patios and asphalt driveways).
- Deciduous ornamental trees and shrubs are acceptable if they are kept green, free of dead plant material, ladder fuels are removed, and individual plants or groups of plants are arranged in a manner in which adjacent wildland vegetation cannot convey a fire to structures through them. Shorter deciduous shrubs are preferred.
- Minimize the use of ornamental coniferous shrubs and trees and tall exotic grasses (such as pampas grass).
- Where permitted, most wildland native shrubs and trees should be removed from this zone and replaced with fire resistant plant varieties. Individual specimens or small groups of wildland shrubs and trees can be retained provided ladder fuels are first removed and they are kept healthy, free of dead wood and pruned.
- For some areas, substantial removal of wildland vegetation may not be allowed. In these instances, wildland vegetation should conform to the recommended separation distances, be kept free of dead plant material, pruned to remove ladder fuels and fuel load, and arranged so it cannot readily convey a fire from the wildlands to a structure. Please become familiar with local requirements before removal of wildland vegetation.
- Tree limbs within 10 feet of a chimney, encroaching on powerlines, or touching a structure should be removed.