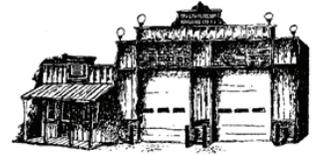


PINOS ALTOS VOLUNTEER FIRE RESCUE

VOLUNTEER NEWS



VOLUME V FIRST QUARTER

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2012

How Can We Clear Defensible Space Around Our Properties?

After the snow melts and spring brings the growth of vegetation around our homes, we will be looking at safe ways to create defensible space around our homes. When excessive vegetation is cleared, a concern is the removal of the debris. The material can be run through a chipper to reduce the mass. The material can also be taken to the landfill. A more complicated solution that can be considered is burning.

If you do plan on doing open burning when outside burning is not banned within the boundaries of the Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue District, the following are guidelines to follow:

- Burning of trash is strictly prohibited in New Mexico.
- Only yard waste, tree limbs, and weeds may be burned.
- Burning hours are restricted to one half hour after sunrise to one hour before sunset.
- Burning is prohibited when winds are in excess of ten miles per hour.
- Burning must be constantly monitored until the fire is completely extinguished.
- A fire extinguisher or other fire extinguishing equipment such as dirt, sand, a water barrel, garden hose, or water truck must be available for immediate utilization.
- Within the Silver City Extra Terrestrial Jurisdiction, a burn permit is needed from the Silver City Fire Department. Reference the map at the bottom of page 3. (Permits are free.)
- Grant County Central Dispatch must be notified by calling 388-8840 when the burning is started and when it is completed.

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**HAVE A HAPPY AND
FIRE SAFE 2012**

from

**Pinos Altos Volunteer
Fire Rescue**

Planning Forward by Looking Backward- Firefighters Need Your Help!

Pull up any newspaper headlines during 2011 and you'll get dramatic declarations, "Fed by stiff winds and extreme drought, the more than 33,000-acre blaze blackened about 45 square miles..." or "Family was getting their first look at the charred rubble that used to be their home..." The 2011 Wildfire season was devastating to many people, homeowners and business owners alike. Over 8,500,000 acres were burned in 2011, taking thousands of homes and businesses with them. It was a wildfire season to remember, learn from, and act upon in the next few months.

While it may be difficult to find the motivation to start limbing trees and clearing vegetation when it's raining or snowing outside, this is the best time of year to do so. You can avoid the stress of last minute preparedness work by doing a small amount each weekend. Once fire season rolls around again in the spring, you'll be ready to handle whatever nature sends us. There is growing evidence that firebrands, or embers, are the chief cause of a majority of home ignitions in the wildland urban interface. Here are a few tips for achieving a survivable space around your home, keeping firebrands in mind.

Start at the home or structure and reduce flammable vegetation directly under windows, eaves, and overhangs. Continue out at least 30 feet on all sides.

Look for and remove dead, cured vegetation that piles up in rain gutters, around and under decks, in roof valleys, around chimneys, and on window sills.

Create 'fire-free' areas within five feet of the house, using non-flammable landscaping materials and/or high-moisture-content annual and perennial plants.

Mow or weed whack grasses at least 30 feet out from your home. You may need to extend this if your home is on a slope.

Prune large trees so that the lowest branches are at least 6 to 10 feet off the ground to prevent a fire from spreading from the ground to the tree tops.

Identify areas around your home where leaves and yard debris tend to accumulate, such as side entry doorways and alcoves. Firebrands will also accumulate in these areas, so be sure to keep them clear of flammable materials.

There are many more tips and suggestions at www.FireWise.org, as well as interactive training courses and a host of information on wildfire preparedness. Working together, we all can decrease our losses to wildfires. For more information, please contact Ellen Brown, Fire Prevention Coordinator for the Gila National Forest, 388-8262 (ellenbrown@fs.fed.us) or Gary Benavides, Grant County Fire Management Officer, 574-2417 (gcfiremgmt@gmail.com)

Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Department Burning Assistance

If you are clearing excess vegetation from around your home to create defensible space, the Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue is available to help you with burning the debris. The department is available to review your situation and make recommendations prior to the burning. If the accumulated debris can be burned safely, the department can assist with the burn.

If you are building a slash pile of the accumulated debris, the pile must be at least 300 feet from any dwelling, workplace, or other inhabited area.

Slash pile should not exceed 1000 cubic feet. To calculate the approximate volume in cubic feet, multiply the length by the width and the height.

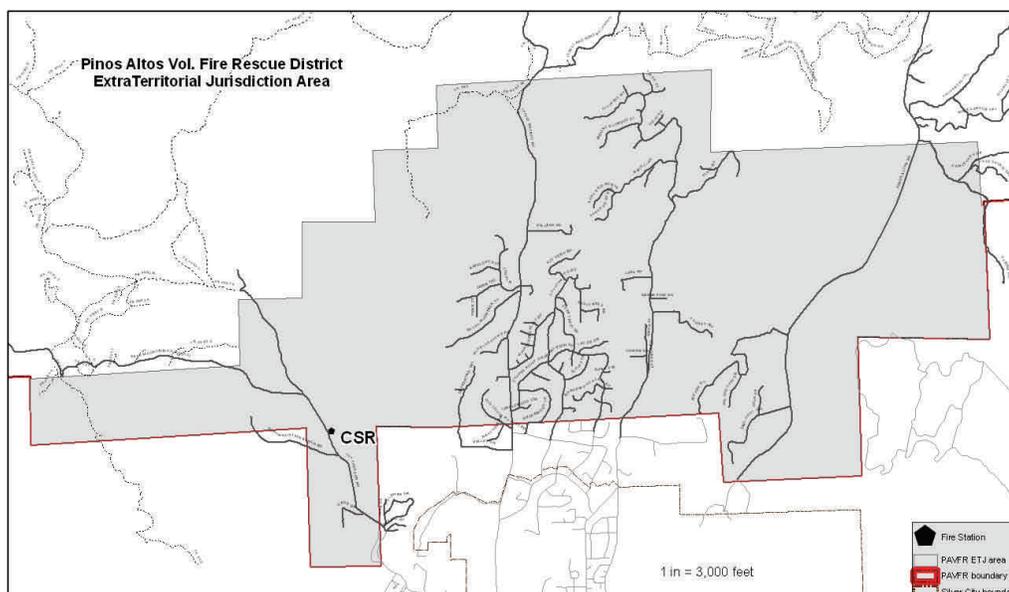
The material to be burned must be dry. Dry materials burn hotter and produce less smoke and toxic air pollutants. If practical, allow green material to dry after cutting for at least the following minimum times:

- Trees and branches over six inches in diameter—90 days
- Trees and branches two to six inches in diameter—45 days
- Brush, vines, bushes, pruning, and small branches—12 days
- Leaves, field crops, and weeds—7 days in dry weather

If you are doing the burning yourself or if the department is assisting you, there are additional factors to consider:

- Carefully consider the local weather forecast and if winds in excess of ten miles an hour are expected, do not do any outside burning.
- Plan to burn in the morning when there is usually less wind.
- Obtain an Open Burning Permit from the Silver City Fire Department if your property is located in the Silver City Extra Territorial Jurisdiction. (See map below.)

To request assistance from Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue, call Chief Lucy Whitmarsh at 575-574-8394.



How to Join Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue

Basic Requirements

- Have an interest in serving your community and in providing a public safety service.
- Have a valid New Mexico Driver's License.
- Be in good to excellent physical condition.
- Be willing to participate in safety training for fire fighting and other essential safety services on an ongoing basis.

The process for becoming an active member of Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue is established by the Grant County Fire Department By-Laws.

- Attend a regular Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Department Meeting at 6:30 on the second Monday of the month at the Pinos Altos Station on Highway 15 in Pinos Altos.
- Complete a preliminary application for Membership.
- Depending on proximity to a station, Pinos Altos, Wagon Wheel Lane, Cottage San Rd. or LS Mesa, senior officers from that station will conduct an interview to determine if a recommendation should be made for department membership.
- With attendance at the second regular meeting of the department, the existing membership votes on accepting a new member for Probationary Membership.
- During Probationary Membership the new member is assigned to a mentor, who is an experienced member of the department.

Probationary Member Training Expectations

- Learn safety requirements and only participate with the supervision of the mentor.
- Assigned personal protective gear and receive instruction on safe use.
- Learn how to use equipment and apparatus effectively and safely.
- Become familiar with department boundaries and response protocols.
- Learn how to use the radio.
- Successfully complete Formal 36 Hour Course on Wildland Fire Fighting and National Incident Management on-line Course.
- Participate in a training burn.
- Learn how to use a fire hydrant and fill apparatus with water.
- Learn safe vehicle operation with mentor supervision.

After successfully completing the Probationary Membership the member is recommended for full membership. Continuing training is required of all active members. Training in specialized areas such as Structure Fire Fighting and Emergency Medical Response is also offered for interested members who have successfully completed probationary membership but is not required. There are also additional services that a member can provide, such as department radio dispatch and traffic control that do not require fire fighting direct involvement.