



## Defensible Space - Your Home

Defensible space is defined as the space between your home and an oncoming wildfire in which vegetation has been modified to reduce the wildfire threat and to provide an opportunity for firefighters to effectively defend your house. Landowners are responsible for creating and maintaining their defensible space. The recommended defensible space on flat ground with grass as the dominant vegetation is a 30 ft radius circle around your home. This distance increases as the slope increases and when shrubs and trees are present.

Within the determined defensible space area, follow these recommendations:

Remove all dead plant material. These may be trees, shrubs, weeds, sticks, leaves, needles, etc.

Mow grass and weeds regularly.

Clear leaves and needles found in gutters, on roofs and under decks.

Tree and shrub crowns should be spaced 10 feet from each other. Occasionally, clumps of two to three trees are acceptable for a more natural appearance, if additional space surrounds them.

Prune branches 10 feet above the ground.

Prune any branches that overhang on your house.

Remove any smaller trees or shrubs found under larger trees. These act as ladder fuels and can allow a ground fire to become a crown fire quickly.

Keep woodpiles at least 30 ft from your house. Clear vegetation within 10 ft the pile.

Maintain your defensible space yearly!

Some other tips to remember to make your home more defensible include having an outdoor water supply available and ensuring your driveway is wide enough to allow access for the fire department. Contact your local fire department to determine this width.

Currently, New Mexico State Forestry has a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) grant to help private landowners with the financial part of defensible space thinning. Contact Tonya Vowles with New Mexico State Forestry at 575-388-2210 for an application and more information regarding the cost share program.

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## **GRANT COUNTY Wildland/Urban Interface Landowner Assistance Program**

As the number of people living in and adjacent to wildland areas grows, the likelihood of homes being threatened by wildfires also grows. A critical factor in determining whether or not a home will survive a wildfire is the type, amount, and maintenance of vegetation surrounding the house. In the 1980's, the term "Defensible Space" was coined to describe vegetation management practices aimed at reducing the wildfire threat to homes. When you create defensible space around your home you not only help yourself, but you help firefighters.

In Grant County there is a Wildland/Urban Interface Landowner Assistance Program that provides financial assistance to homeowners who meet the program requirements and have a need to develop defensible space around their home.

Project Description - Construct fuel breaks and thin overly dense stands of trees near structures on private land to complement federal fuel reduction projects already completed or planned by US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

To be considered for funding assistance the property must be at least one acre in size.

Approved activities consist of :

- Creating Defensible Space as outlined in the article on page two in the area within 30 to 100 feet of the structure.
- Thinning in the area from 100 feet to two acres around the structure.
- Fuel Break Development by creating fuel breaks along property boundaries or roads.

The property owner can schedule an assessment and a planner will visit the property and complete an assessment form. The planner determines needs and identifies activities that need to take place to create defensible space. A treatment plan is developed that must be approved by the property owner, the Socorro District Forester and a representative from the Grant County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Once a notice to proceed is received, work can begin. Any work done prior to the notice to proceed date is not eligible for reimbursement.

The property owner can hire a contractor to do the work, do the work on their own or a combination of the two. If a contractor is hired it is the property owner's and contractor's responsibility to agree on terms and conditions of work and payment.

Once all work identified in the treatment plan is completed, the property owner must request an inspection. Funds are only distributed after the completion of the project has been approved. The reimbursement is for 70% of the cost and 30% is the property owner's responsibility.

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and help your friends and neighbors?**

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Rescue and become a valuable contributor  
to the safety of our fire district?**

**For additional information on how to become  
a member of Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Res-  
cue and the membership requirements, con-  
tact Chief Lucy Whitmarsh at 574-8394 or by  
email at [lmwk@dishmail.net](mailto:lmwk@dishmail.net)**

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Friends of the Fire and Rescue Volunteers

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