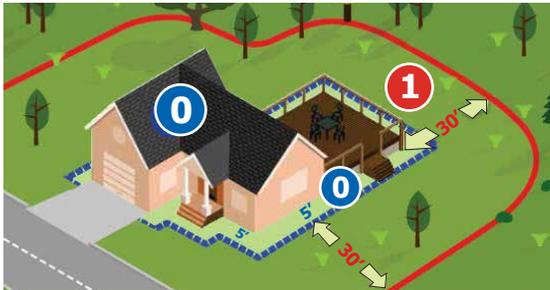




### DEFENSIBLE SPACE AND LANDSCAPING FOR FIRE SAFETY



A defensible space around your home will greatly improve its chance of surviving a wildfire. Create this space between the structure and the grass, shrubs and trees that surround it to protect from flames, burning embers and heat.

#### ZONE 0 DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Zone 0 extends from 0' - 5' around your house and is the most critical area to ensure no combustible materials are present. Remove/reduce fire hazards in this space!

- ❖ No vegetation is recommended within 5' of any structure
- ❖ Replace jute or natural fiber doormats with heavy rubber or metal grates
- ❖ Apply non-combustible mulch such as crushed stones or gravel next to the house.
- ❖ Remove flammable materials on and underneath decks, patios or porches
- ❖ Remove tree limbs that extend into this zone and that hang over the roof or chimney closer than 10'
- ❖ Remove dry leaves and debris from the roof and rain gutters

#### ZONE 1 DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Zone 1 extends approximately 5' - 30' out from buildings, decks and other structures. Maintain this area to be as fire-resistant as possible throughout the year!

- ❖ Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds
- ❖ Remove fire-prone vegetation and replace with fire-resistant varieties (see OCP&R Guide #14 – Planting Checklist)
- ❖ Limb tree branches 6' or more up from ground level and 10' away from other trees and flammables
- ❖ Create a separation between vegetation and items that can catch fire, such as patio furniture, sheds and play areas
- ❖ Cut or mow grasses and weeds down to a maximum height of 4 inches

#### BEYOND ZONE 1

Many sources recommend creating a defensible zone approximately 30' - 100' away from structures, but in urban and residential areas this may not be possible. Do all you can within the boundaries of your property.

- ❖ Space trees apart depending on the ground slope, from 10' minimum on flat ground to 30' minimum on steep slopes
- ❖ Remove fallen leaves, needles, cones and small branches that are deeper than 3 inches on the ground
- ❖ Ensure that vegetation adjacent to roads and driveways is maintained in the same manner as Zone 1, and keep roads firesafe for evacuation and first responder access
- ❖ Work with your neighbors to reduce combustibles along your property lines
- ❖ Maintain your property year-round

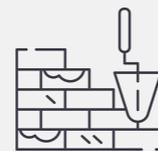
## DESIGN YOUR LANDSCAPE FOR FIRE SAFETY

**FIRESCAPING** is the term for integrating traditional landscaping with firesafe design and materials. Careful firescape design will reduce the chance of ignition, lower a fire's intensity and slow the spread of fire – all to help your home survive and to give you more time to safely escape if necessary.

**DESIGN** your landscaping and choose plants that provide the best possible fire protection. Use non-flammable hardscaping such as rocks and bricks for walls and paths. Create open areas to provide a buffer to help prevent flames from spreading. Select plants that are less likely to burn (see OCP&R Guide #14 – Planting Checklist). Simple landscaping features that protect from flying embers, heat and flames can significantly improve your home's ability to survive a wildfire.

**OTHER FIRESCAPING TECHNIQUES** that help increase fire safety on your property include:

- ❖ Create fuel breaks with walkways, driveways, patios, etc.
- ❖ Construct fences with non-flammable materials such as brick, rocks, metal or concrete
- ❖ Use a drip irrigation system tailored to individual plant's needs to keep them healthy during the dry season and to save water
- ❖ Use a fire-resistant compost mulch or thick bark to maintain moisture in the soil



## MAINTAIN YOUR PROPERTY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



**PRUNING** - As vegetation grows, the spacing between plants, bushes and trees is reduced. Regular pruning helps maintain this spacing and removes the dead foliage that enables even a fire-resistant plant to burn. Larger bushes and shrubs should be pruned up to reduce the chance that they can become ladder-fuels for trees and structures.

**RAKE & CLEAN** - Many types of bushes and trees drop their leaves regularly, especially in the fall when the fire season is at its peak. Rake and clean the ground as often as needed, and pay special attention to the area around the foundation of your home to make sure that it is leaf-litter free.



**WHEN USING POWER TOOLS** such as weed-whackers, chain saws and lawn mowers, be very careful not to create sparks or spill fuel, which can start a wildfire. Make sure that these machines are maintained properly and that exhaust spark-arrestors are installed. Always use caution and never use power tools during Red Flag Warning days!

## TACKLE VEGETATION ISSUES AS A COMMUNITY

**REMEMBER that your community is only as firesafe as its least properly maintained area.**



- ❖ Consider engaging Oakland's Adopt a Spot program to work on City lots that aren't being tended to
- ❖ If a resident is unable to maintain their own property you can come together as neighbors and create a Firewise USA® project (see OCP&R Guide #12 – Firewise USA) to help them and your community
- ❖ If funds are needed to tackle large vegetation issues or to haul away debris, contact the Diablo Firesafe Council ([www.diablofiresafe.org](http://www.diablofiresafe.org)) to inquire about possible matching grants

**OCP&R is a program of the Oakland Firesafe Council**

Contact OCP&R for more information and assistance with defensible space and landscaping for fire safety

Thanking Firesafe Marin and ReadyforWildfire.org for their contribution to this content. Version 1.1 7/21/20

**OAKLAND COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE**

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