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## Wildfire Safety: Defensible Space Fire Zones

### What is defensible space, and why is it so important?

Defensible space is the buffer zone you create around your school, outbuildings, and other structures. It reduces the risk of fire by managing the plants, brush, trees, and other items in the surrounding area that could ignite.

### What are defensible space fire zones?

Defensible space fire zones are strategically maintained areas around schools, homes, and communities that reduce wildfire risk by buffering structures from surrounding vegetation. These zones, including the 100-foot area around property green spaces and nearby wildlands, slow fire spread and improve firefighting conditions. Properly maintained defensible space significantly increases a school's chances of surviving a wildfire.



#### Zone 1 (0-5 feet)

This includes the structure or other outside space, as well as fencing attached to the school and immediate landscaping from the building to 5 feet away.

- Remove all combustible materials from the roofs and gutters, such as wood mulches, dead or dry vegetation, leaves, and pine needles.
- Trim tree branches that hang over the roof, eaves, and chimney.

#### Zone 2 (5-30 feet)

This includes the area from 5 feet to 30 feet away from the school, including the property and all outbuildings.

- Maintain this area by pruning and removing dead and dying branches from well-spaced bushes and trees.
- Make sure to keep this area well-maintained and watered during a hot, dry summer.

#### Zone 3 (30-100 feet)

This area is farthest from the school, extending from Zone 2 to your property's boundary, which is 30-to 100 feet.

- Reduce fuels by thinning and spacing vegetation vertically and lining up trees horizontally to interrupt the fire's path and keep flames small and on the ground.

### Important considerations for schools located in fire zones:

- **Accessibility:** Ensure fire access points are clear and easily accessible for emergency vehicles.
- **Building materials:** Consider using fire-resistant building materials for roofs, siding, and decks.
- **Emergency plans:** Develop and practice evacuation plans specific to wildfire situations, including designated assembly points and communication protocols.
- **Community involvement:** Collaborate with local fire departments, parents, and community members to educate about defensible space practices and wildfire preparedness.