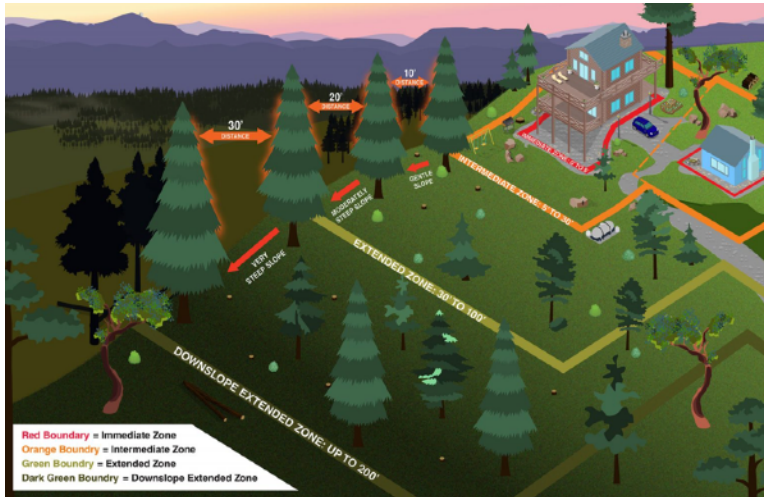


Creating Defensible Space



Homes survive wildfire through a combination of the following factors:

- Awareness and management of combustible materials on the property, especially within the first 5 feet of the home.
- Incorporation of fire and ember resistant construction materials, installation details, and maintenance.
- Careful plant selection, landscape placement, and maintenance.

IMMEDIATE ZONE = 0 feet – 5 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures

The goal is to avoid home ignition from blowing embers.

- Use noncombustible materials such as rock, stone pavers, cement, bare earth, gravel, or sand.
- Remove all plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove leaves and needles from your roof, skylight, and rain gutters.
- Clear vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Remove dead branches that overhang or touch your roof.
- Keep branches 10 feet away from your chimney and roof.
- Remove all leaves, needles, or other debris that fall in this zone.

INTERMEDIATE ZONE = 5 feet – 30 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures

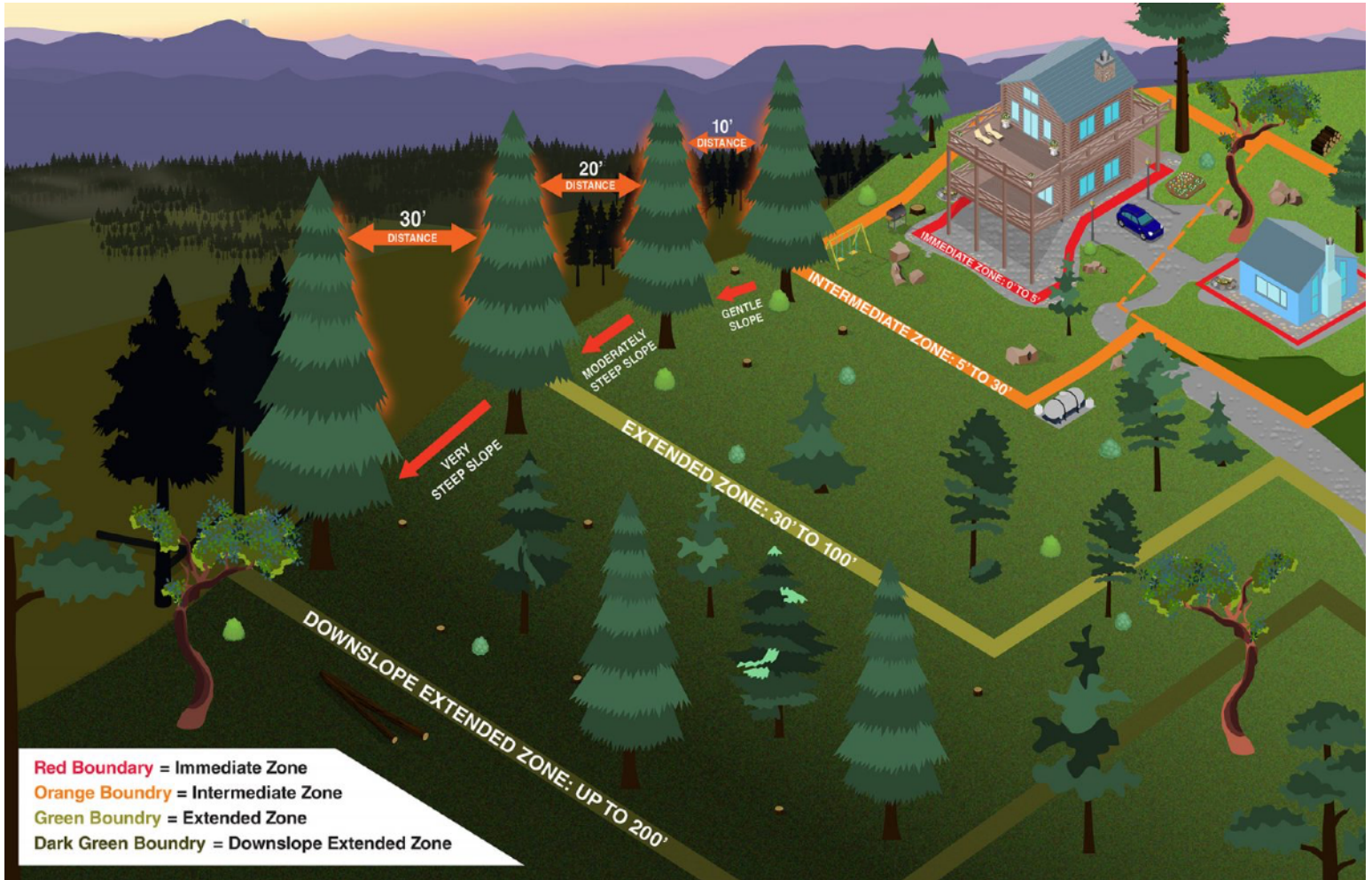
The goal is to reduce heat and movement of flame

- Remove all dead plants, grass, and weeds
- Actively prune live shrubs
- Relocate woodpiles outside of this zone
- Avoid extensive use of mulch, which can convey fire to the house

EXTENDED ZONE = 30 feet – 100 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures, or to the property line

- Create islands of vegetation with horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
- Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees.
- Choose low-growing, irrigated, non-woody plants such as vegetables, succulents, erosion-control grasses, flowers, or lawn to create landscaping in this zone.
- Mow or remove dead or dried vegetation.
- Trim trees regularly to maintain a minimum of 10 feet of clearance between branches of adjoining trees or shrubs.
- Mow any grass to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- To protect water quality, maintain vegetation near waterways; do not clear to bare soil. Vegetation removal can cause soil erosion that damages streams, especially on steep slopes. Remove dead trees and shrubs, leaving the roots in place, if practical.
- Break up dense shrub cover on slopes by creating small islands of pruned shrubs staggered horizontally.
- Prior to evacuation, pull patio furniture, play sets, and gas BBQ tanks as far as possible from any structure, and bring cushions inside.

Creating Defensible Space



Landscaping Tips

Proper Placement Makes A Difference

Remember, any plant can burn under the right conditions. For all plants, maintenance is key.

When choosing species to plant in your 5- to 30-foot defensible space zone, look for plants with these characteristics:

- Able to store water in leaves and stems.
- Produce limited dead and fine material.
- Maintain high moisture content with limited watering.
- Low-growing or open form.
- Open loose branches with a low volume of total vegetation.
- Low levels of volatile oils or resins. Slow growing with little maintenance needed.
- Not considered invasive.

SCCFSC offers a 30 minute [Defensible Space Presentation](#) geared for residents learning the requirements for the first time.

This presentation is also appropriate for HOAs and Road Maintenance Association meetings.

For best practices to protect your home and other structures, see our [Home Hardening page](#).