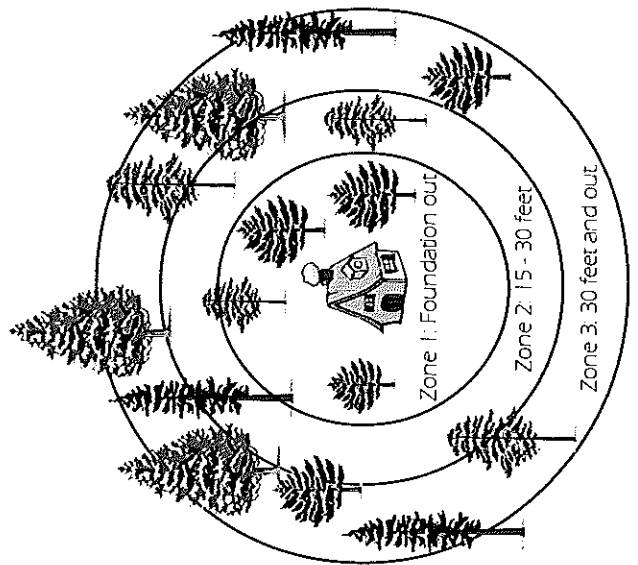


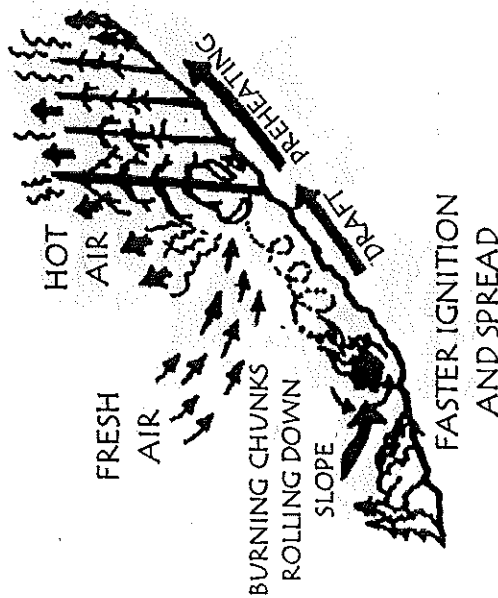
To Determine the Area of Defensible Space Surrounding the Home, Use the following formula:

$1.5 \times \text{height of the structure} + 30$  feet.

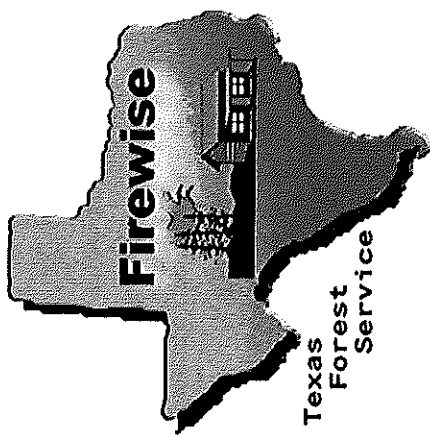
For example, this single story structure stands approximately 18 feet tall.  $1.5 \times 18 \text{ feet} = 27 \text{ feet}$ . Add an additional 30 feet for a total distance of 57 feet. This home should have approximately 57 feet of defensible space surrounding the entire structure to prevent a wildfire from being lured to the front door.



Because fire moves rapidly uphill, if your home is built on or near a slope of 10° or more, you should increase your defensible space by 1 foot for each additional degree of slope beyond 10°.



# SAFER LIVING IN THE WILD



Organization Name  
Website  
Address 2  
City, State, Zipcode  
Phone  
Fax  
Email Address  
Website

Texas Forest Service  
P.O. Box 1991  
Bastrop, TX. 78602  
512-321-2467  
texasuwi@rfs.tamu.edu  
www.tamu.edu/ticc

**TEXAS**  
**FOREST SERVICE**  
The Texas A&M University System

Living in the "wild" is often synonymous with living in the Urban Wildland Interface (UWI). The UWI is not a pre-determined geographical area. Rather, it is a set of conditions that exist when combustible homes are built in a combustible environment.

During the mid-80's Texans began migrating from the hustle and bustle of living in the city, moving toward a more peaceful setting in the wild. While Texas's wildland communities have begun to grow, the volunteer fire departments that serve these areas haven't experienced such a growth and are often times under-equipped and under-staffed and, therefore, are unable to protect a large number of homes when threatened when a wildfire approaches.

By taking a few simple steps to create a defensible space around your home, you can greatly reduce the likelihood of a wildfire being lured to your dream home. Defensible space is an area surrounding a home where the vegetation, and sometimes the

structure itself, has been modified in order to separate the "fuels" which a wildfire feeds from.

Defensible space is designed to achieve three benefits:

- 1) To allow firefighters the room to perform the task at hand.
- 2) To give the structure opportunity to survive a wildfire on it's own when firefighters cannot safely attempt to defend it.
- 3) To stop a fire from spreading from the structure to surrounding vegetation.

To create a defensible space around your home, follow these guidelines:

#### VEGETATION MODIFICATIONS

- R Within the designated defensible space zone, thin trees and brush cover so that the widest portions of the tops are 10-15 feet apart.
- R Remove shrubs and smaller trees if they are underneath larger trees.
- R Prune branches of trees to the height of 10 feet.
- R Isolate flowerbeds and surround them with a non-flammable ground cover.

- R Keep grasses well irrigated and mowed to approximately 2" or less.
- R Clear needles and leaves from roofs and gutters.

#### STRUCTURAL MODIFICATIONS

- R Use fire resistive building materials, especially the roof.
- R Install chimney screens or spark arrestors.
- R Enclose porches, foundations and roof / attic openings to prevent debris from accumulating.
- R Post name and address in 3" letters.
- R Provide adequate driveway and turnaround space for emergency vehicles.
- R Protect windows and glass doors with fire resistant drapes or internal shutters.
- R Develop external water supplies such as cisterns, dry hydrants, ponds and swimming pools.
- R Store tools such as shovels, axes, rakes, hoes and especially connected garden hoses for emergency use.

### **SURVIVAL IN A VEHICLE**

- This is dangerous and should be done in an emergency, but you can survive the firestorm if you stay in your car.
- Roll up windows and close air vents. Drive slowly with headlights on. Watch for other vehicles and pedestrians. Do not drive through heavy smoke.
- If you have to stop, park away from the heaviest trees and brush. Turn headlights on and ignition off.
- Get on the floor and cover up with a blanket or coat. Stay in the vehicle until the main fire passes.
- Stay in the car. Do not run! Engine may stall and not restart. Air currents may rock the car. Some smoke and sparks may enter the vehicle. Temperature inside will increase. Metal gas tanks and containers rarely explode.

### **IF YOU ARE TRAPPED AT HOME**

- Stay calm. As the fire front approaches, go inside the house. You can survive inside. The fire will pass before your house burns down.

### **AFTER THE FIRE PASSES**

- Check the roof immediately. Put out any roof fires, sparks or embers. Check the attic for any hidden burning sparks.
- If you have a fire, get your neighbors to help you fight it.
- The water you put into your pool or hot tub and other containers will come in handy now. If the power is out, try connecting a hose to the outlet on your water heater.
- For several hours after the fire, maintain a "fire watch". Re-check for smoke and sparks throughout the house.

### **IF CAUGHT IN THE OPEN**

- The best temporary shelter is a sparse fuel area. On a steep mountainside, the back side is safer. Avoid canyons, natural "chimneys" and saddles.
- If a road is nearby, lie face down along the road cut or the ditch in the uphill side. Cover yourself

with anything that will shield you from the fire's heat.

- If hiking in the back country, seek a depression with sparse fuel. Clear fuel away from the area while the fire is approaching and then lie face down in the depression and cover yourself.

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**FOR ALL EMERGENCIES DIAL 9-1-1**

For additional information on how to improve your chances of surviving a wildfire, contact **YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT** or the Texas Forest Service office listed below. Ask about other written materials and the availability of video tapes on the subject.

Organization Name

Address

Address 2

City, State, Zipcode

Phone

Fax

Email Address

Website

Texas Forest Service

P.O. Box 1991

Bastrop, TX. 78602

512-521-2467

texasuwi@tfs.tamu.edu

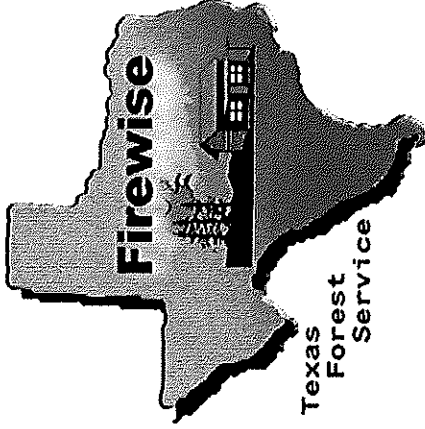
www.tamu.edu/ticc

**IN CASE OF FIRE OR EMERGENCIES**

**DIAL 9-1-1**

**T E X A S**  
**FOREST SERVICE**  
THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

# **WILDLAND FIRE DANGERS**



**SAVE THIS HOMEOWNER'S**



**CHECKLIST FOR  
SAFETY AND SURVIVAL**

**PRECAUTIONS  
IN THE  
URBAN/WILDLAND  
INTERFACE**

## LIVING IN WILDFIRE HAZARD AREAS

When you build or buy a home in a forested/wildland area, you have accepted the fact that these areas may have poor access, native vegetation, steep slopes and limited fire fighting water supplies. In order to attempt to prevent a tragedy, you need to be aware of wildfire hazards and what to do when a wildfire occurs in your area.

Hopefully, you have already created **DEFENSIBLE SPACE** around your home and made other improvements to increase the chances that it can survive a wildfire. **DEFENSIBLE SPACE** in an area of 30 feet or more around your home that is kept free of features that tend to increase the risk of your home being destroyed. Other improvements include improving driveway access and water supplies, having a fire resistant roof, enclosing overhanging eaves and decks, spark arrestors on chimneys, etc.

### FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES

- 
1. Thin tree and brush cover
  2. Dispose of slash and debris left from thinning
  3. Remove dead limbs, leaves and other litter.
  4. Stack firewood away from home
  5. Mow dry grasses and weeds
  6. Maintain irrigated greenbelt
  7. Prune branches to 10 ft. above ground
  8. Trim branches
  9. Clean roof and gutters
  10. Reduce density of surrounding forest

### DEVELOPING A FIRE PLAN

USE THIS CHECKLIST TO DEVELOP YOUR OWN **FIRE PLAN**. Ask your local fire department for advice. Talk with your neighbors about tools, equipment and other resources you could share in an emergency.

## ELEMENTS OF PLAN

- **Evacuation Plan.** Early evacuation is the safest way to avoid injury or death. Timing and other factors can vary so widely that each household needs its own specific plan, including options to cover anything that might happen.
- **Escape Routes.** Normal and alternate escape routes.
- **Safety Zones.** Locations of and routes to large areas with little or no vegetation or other fuels where family members can ride out the fire if it's too late to evacuate.
- **Communication.** Pre-arrange normal and alternate ways to stay in touch with family members, even if phones are out. Family members might "check in" with a friend or relative another area as soon as they're able.
- **Assignments.** Who is to do what when in an emergency.

### PROVIDE EQUIPMENT

- **Hoses.** Pre-connected to out door spigots.
- **Ladder.** Long enough to reach the roof easily.
- **Fire Extinguishers.** One or more 5-pound multipurpose type, readily available.
- **Protective Clothing.** For anyone who is unable to evacuate before the fire arrives. This includes cotton long sleeved shirt or jacket and trousers and handkerchief to provide minimum protection for the lungs (avoid inhaling smoke or hot gasses!). Cotton clothing is a "must". Synthetic fabrics can melt onto your skin.

### WHEN CAUGHT IN WILDFIRE

If you see a wildfire call 9-1-1. Don't assume that someone else has already called. Describe the location of the fire, speak slowly and clearly and answer any questions asked by the dispatcher.

9-1-1

### EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER

### BEFORE THE FIRE APPROACHES YOUR HOUSE

- **Evacuate.** Evacuate your pets and all family members who are not essential to preparing the home. Anyone with medical or physical limitations and the young and elderly should be evacuated immediately.
- **Wear Protective Clothing**

- **Remove Combustibles.** Clear items that will burn from around the house, including wood piles, lawn furniture, barbecue grills, tarp coverings, etc. Move them outside of your defensible space.

- **Close/Protect Openings.** Close outside attic, eaves and basement vents, windows, doors, pet doors, etc. Remove flammable drapes and curtains. Close all shutters, blinds or heavy non-combustible window coverings to reduce radiant heat.

- **Close Inside Doors/Open Damper.** Close all doors inside the house to prevent draft. Open the damper on your fireplace, but close the fireplace screen.

- **Shut Off Gas.** Shut off any natural gas, propane or fuel oil supplies at the source.

- **Water.** Connect garden hoses. Fill any pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, tubs or other large containers with water.

- **Pumps.** If you have gas powered pumps for water, make sure they are fueled and ready.

- **Ladder.** Place the ladder against the house in clear view.

- **Car.** Back your car into the driveway and roll up the windows.

- **Garage Doors.** Disconnect any automatic garage door openers so that the doors can be opened by hand if the power goes out. Close all garage doors.

- **Valuables.** Place valuable papers, momentos and anything "you can't live without" inside the car in the garage. Any pets still with you should be put in the car.

### PREPARING TO LEAVE

- **Lights.** Turn on inside lights and leave a light on in every room to make the house more visible in heavy smoke.
- **Don't Lock Up.** Leave doors and windows closed but unlocked. It may be necessary for firefighters to gain quick entry into your home to fight fire.