



County of Monterey
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY



Basic Defensible Space & Vegetation Management Guidelines For Property Owners

Scope: These guidelines provide property owners with information regarding basic vegetation management practices to create defensible space around structures in all unincorporated areas of Monterey County. Use of these practices will help property owners bring the property into a **basic** level of compliance with:

- LE-100 Defensible Space Inspection Program
- California Public Resources Code Section 4291
- Local fire dept. wildland fire safety requirements
- Planning Services Dept. zoning, easement & environmental requirements

Within 30 feet immediately surrounding the building (or to property line, which ever is closer):

- ❖ Cut flammable vegetation around buildings a minimum 30 feet or to the property line, whichever is closer, except for landscaping, as follows:
 - Cut dry and dead grass to a maximum height of 4 inches.
 - Maintain the roof and gutters of the structure free of leaves, needles or other dead vegetative growth.
 - Maintain any tree adjacent to or overhanging a building free of dead wood.
 - Trim tree limbs that extend within 10 feet of the outlet of a chimney or stove pipe.
 - Trim dead portions of tree limbs within 10 feet from the ground.
 - Remove all limbs within 6 feet of the ground.
 - Remove all dead fallen material unless it is embedded in the soil.
 - Remove all cut material from the area.
- ❖ Remove all cut material from the area or chip and spread on site.
- ❖ Provide and maintain at all times a screen over the outlet of every chimney or stovepipe that is attached to a fireplace, stove or other device that burns any solid or liquid fuel. The screen shall be constructed of nonflammable material and openings of not more than one-half inch in size.
- ❖ Post house numbers per Fire Department requirements.

Between 30 and 100 feet around the building (or to the property line, whichever is closer)

- The fuel reduction zone in the remaining 70 feet (or to the property line) will depend on the steepness of your property and the type of vegetation. For additional information, refer to the Cal Fire brochure [“Why 100 Feet? Protect Your Home...and Property”](#)
- Cut plants and grass beneath tree canopies to prevent fire from spreading to the trees. These plants should be “topped off” leaving the root structure intact to minimize erosion.
- Do not use herbicide or other chemical methods to remove vegetation.

Note: Any further vegetation management activities, including those required by insurance companies, may require prior approval from the Planning Services Department when activities involve the following:

- Exposing soil to erosion
- Impact sensitive habitat
- Accelerating sediment runoff into water courses
- Tree removal

Permit requirements for these additional vegetation management activities are available at the Monterey County Planning Department office located at 1441 Schilling Place, 2nd Floor - South, Salinas, CA 93901. If you wish to speak to a Planner regarding these permit requirements, you may call (831) 755-5025.