

FIRE SAFE LANDSCAPING

Hannah Jacobsen & Robin Stanley – UCCE/El Dorado County Master Gardeners
Mark Stanley – California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Visualize your own property.

The new law for defensible space is 100' around your house.

You may have to clear an even larger area – depending on your slope:

Slope

A	0 – 20%	Level – congratulations
B	21 – 40%	Moderate – easy to walk and to work
C	+40%	Steep – a challenge to climb and to clear

The 3 R's of Fire Safe Landscaping

REMOVE

REDUCE

REPLACE

The Fire Safe Council gives 6 specific steps to creating a fire safe landscape:

1. Determine your **DEFENSIBLE SPACE**.
2. Remove all **DEAD** or **DYING** vegetation or material.
3. Break up **CONTINUOUS** vegetation.
4. Eliminate **LADDER FUELS**.
5. Make your defensible space **LEAN, GREEN** and **MEAN**.
6. Keep Up with regular **MAINTENANCE**.

REMOVE

STEP 1 - Determine the perimeter of your 100' DEFENSIBLE SPACE.

- Identify (and mark) your area.

STEP 2 - Remove all DEAD or DYING plants and combustible material.

- This also includes firewood, scrap lumber or other flammables.

STEP 3 - Break up CONTINUOUS vegetation.

- Create spaces between existing trees and shrubs.
- Eliminate branches overhanging roof or chimney
- 10' – 15' spacing, horizontally and vertically, is the minimum.
- Steep slopes required increased clearance between trees:

A = 10' B = 20' C = 30'

REDUCE

STEP 4 - Eliminate LADDER FUELS.

- In addition to the 10' vertical clearance under trees, if there are lower plants in the area, the cleared height requirement will increase.
- Chipping may be arranged by calling the EDC Fire Safe Council at 530 626-2526 or e-mail: edcchipper@edcfiresafe.org if funds for the program become available. (Check the website.)

REPLACE

STEP 5 - Make your space LEAN, GREEN & MEAN.

Use your plantings to create fuel breaks.

Utilize the Hydro-zoning concept.

High water zone is the oasis nearest the house and living area.

Moderate water zone includes those plants that require less water.

Drought-tolerant plant zone is further out (+/-100').

Select fire-resistant plants with:

- Little or no seasonal accumulation of dead vegetation
- Open, loose branching habit