

# Wildfires: Creating a Defensible Space Around Your Home

---

**Release Date: September 10, 2020**

SALT LAKE CITY – With fires raging across the West, it's important for Utah homeowners to be aware that defensible space is one of the most cost-effective ways to protect a house from wildfire. You can even do most of the work yourself.

A defensible space is an area around a home or other building in which plants, debris and other items that can easily catch fire have been treated, cleared or reduced to slow the spread of fire to and from a structure.

Information about local vegetation, weather and topography is used to determine the Fire Severity Zone of the area where you live. This information helps determine the most effective design to protect your space.

Wild grass, brush and timber can easily catch fire, burning with great intensity and producing embers that can become wind-driven hazards. Yard plants can catch fire just as easily. Maintaining defensible space requires routine maintenance of vegetation like pruning and removing dead branches and leaves.

Be sure to assess both the horizontal and vertical aspects of vegetation when designing the defensible space. Wildfires can move horizontally from shrub to shrub and tree to tree. They can also travel vertically from the ground up into the treetops, resulting in a catastrophic crown fire.

For more information on how to create a defensible space around your home visit [Ready.gov/wildfires](https://www.ready.gov/wildfires).

Contact a mitigation specialist for more information about making your home and family safer before, during and after a wildfire or other natural disaster at [FEMA-r8-HMhelp@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:r8-HMhelp@fema.dhs.gov) or [bereadyutah@utah.gov](mailto:bereadyutah@utah.gov) for more information about making your home and family safer before, during and after an earthquake.



**FEMA**

Page 1 of 1