WILDFIRE IS COMING. ARE YOU...

READY?

DEFENSIBLE SPACE AND HARDENING YOUR HOME.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION
CAL FIRE
SINCE 1885

THOUSANDS OF WILDFIRES STRIKE CALIFORNIA EVERY YEAR. IT'S NOT A MATTER OF IF YOUR HOME IS AT RISK, BUT WHEN.

ReadyForWildfire.org

PLANT AND TREE SPACING

The spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees is crucial to reduce the spread of wildfire. The spacing needed is determined by the type and size of the shrubs and trees, as well as the slope of the land. For example, a property on a steep slope with larger plant life will require greater spacing between trees and shrubs than a level property that has small, sparse vegetation.

VERTICAL SPACING

Remove all tree branches at least 6 feet from the ground.

If shrubs are under trees, additional vertical space is needed. Lack of vertical space can allow a fire to move from the ground to the shrubs to the treetops like a ladder.

FIRE-SAFE LANDSCAPING

Fire-safe landscaping isn't necessarily the same thing as a well-maintained yard. Fire-safe landscaping uses fire-resistant plants that are strategically planted to resist the spread of fire to your home.

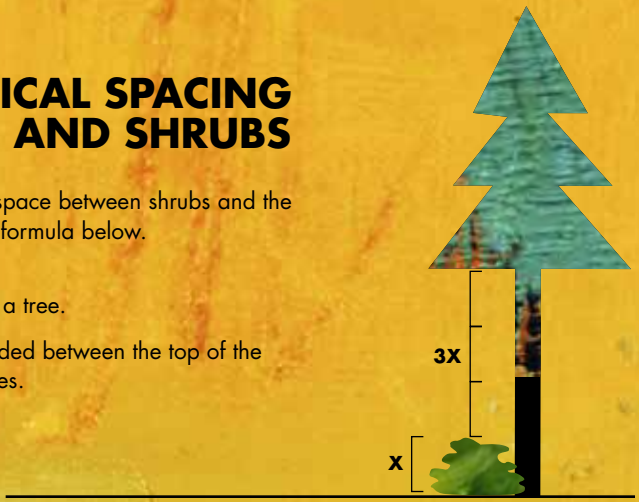
The good news is that you don't need to spend a lot of money to make your landscape fire-safe. And fire-safe landscaping can increase your property value and conserve water while beautifying your home. For more information on fire-safe landscaping, visit: **ReadyForWildfire.org/landscaping**.

MINIMUM VERTICAL SPACING BETWEEN TREES AND SHRUBS

To determine the proper vertical space between shrubs and the lowest branches of trees, use the formula below.

Example:
A five-foot shrub is growing near a tree.

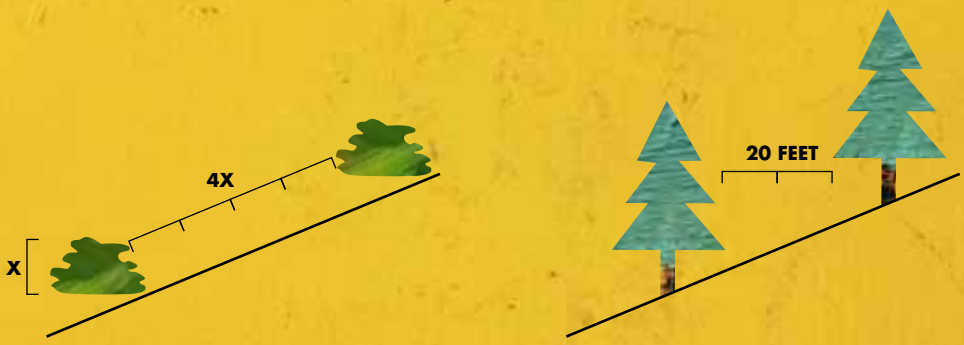
3 x 5 = 15 feet of clearance needed between the top of the shrub and the lowest tree branches.



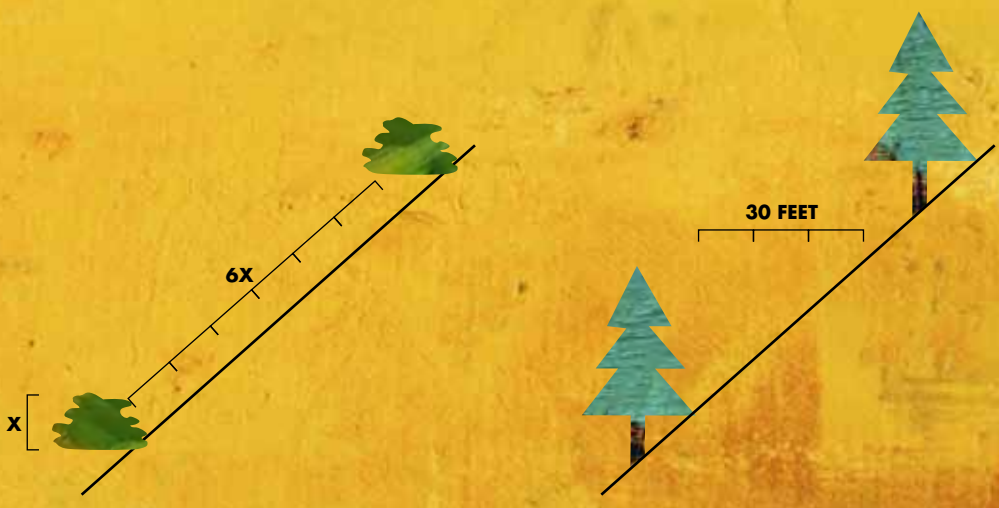
MINIMUM HORIZONTAL SPACING FOR TREES AND SHRUBS

Horizontal spacing depends on the slope of the land and the height of the shrubs or trees. Check the diagrams below to determine spacing distance.

FLAT TO MILD SLOPE (LESS THAN 20%)



MILD TO MODERATE SLOPE (20%–40%)



MODERATE TO STEEP SLOPE (GREATER THAN 40%)

DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Creating and maintaining defensible space is essential for increasing your home's chance of surviving a wildfire. It's the buffer that homeowners are required to create on their property between a structure and the plants, brush and trees or other items surrounding the structure that could catch fire. This space is needed to slow the spread of wildfire and improves the safety of firefighters defending your home.

Two zones make up the required 100 feet of defensible space:

ZONE 1—Extends 30 feet out from buildings, decks, and other structures

1. Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds.
2. Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
3. Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
4. Remove dead branches that hang over your roof. And keep branches 10 feet away from your chimney.
5. Relocate exposed woodpiles outside of Zone 1 unless they are completely covered in a fire resistant material.
6. Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
7. Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
8. Create a separation between trees, shrubs and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, swing sets, etc.

ZONE 2—Extends 30 to 100 feet from buildings and other structures

9. Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
10. Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees. (See diagram)
11. Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs and trees. (See diagram)
12. Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of 4 inches if erosion control is an issue.

BOTH ZONES—0 to 100 feet from buildings and other structures

13. Mow before 10 a.m., but never when it's windy or excessively dry.
14. Protect water quality. Do not clear vegetation near waterways to bare soil. Vegetation removal can cause soil erosion—especially on steep slopes.

ARE YOU DOING THE RIGHT THING—THE WRONG WAY?

Each year, CAL FIRE responds to hundreds of fires started by Californians using equipment the wrong way. If you live in a wildland area, all equipment must be used with extreme caution.

Lawn mowers, metal-bladed trimmers, chain saws, grinders, welders, and tractors can all start a wildland fire if not used properly. Do your part to keep your community fire-safe.

HERE'S HOW TO DO IT THE RIGHT WAY:

Mowing

Metal blades striking rocks can create sparks and start fires in dry grass. Use caution.

Spark Arresters

In wildland areas, spark arresters are required on all portable, gasoline-powered equipment. This includes tractors, harvesters, chainsaws, weed-trimmers and mowers.

- Keep the exhaust system, spark arresters and mower in proper working order and free of carbon buildup.
- Use the recommended grade of fuel, and don't top it off.

14
10
13
3
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12
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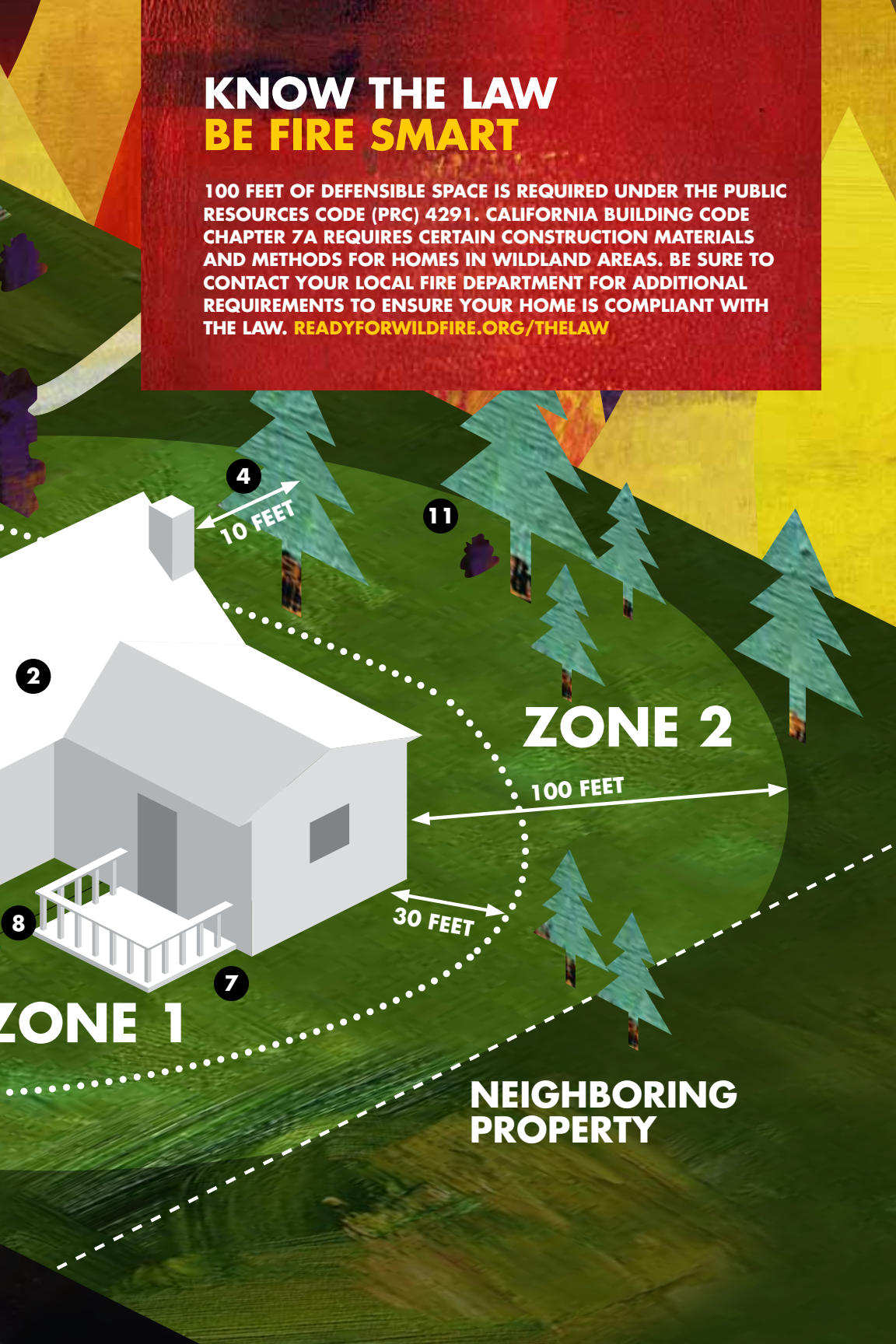
ROAD
1

KNOW THE LAW
BE FIRE SMART

100 FEET OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE IS REQUIRED UNDER THE PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE (PRC) 4291. CALIFORNIA BUILDING CODE CHAPTER 7A REQUIRES CERTAIN CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS AND METHODS FOR HOMES IN WILDLAND AREAS. BE SURE TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS TO ENSURE YOUR HOME IS COMPLIANT WITH THE LAW. READYFORWILDFIRE.ORG/THELAW



HARDENING YOUR HOME

FLYING EMBERS CAN DESTROY HOMES UP TO A MILE AHEAD OF A WILDFIRE. PREPARE (HARDEN) YOUR HOME NOW BEFORE FIRE STARTS.

SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HARDEN YOUR HOME:

Roof: Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home. Homes with wood or shingle roofs are at high risk of being destroyed during a wildfire.

Build your roof or re-roof with materials such as composition, metal or tile. Block any spaces to prevent embers from entering and starting a fire.

Vents: Vents on homes create openings for flying embers.

- Cover all vent openings with 1/8-inch to 1/4-inch metal mesh. Do not use fiberglass or plastic mesh because they can melt and burn.
- Protect vents in eaves or cornices with baffles to block embers. (Mesh is not enough.)

Eaves and Soffits: Eaves and soffits should be protected with ignition-resistant or non-combustible materials.

Windows: Heat from a wildfire can cause windows to break even before the home ignites. This allows burning embers to enter and start fires inside. Single-paned and large windows are particularly at risk.

- Install dual-paned windows with one pane of tempered glass.
- Consider limiting the size and number of windows that face large areas of vegetation.

Decks: Surfaces within 10 feet of the building should be built with ignition-resistant, non-combustible, or other approved materials.

- Remove all combustible items from underneath your deck.

Exterior Walls: Wood products such as boards, panels or shingles are common siding materials. However, they are combustible and not good choices for fire-prone areas.

- Build or remodel your walls with ignition-resistant building materials, such as stucco, fiber or cement siding, fire-retardant-treated wood, or other approved materials.
- Be sure to extend materials from the foundation to the roof.

Rain Gutters: Screen or enclose rain gutters to prevent accumulation of plant debris.

Patio Cover: Use the same ignition-resistant materials for patio covers as a roof.

Fences: Consider using ignition-resistant or non-combustible fence materials to protect your home during a wildfire.

Additional Home Fire Safety Steps:

Go to ReadyForWildfire.org/hardening for more important information on the following:

- Driveways and Access Road Information
- Garage Safety
- Address Visibility
- Water Supply Access
- Equipment Use Safety
- Ignition-Resistant Materials

READY, SET, GO! PREPARATION GUIDES

Preparing for a wildfire starts with three simple steps: Ready, Set, Go! Keep all three wildfire preparation guides on hand as a quick reference for helping your family and property be safe in the event of a wildfire.

WILDFIRE IS COMING PREPARATION GUIDES:

Step 1:
Is Your Home Ready?

Creating defensible space and hardening your home against wildfire.

Step 2:
Are You Set?

Developing a Wildfire Action Plan.

Step 3:
Are You Ready to Go?

A quick-reference evacuation guide.

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Go to ReadyForWildfire.org for more detailed information on all three guides to prepare for and survive a wildfire.