



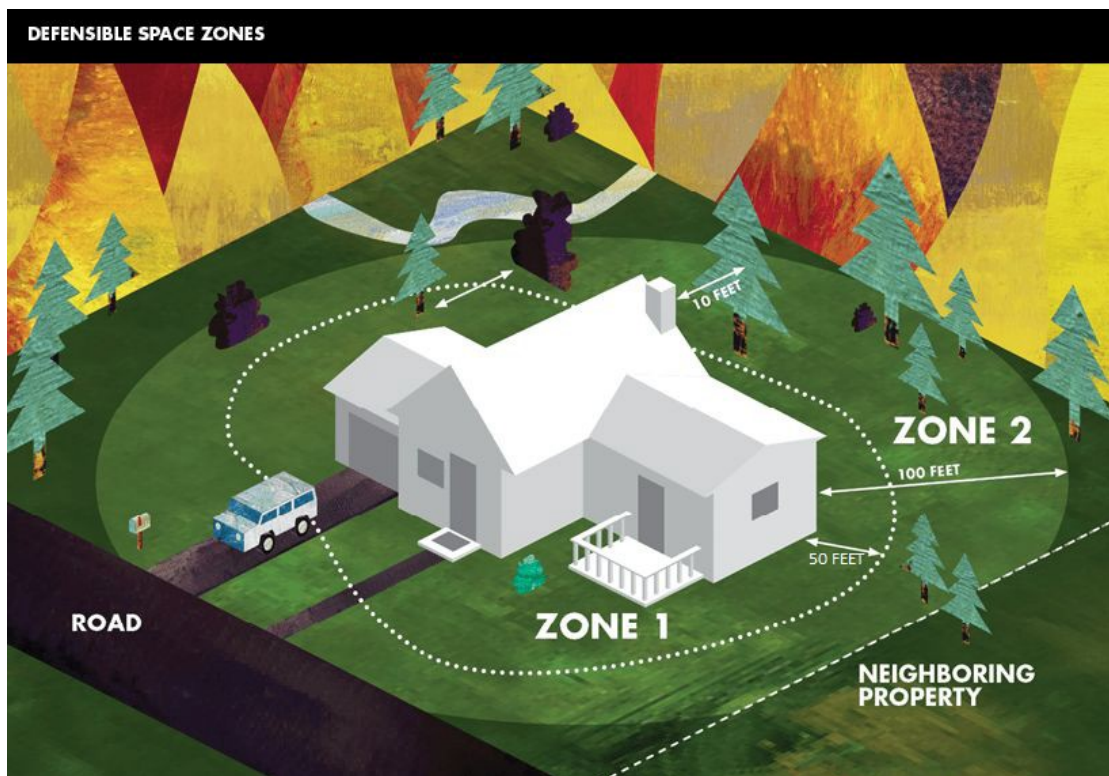
Every Second Counts...



The Valley Center Fire Protection District is here for you in any emergency.
Your help can make a difference!

Issue #4 - Defensible Space

As we ease into summer, let's talk about Defensible Space around your home and structures. Last month we talked about the area very close to the house, this month we're going to expand our horizon out to about 100 feet from the structure. We talked about embers and direct heat; defensible space is about reducing the amount of fuel around the house to a level where the house will survive. Bear with me, this article will be a little longer than the previous ones, but this is an important topic and there is a lot to cover! Let's jump right into what defensible space is and how to create it. First off, defensible space is divided into two zones, with some slightly different needs.



Zone 1 - Zone 1 extends 50 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

- Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds (vegetation).
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
- Remove branches that hang over your roof and dead branches 10 feet from your chimney.
- Relocate wood piles into Zone 2.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Create a separation between trees, shrubs and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.

Zone 2 - Zone 2 extends 100 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
- Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs and trees.
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they are OK to a depth of 3 inches.

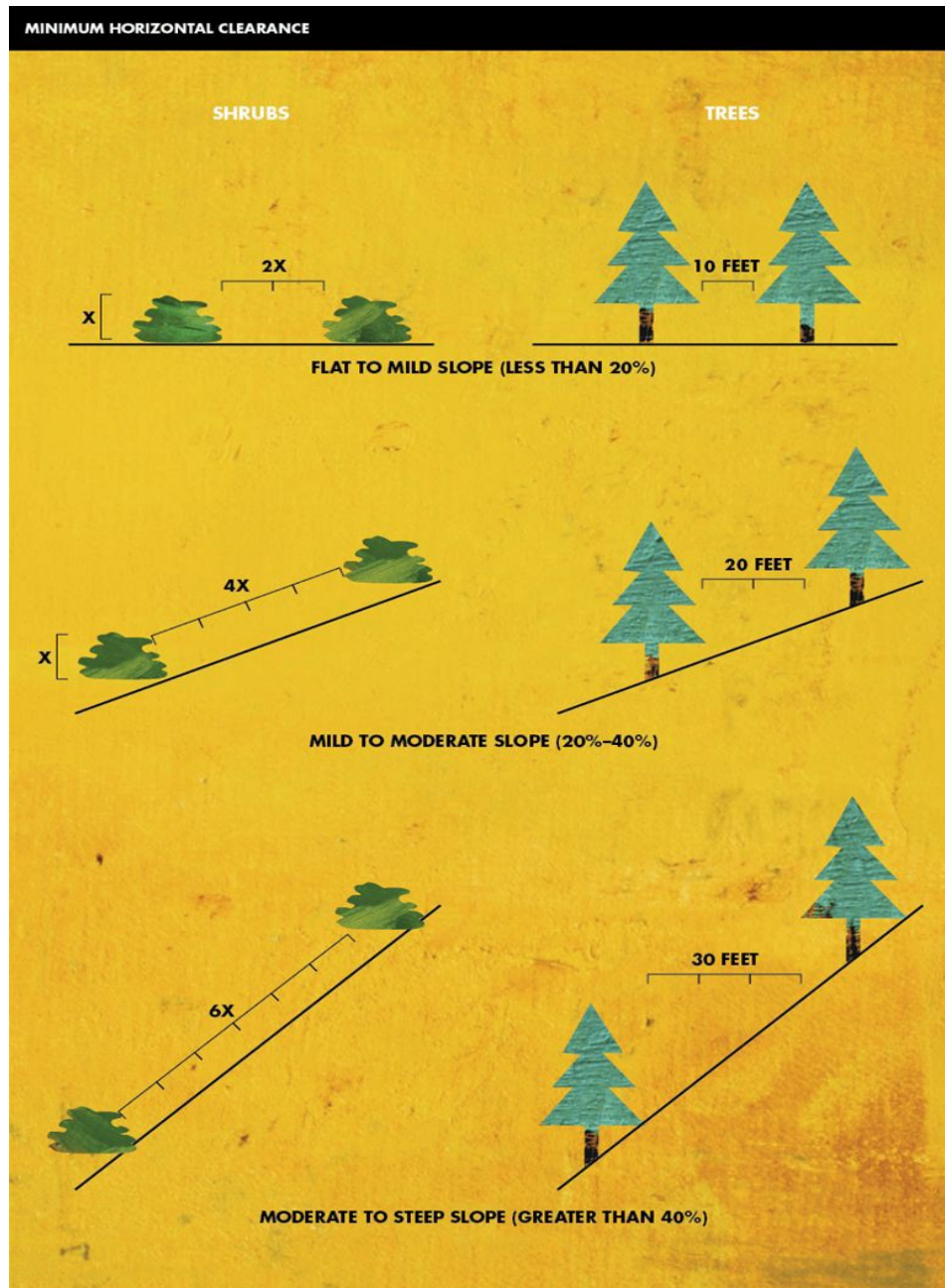
Now, let's talk a little about the vertical and horizontal spacing mentioned above. These diagrams are based on research into how a fire behaves, the intent being to both slow the spread of the fire, and to reduce the total amount of heat generated by the fire.

Vertical spacing is all about reducing the "ladder". We want to provide enough space that fire won't be able to transition from a low fire on the ground to a large fire in the trees. The guidelines are pretty simple, remove all tree branches at least 6 feet from the ground and allow extra vertical space between shrubs and trees.



Horizontal Spacing

Horizontal spacing depends on the slope of the land and the height of the shrubs or trees.



That's the defensible space story. I hope this was informative and please feel free to call us if you have any questions!

Thank you!
Jim Davidson
Fire Marshal - Valley Center Fire Protection District
760-751-7600
28234 Lilac Road - Valley Center, CA, 92082