

Frequently Asked Questions Pine Forest Firewise Program

Q: What is “**defensible space**?”

A: Information learned from breakthrough research conducted on the ground after fires, as well as through experiments & models, shows that homes ignite due to the condition of the home itself, & everything around it, up to 200’ away, depending on slope and vegetation. This area is called the “defensible space” or “home ignition zone.” Firewise principals focus on mitigating a home’s vulnerability to wildland fire through actions undertaken within the defensible space, such as reduction of fuel sources.

Source: The basics of defensible space and the “home ignition zone,” Firewise Communities (<http://www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/be-firewise/home-and-landscape/defensible-space.aspx>).

Q: “Why are we focusing on **ladder fuels & tree crown density**?”

A: To reduce the likelihood of crown fires, which occur when a ladder of vegetation or other fuels allows fire to climb to the tops of pine & fir trees. Crown fires produce the largest flames & farthest reaching embers. In fact, crown fire flames can be 100’ or more in height & can send burning embers more than a mile away. Those embers can ignite other fuels such as accumulated needles, wood stacks, door mats, decks, & homes.

Source: Living with Fire: A Guide for the Homeowner, Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group (http://extension.oregonstate.edu/tough_times/sites/default/files/documents/livingwithfirepnw.pdf).