DEFENSIBLE SPACE GUIDELINES

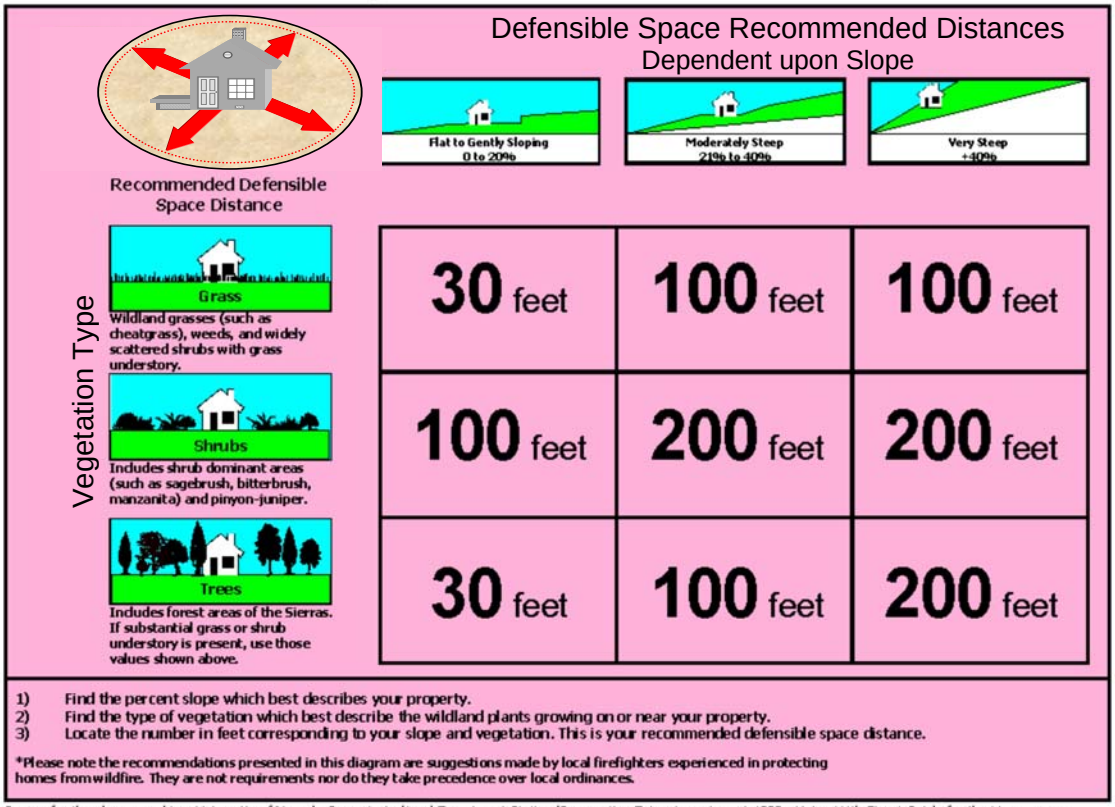
A FACT SHEET FOR CLARK COUNTY HOMEOWNERS

Defensible space refers to a **minimum** 30-foot area around houses and other buildings where vegetation has been significantly reduced or removed. The purpose of creating defensible space is to reduce the risk of losing homes and other property improvements to a wildfire.

HOW TO CREATE DEFENSIBLE SPACE

STEP 1 **DETERMINE DEFENSIBLE SPACE DISTANCE.** Use the table below to determine the minimum distance for defensible space, dependent upon slope and native vegetation type surrounding homes.

Standard Defensible Space Guidelines



Source for the above graphics: University of Nevada, Reno Agricultural Experiment Station/Cooperative Extension. August 1998. Living With Fire-A Guide for the Homeowner.

STEP 2 **REMOVE.** Cut and remove all dead, diseased or dying trees and shrubs from within the defensible space area. Remove selected trees and shrubs to eliminate continuous fuels extending up to the house. Also remove any flammable debris and firewood piles from within the minimum defensible space distance. Weeds or other dry vegetation should be removed from underneath porches and decks. Eliminate any flammable vegetation or debris within 10 feet of propane tanks. Remove leaves and debris from rain gutters.

STEP 3 **REDUCE.** Reduce vegetation height of shrubs under mature trees to decrease "ladder" fuels. Prune low tree branches to a minimum height of 4 feet and prune branches within 15 feet of structures and chimneys. Reduce accumulations of annual grasses (cheatgrass) through mowing or pre-emergent selective herbicide treatments in the fall. Reduce the accumulation of vegetation around wood fences through mowing or plant removal.

STEP 4 **REPLACE.** Substitute flammable vegetation such as juniper, sagebrush, and rabbitbrush with fire resistant plants. Replacement plantings may include low stature shrubs, decorative rock, lawn, flowerbeds, and succulent vegetation. Irrigation of vegetation throughout the fire season will decrease plant flammability.

STEP 5 **DISPOSE.** It is essential that all tree branches, shrubs, and other plant biomass be removed from the site immediately to a safe disposal area. This material dries rapidly and can contribute to the fire hazard problem if allowed to remain on the premises.

STEP 6 **MAINTAIN.** Maintenance of the defensible space area requires an annual review of fuel reduction guidelines around the home. Action should be taken to maintain an effective defensible space area.

Remember, good defensible space is –

Lean – There are only small amounts of flammable vegetation
Clean – There is no accumulation of dead vegetation or flammable debris
Green – Existing plants are healthy, green, and irrigated during fire season

(Source: Living With Fire…In the Big Sagebrush/Bitterbrush Environment. Nevada State Bureau of Land Management. Produced by Ed Smith and JoAnne Skelly.)