

## How to create Defensible Space Around Your Home

According to State law, it is your responsibility to create and maintain “defensible space” around your home and any other habitable structure on your property. Not only is this the law, but it is in your own best interest to give firefighters a better chance of saving your home and property. Sometimes it can seem like a daunting task, so how do you go about making your home more survivable?

First, do a little research. Go to the web site [www.readyforwildfire.org](http://www.readyforwildfire.org). There are some very good tools and diagrams that describe defensible space and vulnerable areas around your home. Using your newfound knowledge, create a checklist of what needs to be done and make a schedule to “get’er done”. You can go “all in” and work all weekend, or take it incrementally, doing a little bit each day until the job is done. If you have green waste cans you can use the cans as a tool to help you accomplish the job in manageable “chunks”. Work until the cans are full and then do the next segment after the cans are emptied. The important thing is to make steady progress.

If you are physically unable to do the more strenuous tasks, think about a “family day”. Invite your children, brothers and sisters, cousins, grandkids, uncles and in-laws to come help. Have a picnic or Bar-B-Q to celebrate your success. You might find that the teamwork and sense of accomplishment makes your family closer.

If you do not have any family in the area, talk to your friends and neighbors. Propose a neighborhood cleanup day. Even if you can’t do much of the physical work, you could plan and coordinate the event and perhaps cook some hotdogs at the end. You will find people are willing to help each other and it strengthens your community.

If you can’t motivate your neighbors to help, try contacting church and civic groups like the Boy Scouts or senior groups. You may be surprised how many organizations are ready to help. You just need to let them know you need a little assistance.

You can pay a landscape contractor to do the work to make your home safe. Creating and maintaining defensible space is an expense of home ownership. Just like replacing the roof or painting the exterior of your house, it is an investment you want to protect and defend.

If all else fails, and if you are both physically unable to do the needed work and financially unable to pay to have the work done, you can request senior assistance from ~~the El Dorado County~~ Friends of Seniors and the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council. This is a program made possible by charitable donations from community members and fundraising events. Funds are very limited and not all applicants will be approved.