

What is “defensible space” as it relates to wildfires?

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Given the below-normal level of precipitation this past winter, the region is looking at what could be a difficult fire season this year. At the Laboratory, we began planning a month earlier than we normally do so that we’re ready for a multitude of different scenarios should fire break out.

Overall, the same guidance applies to homeowners as to employees and workers on Laboratory property: don’t have flammable materials near structures. The idea of defensible space creates different zones around buildings to ensure there is a minimal amount of combustibles close to anything you don’t want to catch fire.

Combustibles can include trees, dried leaves and pine needles, stacks of wood, or anything else that’s highly flammable. If there is a wildfire, you want to make sure you have a firebreak, or in other words, an area with no or little fuel that is available to spread any flames. Such a firebreak also allows firefighters a safe area from which to fight the blaze.

For more information on defensible space for homeowners, take a look at this publication put out by the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#).

Additional information is available from the [National Fire Protection Association](http://www.nfpa.org) website.
Here's hoping things stay calm until our monsoon season begins later this summer.
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