The City of Scottsdale has an ongoing interest in preserving the unique qualities of the Sonoran Desert, however much of the Southwest wildland is considered a high-hazard fire environment. All vegetation, naturally occurring and otherwise, is potential fuel for fire. Preventative actions must be taken and natural area open space (NAOS) must be protected.

Creating defensible space around your home is one of the most important and effective steps you can take to protect you, your family and your home from wildfire.

**What is NAOS?**

In the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance, which affects the northern two-thirds of the community — north of the Central Arizona Canal, there are requirements for providing open space on each parcel. Natural area open space areas are either natural desert that has been undisturbed by development activity or where development has restored the desert terrain and vegetation to its natural condition.

The amount of NAOS required to be set aside with each development is based upon two factors — the landform area and land slopes.

It is very important to provide continuous open spaces along the washes in order to sustain both the desert plants and animals. NAOS can be dedicated on individual lots or on common tracts maintained by homeowners associations, etc.

**What is Defensible Space?**

Defensible space refers to that area between a house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been modified to reduce the wildfire threat and to provide an opportunity for structural protection without risking homeowner or firefighter lives.

Homeowners and contractors should create a well-maintained, live vegetation zone to prevent damage to structures in case of wildland fires. Defensible Space acts as a fire break, and should contain only small brush, cacti and trees to prevent a continuous path of flammable materials leading to inhabited structures.

**Specific Preventative Recommended Actions**

Maintain a 20-foot zone out from the rear and side yard fences around your home. Thin dead and fallen vegetation, perennial grasses and overgrown bushes; remove dead branches and/or branches touching the ground; and all invasive plants within this 20-foot area. Your back yard is considered 10 feet of the 30-foot Defensible Space noted in the diagram.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Homes</th>
<th>Walls &amp; Streets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trim Live Vegetation</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
<td>5 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove Dead Vegetation</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Defensible Dimensions</td>
<td>30 feet</td>
<td>20 feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are here to help

Schedule a free home safety inspection. Visit ScottsdaleAZ.gov, search "home safety visit" or call 480-312-1855.
Top Tips For Fire Prevention
- Consistently monitor defensible space for maximum fire prevention
- Remove flash fuels such as dead grass (however do not remove live native plants from NAOS)
- Trim trees within the 30 foot defensible space so the canopy is not touching the ground; remove any dead branches or leaves
- Trim grass and foliage around trees
- Keep gutters, eaves and roof clear of leaves and other debris
- Do not stack wood or other flammable materials with in the 30 foot defensible space
- Keep a rolled up garden hose with a nozzle attached to an outside hose valve connection
- No smoking is allowed in NAOS

Protected Native Plants
Protected native plants are cacti which are 3 feet or taller and trees which are 4 inches or greater in caliper of the following species:

**Trees**
- **Botanical Name**
  - Acacia constricta
  - Acacia greggii
  - Berberis Haematocarpa
  - Canotia holocantha
  - Celtis pallida
  - Cercidium floridum
  - Cercidium microphyllum
  - Chilopsis linearis
  - Juniperus species
  - Olneya tesota
  - Populus fremontii
  - Prosopis species
  - Quercus species
  - Rhus ovata
  - Vauquelinea Californica
- **Common Name**
  - Whitethorn Acacia
  - Catclaw Acacia
  - Red Barberry
  - Crucifixion Thorn
  - Desert Hackberry
  - Blue Palo Verde
  - Foothill Palo Verde
  - Desert Willow
  - Juniper
  - Ironwood
  - Cottonwood
  - Mesquite
  - Scrub Oak
  - Sugar Sumac
  - Arizona Rosewood

**Cacti**
- **Botanical Name**
  - Carnegiea gigantea
  - Ferocactus species
  - Fouquieria splendens
  - Peniocereus Greggii
  - Yucca elata Soaptree
- **Common Name**
  - Saguaro
  - Barrel
  - Ocotillo
  - Desert Night-Blooming Cereus
  - Yucca

Building Contractor Alert
Be vigilant! Keep construction site safe and free of combustible materials.
- Limit welding & cutting to cleared areas
- Remove all flammable products & flash fuels
- Maintain the building envelope as a Clear Zone and thin an additional 30 foot to provide adequate Defensible Space
- Do not stack combustible construction materials in Defensible Space.

Contractors found negligent in maintaining a safe building environment are responsible for damages via fines and/or criminal citations for the cost of providing fire protection services and for property loss. (Ord. 3507, Section H124)

For more information, or to report an unsafe construction site, call Scottsdale Fire Department at 480-312-1855.

Overgrown trees & bushes provide fuel for wildfires

Providing a Defensible Space will protect your home

Unless you plan to haul it away yourself, coincide your brush clean up with Scottsdale Solid Waste's monthly brush and bulk collection. Visit ScottsdaleAZ.gov and search "brush" to view the collection guidelines and schedules.

Looks for signs that indicate the Fire Danger Level throughout the year. Fire Danger Levels are often elevated in early spring.

Contributing factors to changing levels are:
- Volume and moisture of materials
- Single-Digit Humidity Levels
- Triple Digit Temperatures
- High Winds

If you have any questions about the Fire Danger Level in your area, call the Scottsdale Fire Department at 480-312-1855.