

## Our Recent Experience

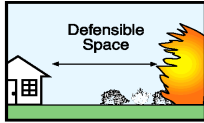
In the Deer Ridge fire which occurred in September, 2009 we witnessed how quickly a fire could spread within the wildland-urban interface when 633 acres



rapidly burned in the foothills of East Medford. Fortunately, no lives were lost and all homes were saved. Under different conditions, we might not be so fortunate in the future.

We know that maintaining a “defensible space” and having safe access and egress makes all the difference; we witnessed this on the Deer Ridge fire. The picture above shows a house on Panorama Drive, which served as a good example of how preparation can save a home. The fire burned towards

the house, but lost momentum when it approached the defensible space previously created by the homeowner thinning and mowing vegetation around the house.



Preparing your property before fire season begins, by creating a defensible space, is the best preventative measure you can take to reduce the risk of losing your home in a wildfire. Working now to reduce ignition hazards around your home will help protect your home and your neighborhood next summer.

## What Can I Do? Schedule a Free Home Evaluation

Medford Fire-Rescue offers **free** home evaluations for anyone residing in Wildland-Urban Interface. The Wildland-Urban Interface Home Evaluation Program teaches property owners how to create a defensible space around their home. Call 541- 774-2300 today to schedule an appointment.

Medford Fire-Rescue  
200 S. Ivy Street #180  
Medford, OR 97501

# Wildland-Urban Interface Home Evaluation Program



## Medford Fire Department Fire & Life Safety Division

Lausmann Annex

200 S. Ivy Street, Room #180

Medford, OR 97501

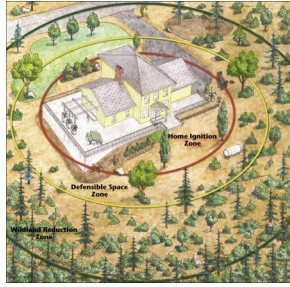
Ph. (541) 774-2300 Fax (541) 774-2514

[www.medfordfirerescue.org](http://www.medfordfirerescue.org)

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## What is this Program?

The Wildland-Urban Interface Home Evaluation Program is a program provided by the Medford Fire Dept. to educate homeowners living in the wildland-urban interface areas about the importance of reducing home ignition hazards and



maintaining defensible space around their homes. While this is a completely voluntary program, the results will help to protect you and your property in the event of a wildfire.

Studies have shown that over 90% of homes that burn in wildfires across our nation burn because of small spot-fires or flying embers that ignite the home. Reducing ignition hazards on and around your home reduces the chance of your structure igniting during a wildfire.

## What is the Wildland-Urban Interface?

The wildland-urban interface is defined as a geographical area where structures and other human development meets or intermingles with wildland or vegetative fuels.



In Medford, this area usually begins near the base of the foothills and extends into the hillsides. Because of the vegetative fuel load, challenging topography, limited access, weather conditions, and lack of water supply, these areas can be prone to wildfires that consume both landscape and property.

## What will the Evaluation Entail?

When we meet with you on your property we will walk around with you and talk about items that you can do that will improve your chances of surviving a wildfire. We will also help you to prioritize your "to do" list. Some of the issues we will address are briefly discussed in this brochure.

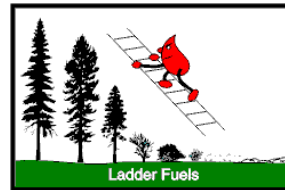
## Evaluating Access

Maintaining a safe access into and out of your property is vital to surviving a wildfire. A reflective address sign can save firefighters precious minutes when responding to your home. Did you know that having a "tunnel" of vegetation above your driveway can block your escape route during a wildfire? It can also deter firefighters from entering your property. Also, firefighters may choose not to cross a bridge without load capacities marked, if they are uncertain it will support their vehicle's weight.



## Evaluating Vegetation

Vegetation plays an important role in the spread of fire to a home. A defensible space generally covers a minimum diameter of 100 feet around the perimeter of your home, but may increase because of topography. All dead vegetation should be removed from this zone. Measures such as maintaining dried weeds/grass to below 6 inches, reducing ladder fuels (a ladder fuel is vegetation below tree crowns such as shrubs, smaller trees, bushes, etc., that will spread fire up into the tree crown), and thinning trees in this zone will make your property more resistant to wildfire.



The first 30 feet around your home should be kept "lean and green." Trim tree branches that overhang the roof. During fire season combustible materials such as pine needles and leaves should be raked and removed. Move shrubs and vines away from the house, especially underneath windows. Consider utilizing fire-resistant vegetation in this area.

## Evaluating Structures

Making your home more fire resilient means assessing building techniques, replacing highly flammable building materials, and keeping flammable vegetation away from the structure.

Some roofing materials provide greater fire resistance than others. A shake roof is the least fire resistant. Leaves, pine needles, and pine cones on your roof or in your rain gutters can accumulate and easily ignite during a wildfire. Preventative cleaning of these areas reduces the threat of ignition.



Eaves can trap heat, embers can enter through vent openings, walls can ignite, and windows can fail. Enclosed eaves, screened vents, non-combustible siding, and dual pane windows provide an extra level of fire protection to your house.

## Evaluating Decks/Porches

Combustible debris on and under decks or porches can easily ignite. Installing solid skirting around the perimeter of these features will provide greater fire protection. If you are building or replacing a deck or porch, consider using non-combustible materials. Use non-combustible patio furniture or relocate these items indoors when wildfire threatens.



## Evaluating Other Concerns

During fire season, firewood piles should be moved at least 30 feet away from the house. Combustible vegetation and materials should be cleared around propane tanks and vehicles.

**For more detailed information about wildfire home safety, emergency planning, or any of the subjects listed in this brochure, visit our webpage at:**

<http://www.ci.medford.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=343>