



# PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

## BUILDING DIVISION

[Building Division - El Dorado County \(ca.gov\)](http://Building%20Division%20-%20El%20Dorado%20County%20(ca.gov))

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### PLACERVILLE OFFICE:

2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, CA 95667

#### BUILDING

(530) 621-5315

[bldgdept@edcgov.us](mailto:bldgdept@edcgov.us)

#### PLANNING

(530) 621-5355

[planning@edcgov.us](mailto:planning@edcgov.us)

### LAKE TAHOE OFFICE:

924 B Emerald Bay Rd

South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

(530) 573-3330

[tahoebuild@edcgov.us](mailto:tahoebuild@edcgov.us)

## Defensible Space Guidelines

### **Defensible Space Zone (within 30 feet of all structures or to property line):**

- Remove all branches within 10 feet of any stovepipe or chimney outlet. PRC §4291(a)(4)
- Remove leaves, needles or other vegetation on roofs, gutters, decks, porches and stairways etc. PRC§4291(a)(6)
- Remove all dead or dying trees, branches, shrubs or other plants adjacent to or overhanging buildings. PRC§4291(a)(5)
- Prune lower branches of trees up to a height of 6 to 15 feet (1/3 tree height for trees under 18 feet). PRC§4291(a)(1)
- Remove all dead or dying grass, leaves, needles or other vegetation. PRC§4291(a)(1)
- Remove or separate live flammable ground cover and shrubs. PRC§4291(a)(1)

### **Reduced Fuel Zone (within 30 – 100 feet of all structures or to property line):**

- Mow dead or dying grass to a maximum of 4 inches in height. Trimmings may remain on the ground. PRC§4291(a)(1)
- Live flammable ground cover less than 18 inches in height may remain, but overhanging and adjacent trees must be pruned to a height of 6 to 15 feet. PRC§4291(a)(1)
- Reduce fuels in accordance with the Continuous Tree Canopy Standard (see back). PRC§4291(a)(1)
- Reduce fuels in accordance with the Horizontal Spacing Standard (see back). PRC§4291(a)(1)

### **Defensible and Reduced Fuel Zone (within 100 feet of all structures or to property line):**

- Logs or stumps embedded in the soil must be removed or isolated from structures and other vegetation. PRC§4291(a)(1)
- Remove all dead or dying brush and trees, and all dead or dying tree branches within 15 feet of the ground. PRC§4291(a)(1)

### **Other Requirements:**

- Clear all flammable vegetation, trash and other combustible materials 10 feet around and above propane tanks. CFC §3807.3
- Address numbers shall be displayed in contrasting colors (4" Min Size) and readable from the street or access road. CFC §505.1
- Equip chimney or stovepipe openings with a metal screen having openings between 3/8 inch and 1/2 inch. CBC §2113.9.1

### **Recommendations:**

- Clear 10 feet around and 15 feet above fuels (e.g. woodpiles, lumber, scrap etc.). Move woodpiles as far as possible from structures.
- Remove flammable materials stored under decks and similar overhangs of structures.
- Clear vegetation 10 feet from sides and 15 feet above all driveways and turnaround areas.

## Continuous Tree Canopy Standard

To achieve defensible space while keeping a larger stand of trees with a continuous tree canopy, adhere to the guidelines below:

- Prune lower branches of trees to a height of 6 to 15 feet from the top of the vegetation below or 1/3 to 1/2 the tree height for under 30 feet, whichever is less.
- Remove all ground fuels greater than four inches in height. Single trees or other vegetation may be kept if they are well spaced, well pruned, well maintained, free of all dead material, and will not spread fire to other vegetation or structures.

### Horizontal Spacing Standard

- Beyond 30 feet from structures grass should not exceed four inches in height. In situations where these fuels are isolated from other fuels or where necessary to stabilize soil, grasses may reach a height of 18 inches.
- Clearance between shrubs should be 4 to 40 feet depending on the slope of the land and size and type of vegetation. Check the chart below for an estimation of clearance distance.

<b>Minimum Horizontal Spacing Guidelines</b>		
<b>Slope</b>	<b>Shrubs, Ground Covers &amp; Other Ornamental Plants Space required between clumps of ground cover, plants, bushes, shrubs, seedlings, or sapling trees, etc</b>	<b>Trees Space required between tree canopies or groups of trees</b>
Flat or gentle slope (0% to 20%)	2 times the height of the plant	10 feet
Moderate slope (20% to 40%)	4 times the height of the plant	20 feet
Steep slope (greater than 40%)	6 times the height of the plant	30 feet