

Wildfire Lands Fuel Break Construction Standards

The AMC states that new construction or remodels in the wildfire lands must include creation of a primary and secondary fuel break around the structure. These standards are an internal document to help staff interpret the AMC requirements in the most protective way so the improvements and lives of the homeowners and our firefighters are not at risk during a wildfire.

Site Address:		Applicant Name:	
Planner:		Date Received:	
Date Returned:		AFR Staff:	

Wildfire Lands Fuel Break Construction Standards Checklist

Is the project a Performance Standards Development?

- If “no” then complete section B only.
- If “yes” then complete sections A and B.

A. Code Requirements for Wildfire Prevention and Control Plan ONLY

- AMC 18.62.090 **Section A** (only) requires a Fire Prevention & Control Plan for Performance Standards Development, subdivision, and partitions in the Wildfire Hazard area. Fire Prevention and Control Plan shall be required with the submission of any application for an outline plan approval of a Performance Standards Development, preliminary plat of a subdivision, or application to partition land which contained areas designated Wildfire Hazard areas.
- The Fire Prevention and Control Plan, prepared at the same scale as the development plans, shall include the following items:
 - a. An analysis of the fire hazards on the site from wildfire, as influenced by existing vegetation and topography.
 - b. A map showing the areas that are to be cleared of dead, dying, or severely diseased vegetation.
 - c. A map of the areas that are to be thinned to reduce the interlocking canopy of trees.
 - d. A tree management plan showing the location of all trees that are to be preserved and removed on each lot. In the case of heavily forested parcels, only trees scheduled for removal shall be shown.
 - e. The areas of Primary and Secondary Fuel Breaks that are required to be installed around each structure, as required by 18.62.090 B.
 - f. Roads and driveways sufficient for emergency vehicle access and fire suppression activities, including the slope of all roads and driveways within the Wildfire Lands area.
- Locate home away from topographical hazards such as chimneys, very steep slopes, saddles. Setbacks to slope are a good idea, especially on steep slopes. 18.62.090 A.5.d. gives authority to change siting of structure. Address during pre-app review.

- ❑ Maintenance of the Fire Prevention and Control Plan described in CCR's if applicable.
- ❑ Roof covering(s) must be non-wood class A or B.
- ❑ All requirements under section A or B of the AMC 18.62.090 shall be completed before construction with combustible materials begins.
- ❑ Review landscape plans if they are required and submitted during pre-app phase.
- ❑ Ask that the applicant delineate the primary and secondary fuel breaks.

Recommendations

- ❑ Notify builder or owner of the Wildfire Lands requirements in the AMC.
Recommend non-combustible building materials for siding and decks.
Recommend separation of combustible fence from structure with non-combustible gate or section of fence.
- ❑ Recommend that the applicant schedule a field visit with building plans in hand and the building outline staked out beforehand.
- ❑ Recommend optimum structure location that will minimize heat exposure during a fire.
- ❑ Recommend firewise landscape planning.
- ❑ Give out fire resistant plants landscaping guide. www.ashland.or.us/plants
- ❑ Approved spark arrester on chimney—screen should be between 3/8 inch and 1/2 inch mesh.
- ❑ Flammable fences should be separated from house by non-flammable section.

B. Inspection Phase for ALL PROJECTS

Primary Fuel Break - Goal of the primary fuel break is to remove non fire-resistive vegetation that will produce flame lengths in excess of one foot. All vegetation removed must be chipped or hauled to the local transfer station or biomass utilization company per DEQ regulations.

- ❑ Establish correct size of Primary Fuel Break. 30 feet plus 10 feet for every 10% of slope over 10% (see Table 1). Designate this area from outside of structure including decks and permitted outbuildings out to property line. Ask applicant to delineate primary AND secondary fuel break boundaries if not already complete.
- ❑ Start at structure working out. Look for non-combustible 5 foot space next to house, fire resistant plants are OK depending on maintenance. Use extra caution where flammable siding or deck/stairs are close to ground or vegetation. Don't worry about leaf and needle litter except very near the house, on the roof, and in gutters. Screen off small spaces under decks with metal screening 1/8" mesh or finer.
- ❑ Fire resistant landscaping should be trimmed below windows. Flammable species shall be removed if below a window.
- ❑ Tree limbs shall be trimmed minimum 10 feet above roof and 10 feet from chimney.
- ❑ Trees should be pruned up to a minimum 8 feet or 1/3 of the tree height, whichever is less.
- ❑ Lowest tree limbs should be at least 3 times the height of vegetation below the tree. Consider flammability of each species.

- ❑ Canopy Spacing - Tree canopies (outermost limbs) should be separated by at least ten feet **at mature size**. Spacing of large trees should be extended based on the steepness of the slope and field interpretation (see Recommended Separation Distances for Shrubs and Small Conifers diagram). Groups of trees are fine if there is space around the group. Mature conifers pruned to at least 8 feet with no ladder fuels should not be considered for removal unless diseased, dying, or too close to structure.) Deciduous trees are less flammable than conifers.
- ❑ Grass must be mowed on lot from June 15th until the end of fire season.
- ❑ All standing dead and dying vegetation shall be removed
- ❑ Wooden fence should not connect directly to structures.
- ❑ Address signs shall be easily visible from street, even during construction. 24/7.
- ❑ Flammable and combustible materials should be moved away from house during fire season.

Primary Fuel Break Distance

Site Slope %	Added Distance	Total Distance
10	none	30 ft
20	10	40
30	20	50
40	30	60
50	40	70
60	50	80

Secondary Fuel Break - Goal of the secondary fuel break is to remove vegetation that will reduce the intensity of a wildfire. All vegetation removed must be chipped or hauled to the local transfer station or biomass utilization company per DEQ rules.

- ❑ Secondary fuel break begins at outer edge of primary fuel break and shall extend 100 feet or to the property line, whichever is less.
- ❑ Trees shall be pruned up to a minimum 8 feet or 1/3 of the tree height, whichever is less.
- ❑ Lowest tree limbs shall be at least 3 times the height of vegetation below the tree. Remove understory vegetation if minimum clearance cannot be met. Consider flammability of each species.
- ❑ Remove intermediate and some sub-dominant trees in order to decrease crown bulk density.
- ❑ Prioritize retention of larger trees over smaller trees. Favor native trees in this order: Sugar pine, Ponderosa pine, oaks, madrones, Douglas-fir, incense-cedar.
- ❑ One or two standing dead trees (snags) are allowed if they pose no hazard to home or other improvements or transportation corridors. Trees over 15 inches diameter at base are best wildlife habitat trees, especially oaks and conifers.

Recommendation:

- ❑ Pull all Scotch broom during winter and spring and keep pulling every year until gone. Make small, (3' x 3') isolated piles.