

Create a Defensible Space

Carlsbad Fire Dept. offers the following guidelines for establishing effective defensible space:

Create a "lean, clean and green" firebreak area by removing flammable vegetation and growth within 30 feet of each structure. Single trees and shrubs may be retained if they are well spaced, pruned and placed so they avoid the spread of fire. Maintain an irrigation system for any vegetation near structures.

- Remove any dead vegetation as well as large amounts of leaves, needles and other debris from around structures and from rooftops and gutters.
- Keep grass and weeds mowed.
- Prune lower tree limbs to at least 6 feet up to 15 feet (or lower 1/3 of branches on smaller trees), which will keep them from acting as a ladder for fire moving along the ground. Property with steeper slopes can present a higher fire risk and should be pruned higher.
- Remove vegetation and debris around propane tanks.
- Relocate woodpiles and other flammable materials away from structures.
- Keep grass and weeds from growing up around and under raised decks or porches and remove any combustible materials as well.

New Mexicans are encouraged to log onto <http://nmforestry.com> for links to other important information regarding the creation of defensible space or to download a copy of "Living with Fire - New Mexico, a Homeowner's Guide" in both English and Spanish.

The New Mexico Family Emergency Preparedness Guide with Wildfire information can be found at <http://nmdhsem.org> then click on the Preparedness icon, then Preparedness Guide and go to the section on Wildfires.