

Wildland and Natural Area Open Space



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CITY OF SCOTTSDALE

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.

	Homes	Walls & Streets
Trim Live Vegetation	15 feet	5 feet
Remove Dead Vegetation	15 feet	15 feet
Total Defensible Dimensions	30 feet	20 feet

Schedule a free home safety visit. 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



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

LOW
MODERATE
HIGH
VERY HIGH
EXTREME

If you have any questions about the Fire Danger Level in your area, call the 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.

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.

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

Cacti

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

Single family projects are required to submit a native plant program at the time of submittal for building plan reviews. Commercial projects are required to submit a native plant program no later than the time of application for Development Review Board.

A native plant permit is required to remove, relocate, or destroy any plant protected by the ordinance. Permits will not be issued unless submitted in conjunction with an approved or proposed development project. A permit will be issued after the native plant program has been approved.

For more information about the inspection process for native plants, including how to schedule an inspection, visit ScottsdaleAZ.gov and search "native plants" or call the Planning Department at 480-312-7000.