

Darkhorse Owners' Association

Summary of Fire Safety Requirements and Guidelines

This document summarizes the minimum standards for weed abatement, defensible space maintenance and roadway "clear zone" maintenance to be followed by Darkhorse Owners' Association (DHOA) members. It is a compilation of work done by volunteers researching existing ordinances and fire safety recommendations in order to minimize the effects of a fire event. It is not intended to ensure the fire safety of any person, property, or thing.

Detailed requirements, guidelines and references to state and county laws can be found on the Owner Portal (DHOA member login required).

ALL PROPERTIES: WEED ABATEMENT

Weed abatement helps to reduce or eliminate fire hazards from overgrown vegetation and the accumulation of combustible debris on properties.

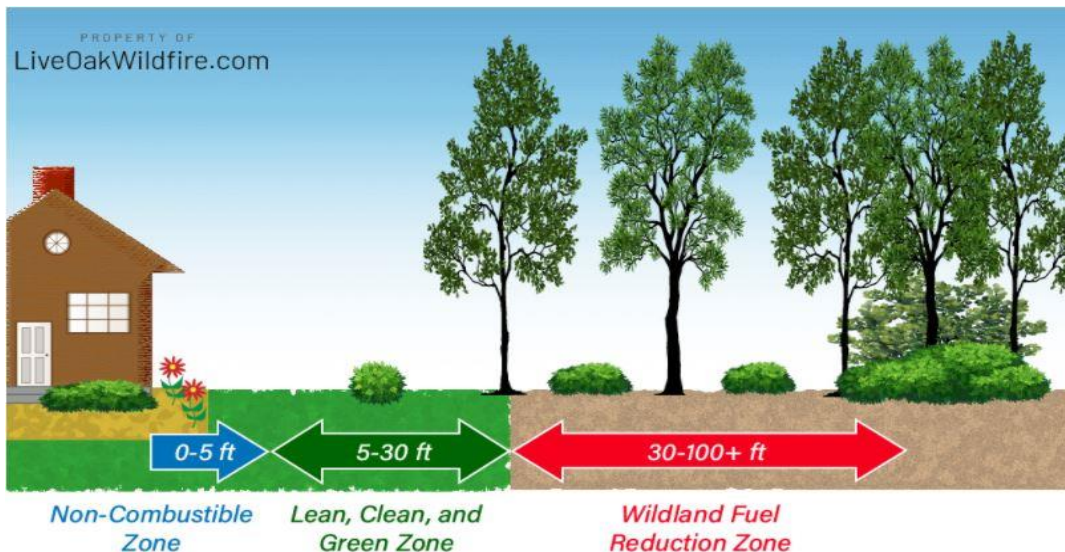
DHOA requires that Darkhorse property owners must:

- a) Maintain a lot under 1.00 acre by mowing/clearing the entire property so that dry or dead weeds are no higher than four inches above the mineral soil.
- b) Maintain a lot over 1.00 acre by mowing/clearing the first 250 feet from the roadway, or nearest lot line to roadway access, so that dry or dead weeds are no higher than four inches above the mineral soil.

IMPROVED PROPERTIES: DEFENSIBLE SPACE MAINTENANCE

Defensible space is the buffer created between a building and the grasses, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and it helps protect structures from catching fire. Proper defensible space also provides firefighters a safe area in which to work.

It is recommended that owners of each improved parcel follow the following guidelines to help satisfy state (California PRC 4291) and local (Nevada County Ordinance 2477) requirements for maintaining a one hundred foot defensible space around all structures.



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The Immediate Zone: 0-5 feet around the home and/or structures – “The First Five Feet”

- a) Create a no-fuel zone 0-5 feet around the home.
- b) Clean and maintain roofs and gutters of dead leaves, debris, and pine needles that could catch on fire by flying embers.
- c) Create hard surfaces using concrete or fire-resistant material. Avoid combustible mulch. Non-combustible mulches such as decomposed granite, gravel, or rocks offer superior fire-proofing as landscape mulches and should be used when mulch is needed within five feet of buildings or any combustible structural materials such as siding or decking.
- d) If planting, use widely spaced, non-woody, and low herbaceous vegetation and keep it away from vents, windows, and interior corners.
- e) Shrubs and trees are not recommended in this zone.
- f) Trim back overhanging branches ten feet from the roof.
- g) Reduce the chance of embers that could pass through vents in the eaves and foundation vents. Install 1/8-inch or smaller metal mesh screening.
- h) Remove any flammable material from wall exteriors – mulch, flammable plants, leaves, needles, and firewood piles – anything that can burn. Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches. In case of an evacuation remove anything from decks that can burn – plastic or wood chairs, tables, storage containers, etc.

The Intermediate Zone: 5-30 feet around the home or structures

- a) Create vegetation “islands” to break up contiguous fuels.
- b) Remove ladder fuels – grasses, shrubs, young trees, and low-hanging branches that allow a fire to climb from the ground into the tree canopy.
- c) Get rid of leaf and needle debris from the yard.
- d) Keep grass under four inches tall.
- e) When planting trees, space the trees to have a minimum of eighteen feet between canopy tops with the distance increasing with the percentage of the slope.
- f) Keep tree canopies no closer than ten feet to the edge of any structures on the property.
- g) Tree and shrubs in this zone should be limited to small clusters of a few each to break up the continuity of the vegetation across the landscape.
- h) Keep vegetation well-irrigated and free of debris.

The Extended Zone: 30-100 feet around the home and structures

- a) Remove ladder fuels.
- b) Dispose of heavy accumulations of ground litter/debris.
- c) Remove dead plant and tree material.
- d) Remove small conifers growing between mature trees.
- e) Remove vegetation adjacent to storage sheds or other outbuildings.
- f) Trees planted 30 to 60 feet from the home should have at least twelve feet between canopy tops.
- g) Trees planted 60 to 100 feet from the home should have at least six feet between canopy tops.

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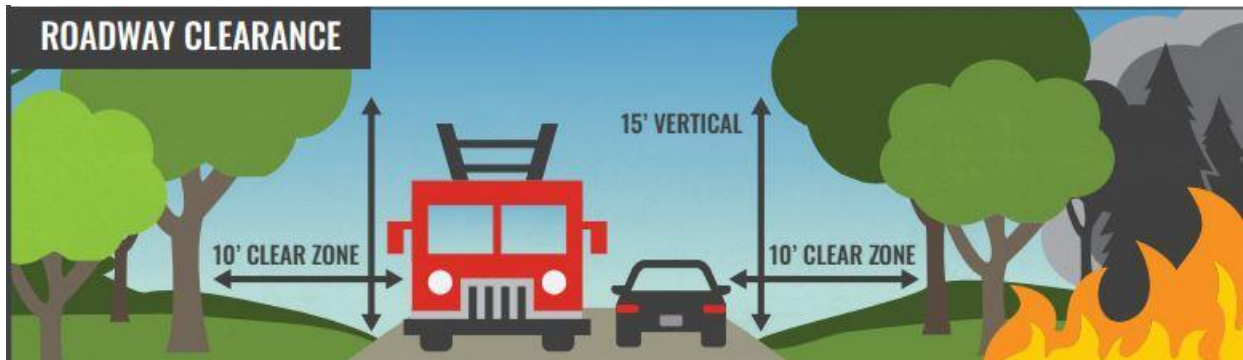
Plants to Avoid

Avoid the use of these "Gasoline" plants:

Acacia	Eucalyptus	Pampas Grass
Bamboo	Fountain Grass	Pine
Black Sage	French Broom	Rosemary
California Bay	Juniper	Scotch Broom
Cedars	Maiden Grass	Spruces
Cypress	Manzanita	Toyon

PUBLIC ROADWAYS: "CLEAR ZONE" MAINTENANCE

All Darkhorse roadways are within a County of Nevada Permanent Road Division (PRD) and are subject to Nevada County rules and regulations concerning the Fuel Modification Area – a strip of land or ten-foot zone adjacent to a roadway that is used for safe ingress and egress to the area served by the roadway or fire access.



Property owners are warned that the County has an easement on this area and may perform any required hazardous fuel reduction activities that they deem necessary including spraying and removal of vegetation. Accordingly, DHOA members are advised to follow Nevada County requirements for roadway clearance which include:

- a) Remove ladder fuels a minimum of a ten feet beyond the shoulder of a roadway serving as primary ingress and egress to the parcel to a height of fifteen feet along the boundary of a parcel.
- b) For trees that are in the ten-foot wide strip of land that are not tall, remove branches up to 1/3 the height of the tree.
- c) For bushes in the ten-foot wide strip of land the maximum allowed height is two feet. Allow two times the height of the bush as clearance to the limbs of a tree that it is under. Plant the bushes in a mosaic pattern to minimize the spread of wildfire in the Fuel Modification Area.
- d) Cut and remove all weeds and grasses down to four inches or lower.
- e) Remove all dead or decaying trees and tree limbs.
- f) Perform any other fire protection or maintenance activities within the Fuel Modification Areas consistent with the standards and requirements contained in California PRC 4291, Nevada County Ordinance 2477 or as required by a public official.