

Wildfires in Maine

Maine, the most forested state in the U.S., averages 650 wildfires that burn about 550 acres annually. Most are human caused. The Maine Forest Service (MFS) has been working with local communities and homeowners to help reduce the risk of wildfire since the early 2000s.

Around 79 percent of homes in Maine are located within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), providing unique challenges for structural and wildland firefighters. Homes and camps in the Unorganized Territory (UT) and other rural areas face additional challenges with longer response times and fewer nearby firefighting resources than in urban areas. The MFS is the sole fire suppression agency in many parts of the UT.

Maine Forest Rangers have conducted hundreds of wildfire risk assessments and have used this data to develop nearly eighty Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). Currently, there are [federal grants](#) available to assist communities with developing CWPPs.



Contact a Forest Ranger (see inside) to learn more about creating a CWPP for your community.



Maine Forest Service (MFS) Forest Protection Division

The Division's mission is to protect Maine's forest resources and homes from wildfire, respond to disasters and emergencies, and to enhance the safe, sound, and responsible management of the forest for this and future generations.

Phone: (207) 287-2791

Email: maine.forestrangers@maine.gov

Web: maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_protection/



Maine Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC)

The LUPC serves as the planning, zoning, and permitting authority for the unorganized areas of the State, including townships, most plantations, and some towns, a service area of more than 10.4 million acres.

Phone: (207) 287-2631

Email: LUPC@maine.gov

Web: maine.gov/dacf/lupc/



Wildfires in Maine:
Are you ready?





What is defensible space?

Defensible space is an area around a building where vegetation and other fuels are reduced to slow the spread of wildfire and limit the risk of building ignition.

Why is the defensible space important?

Defensible space reduces the risk of a structure being ignited by sparks, burning debris, or radiant heat. It also slows the spread of wildfire and reduces fire intensity. This allows more time for firefighters to respond, reducing risks to human, animals, and property. It is the landowner's responsibility to prepare their property and reduce fire risk prior to a wildfire.

Does this mean that I can't have landscaping near my home?

No, isolated patches of vegetation may be planted or retained near a home or camp, provided they are well-maintained, pruned, and watered.

What can I do to reduce my wildfire risk?

- Do not stack firewood against your home or camp. Place woodsheds or wood piles at least 30 feet away.
- Keep roofs and gutters clear of leaves, needles, seeds, and other debris.
- Keep 100 feet of garden hose attached to an outside faucet (if water is available).
- Trim tree branches that overhang roofs.
- Prune vegetation along your driveway to maintain at least 12 feet of horizontal and 14 feet of vertical clearance.
- Keep vegetation within 30 feet of your home or camp pruned and watered. Clear any accumulated dead vegetation. If planting, use plants from the MFS [list of fire-resistant plant species](#).
- Thin and prune trees between 30 and 100 feet from your home or camp.
- Check with local fire officials before having a campfire on your property. Always keep your fire "small, not tall" and make sure it's completely out before leaving the area.

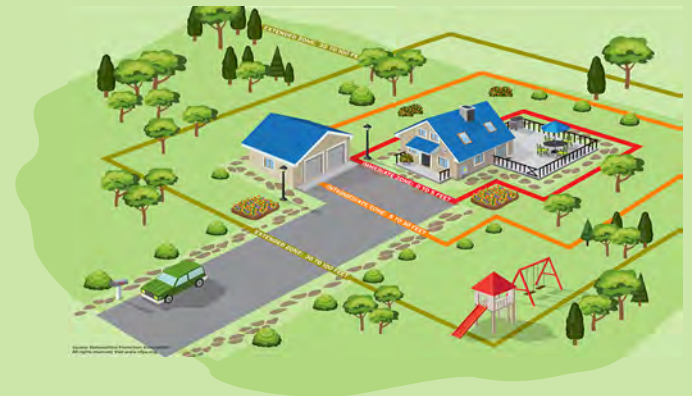
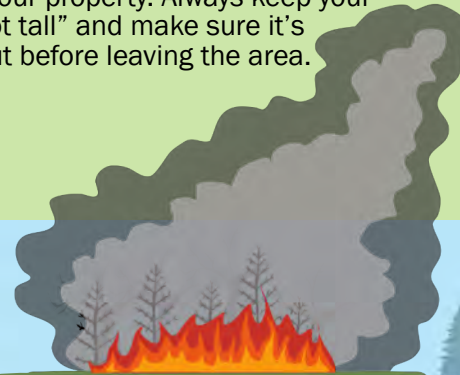


Image: lines showing defensible space zones of 0 to 5 feet, 5 to 30 feet, and 30 to 100 feet.

Source: National Fire Protection Association

Where can I learn more?

- Visit maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_protection/ to learn more about reducing wildfire risk. You can also use this website to contact your local Forest Ranger, who may be able to conduct a free wildfire risk assessment.
- You can monitor daily fire danger rating by visiting mainefireweather.org after 9 a.m. each day. Obtain a burn permit from maineburnpermit.com before burning brush.
- If you live in the UT, visit maine.gov/dacf/lupc to learn more about LUPC requirements and to contact your local LUPC representative.



Check and comply with relevant state and local requirements before removing vegetation, especially in the shoreland zone. Respect property boundaries. Do not remove vegetation without landowner permission.

