

Summary of Proposed Wildfire Risk Reduction Best Management Practices

Background

King County Ordinance 15051, Sec. 238 directs the King County fire marshal to develop best management practices to reduce the hazards of wildfire at the urban-wildland interface. Through the summer and fall of 2005, the King County Fire Marshal convened meetings with representatives from local fire districts and others to develop the best management practices.

Summary of Proposed Rule Regarding Wildfire Risk Reduction Best Management Practices

Adopts best management practices for wildfire risk reduction. The best management practices include:

- **Evaluation** of a property's vulnerability to wildfire based on availability of fuels, weather, and terrain
- **Hazard assessment** based on vulnerability, fire fighter access, and local fire fighting preparedness and capability
- **Risk reduction practices** such as:
 - Using fire resistant construction for roofs and building exteriors
 - Maintaining a **survivable space** of 30 feet around homes
 - **Spacing trees and eliminating ladder fuels** within 50 feet of homes to reduce fire intensity and reduce risk of spreading to the tree canopy
 - Within 100 feet of a home, **remove highly flammable vegetation** by reducing accumulations of fine and medium size dead woody debris
 - **Maintaining healthy forest** conditions in all other forested areas

Permits for fire hazard reduction are required under some circumstances:

- Unless removal of native vegetation is required, a permit is **not** required to maintain the defensible space surrounding a residence if the practices outlined in Fire Safety Tips for Rural Homeowners are followed.
- If native vegetation must be removed to create a defensible space, a **free fire hazard reduction permit** is required.
- Permits to clear native vegetation outside of the defensible space may be required, depending on the scope of the proposed work.

Community Wildfire Protection Planning is encouraged as a way to better protect against wildfire hazards in an entire community.

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