



DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Defensible space is the safe, workable distance between the structure and the fuels surrounding it. More space is needed as fuels get thicker, taller, and more combustible, and as slope gets steeper. A minimum distance of 30 feet is required and gives the firefighter a chance to succeed. 100 feet is optimum.

LCES CHECKLIST

- Lookouts
- Communications
- Escape Routes
- Safety Zones

- Fire not scouted and sized up.
- In country not seen in daylight.
- Safety zones and escape routes not identified.
- Unfamiliar with weather and local factors influencing fire behavior.
- Uninformed on strategy, tactics, and hazards.
- Instructions and assignments not clear.
- No communications link with crew members/supervisor.
- Constructing fireline without a safe anchor point.
- Building fireline downhill with fire below.
- Weather is getting hotter and drier.
- Wind increases and/ or changes direction.
- Getting frequent spot fires across the fireline.
- Terrain and fuels make escape to safety zones difficult.
- Taking a nap near the fireline.
- Attempting a frontal assault on a fire.
- Unburned fuel between you and the fire.
- Cannot see the main fire, not in contact with someone who can.
- On a hillside where rolling material can ignite fuel below.



SIZE-UP

Your primary considerations as you arrive at the fire include fire fighter safety, threat to life, potential fire behavior, access, the threat to structures and improved property, and water supply.

Observe:

- Fire History—what have fires in this area done before?
- Weather conditions—temperature, relative humidity, and wind speed and direction. Ask for an up-to-date forecast.
- Fuels—Heavy/light, loading, arrangement, etc.
- Topography—ridges, man-made or natural barriers.
- Fire Behavior—Spotting, crowning, and rate of spread
- Fire Brands—A primary threat, how many brands are there?
- Number of Structures Being Threatened—Density, roofing, siding, clearance, and arrangements.
- Access—Narrow roads, dead ends, bridges and clearance
- Water sources—Hydrants, swimming pools, ponds, and rivers
- Evacuation—Will you have to evacuate people or animals? If the residents are going to stay, turn them into an asset. Identify safety zones.
- Special Hazards—Hazardous materials, high-voltage lines and above-ground fuel storage tanks.