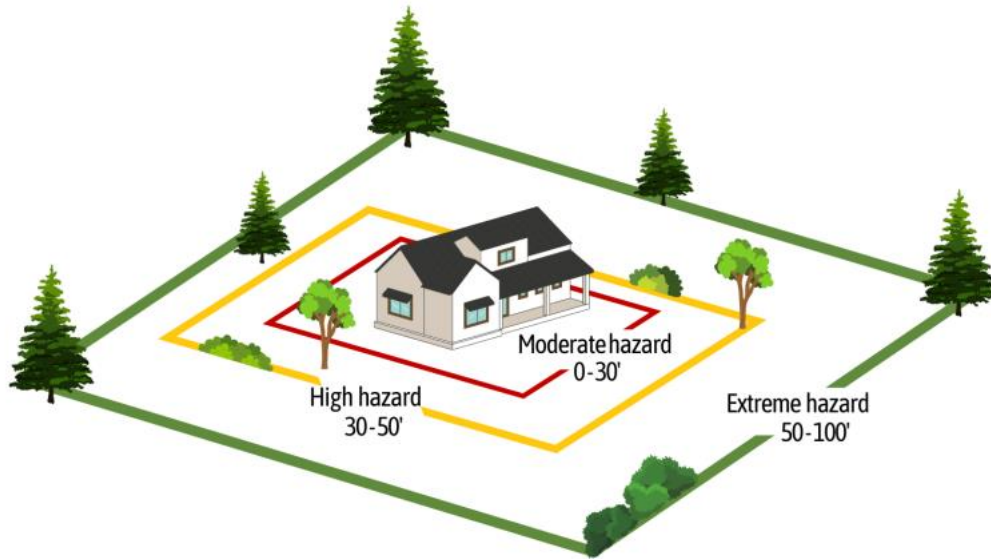




Understanding WUI Defensible Space

Determining Conforming vs. Non-Conforming



With the state adoption of the Wildland-Urban Interface Code (WUIC) on July 1, 2023, landowners are now required to meet defensible space minimums and/or ignition-resistant building materials when developing on the island.

The class of ignition-resistant (IR) materials necessary is based on fire hazard severity level and vegetation on site (defensible space). Once you've defined your fire hazard level (moderate, high, or extreme) the chart below can be used to determine the distance of defensible space needed to be considered conforming.

WUIC Table 603.2 Required Defensible Space	
Wildland Urban Interface Area	Fuel Modification Distance
Moderate Hazard	30 ft
High Hazard	50 ft
Extreme Hazard	100 ft

In some areas, it may be difficult for landowners to obtain conforming defensible space due to environmental regulations or parcel size. A site can have non-conforming defensible space but will require a higher class of ignition-resistant building materials as a result.

Conforming defensible space looks like:

- Trees where horizontal distance between crowns, crown to structures, and crowns to electrical facilities is not less than 10 ft
- Ornamental plantings and groundcovers that don't have a means to transmit fire from native growth to structures
- Firewood and combustible materials stored 20 ft or more from structures and trees
- Reduced fuel ladders through pruning tree canopies up 6 ft
- Removal of buildup of dead leaves and other dried vegetation near structures and chimneys

What IR Class is needed based on my defensible space?

WUIC Table 503.1 Ignition-resistant Construction

Defensible Space	Fire Hazard Severity		
	Moderate Hazard	High Hazard	Extreme Hazard
Nonconforming	IR 2	IR 1	IR 1 N.C.
Conforming	IR 3	IR 2	IR 1
1.5 x Conforming	Not required	IR 3	IR 2

Resources

Bainbridge Island Fire Department: <https://www.bifd.org/>

WUIC: <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IWUIC2021P2?examId=>

WUIC state amendments: <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=51-54A>

Bainbridge Island Municipal Code: <https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Bainbridgeland/#!/Bainbridgeland16/>

[Bainbridgeland16.html](https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Bainbridgeland16/Bainbridgeland16.html)

