

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

FIREBREAK

(Feet)

CODE 394

DEFINITION

A strip of bare land or vegetation that retards fire.

PURPOSES

- To prevent the spread of wildfire.
- To control prescribed burns.
- To protect woody plantings including conservation buffer practices.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

All land uses where protection from wildfire is needed or prescribed burning is applied.

CRITERIA

Firebreaks may be temporary or permanent and shall consist of fire-resistant vegetation, non-flammable materials, bare ground, or a combination of these.

Firebreaks will be of sufficient width and length to contain the fire.

Firebreaks shall be located to minimize risk to the resources being protected.

Plant species selected for vegetated firebreaks will be noninvasive, comprised of attributes making them capable of retarding fire, and easy to maintain.

Erosion control measures shall prevent sediment from leaving the site.

Comply with applicable laws and regulations.

CONSIDERATIONS

Use barriers such as streams, lakes, ponds, rock cliffs, roads, field borders, skidtrails,

landings, drainage canals, railroads, utility right-of-ways, cultivated land, or other areas such as existing firebreaks.

Locate firebreaks on the contour where possible to minimize risk of soil erosion.

Attempt to locate firebreaks near ridge crests and valley bottoms. If winds are predictable, firebreaks should be located perpendicular to the wind and on the windward side of the area to be protected.

Select plant species that provide wildlife habitat if they are capable of providing a satisfactory firebreak.

Design and layout should include multiple uses.

Consider cultural resources when planning this practice. This practice may adversely affect cultural resources and should comply with General Manual Title 420, Part 401, during planning, prior to installation, and during maintenance.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan and the burn plan or other acceptable documentation.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Mow or graze vegetative firebreaks to avoid a build-up of excess litter and to control weeds.

Inspect all firebreaks for woody materials such as dead limbs or blown down trees and remove them from the firebreak.

Inspect firebreaks annually and rework bare ground firebreaks as necessary to keep them clear of flammable vegetation.

Repair erosion control measures as necessary to ensure proper function.

Access by vehicles or people will be controlled to prevent damage to the firebreak.

Bare ground firebreaks, which are no longer needed, will be stabilized structurally and/or vegetatively.

Avoid creating bare ground firebreaks on extreme slopes.