

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS**

FIREBREAK

1. Scope

This work will consist of preparing a strip of bare land or vegetation that retards fire. This specification (including references made within to Conservation Practice Standards and Technical Notes) and the Kansas Grass Seeding Field Sheet (Form KS-ECS-4) shall be used to design the practice. Practice application will be documented on the Kansas Grass Seeding Field Sheet (Form KS-ECS-4), and narrative statements in the conservation and or burn plans.

2. Design

In planning firebreak location, make maximum use of natural barriers such as roads, trails, streams, and rock escarpments.

Firebreaks should be installed shortly before the fire hazard season. Normally this occurs in the late fall after hard frosts.

3. Firebreak Types

Backfiring (see Conservation Practice Standard 338, Prescribed Burning).

- Denude strips or corridors by backfiring to provide a barrier along fire hazard areas.
- Effective control normally is provided by strips 30 to 80 feet in width, depending on the height and volume of vegetation.
- Proper equipment should be on hand before beginning this operation. Mobile fire fighting units, such as livestock sprayers, are essential to keep the backfire in check and prevent inadvertent pasture burning.

Mechanical construction.

- Remove inflammable materials from strips along the edge of the danger area by using a blade or plow.
- Strips should be 12 feet or more in width and located to reduce erosion hazards to a minimum by going around sand dunes and circling steep areas on the contour.
- This method may be used in combination with backfiring.

Grazed border strips.

- Install border strips of cool season grasses adjacent to area to be protected.
- Strips should be at least 20 feet or more in width.
- Prepare seedbed and seed smooth brome or tall fescue according to Conservation Practice Standard 512, Pasture and Hayland Planting.
- Fertilize each fall to encourage close grazing for effective use as firebreak.
- The method is applicable only in areas where smooth brome and tall fescue are approved for use. See Kansas Field Office Technical Guide, Section II, Pasture and Hayland Interpretations.