

## Firebreak

### Virginia Conservation Practice Job Sheet

394



#### Definition

A permanent or temporary strip of bare or vegetated land planned to retard fire.

#### 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 expected fire.

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

Erosion control measures shall be installed to prevent sediment from leaving the site.

Existing forest roads or trails can be effective firebreaks if properly maintained. Abandoned roads or trails should be renovated and erosion should be controlled. Expose mineral soil where needed prior to the critical fire season.

Debris and other flammable materials should be removed.

Plowed, disked, or bladed firebreaks should be constructed to expose mineral soil. Depending upon the terrain and character of vegetation to be removed; fire line plows, heavy bush and bog disks, or farm equipment should be utilized.

Vegetated firebreaks shall be a minimum of 30 feet wide adjoining forestland, and 50 feet wide within forests. The land should be prepared and seeded with an adapted grass and/or an adapted legume. Use cool season forages only.

Plant species selected for vegetated firebreaks will be noninvasive and capable of retarding fire. Select species from the Virginia Plant Establishment Guide.

**NOTE: This summary does not address all requirements and considerations in the VA Firebreak Conservation Practice Standard (VA-394). Consult the Conservation Practice Standard for further details.**

Producer \_\_\_\_\_ Farm # \_\_\_\_\_ Tract # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Field Office \_\_\_\_\_ Contract # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Producer's Purpose

- Reduce the spread of wildfire.
- Contain prescribed burns

### Practice Specifications

Type of firebreak planned  Road  Disked/ Plowed  Burned\*  Vegetated

- Temporary  Permanent

Width:	Erosion Control required:		
Length:			
Number and distance between water breaks (if required):			
Vegetation Specifications:			
Seedbed preparation:			
Species	1.	2.	3.
Rate			
Lime			
Fertilizer			
For Disked/ Plowed firebreaks: Expose mineral soil with fire line plows			

\* The burned firebreak must be established following a burn plan written by a Virginia Department of Forestry Certified Burn Manager. A burning permit must be obtained from the local Forest Ranger or Fire Warden, representing the Virginia Department of Forestry

### Operation and Maintenance

#### 1) Temporary Disked/Plowed Fire breaks

- A. Create the firebreak by disking or plowing. Expose mineral soil with fire line plows, heavy bush and bog disks, or farm plows and disks or blades depending upon the terrain and character of vegetation to be removed immediately prior to the burn. The break should be wide enough to retard a ground fire
- B. Immediately after the burn, vegetate the disturbed soil as to the specifications provided.

**2) Permanent Firebreaks**

- A. Forest Roads -- Existing or newly constructed forest roads or trails can be effective firebreaks if properly maintained.
  - i. Maintain the forest road to a minimum width of ten feet
  - ii. Occasionally disk the road to expose mineral soil.
  - iii. Remove woody debris from road surface
  - iv. Maintain erosion control measures, ditches, water breaks, and culverts in proper working order
  - v. Mow roadway prior to the critical fire season
- B. Burned Firebreaks
  - i. Burn as necessary to eliminate flammable material and insure proper functioning condition.
  - ii. Schedule mowing, and other renovation activities to avoid the nesting season (April 15 through Aug 15)
- C. Vegetative Firebreaks
  - i. Establish vegetation according to the specifications provided.
  - ii. Fertilize and manage to maintain ground cover and proper mixture of grasses and legumes.
  - iii. Mow vegetative breaks to avoid a buildup of excess litter, weeds and woody vegetation.
  - iv. Protect from grazing
  - v. Schedule mowing, and other renovation activities to avoid the nesting season (April 15 through Aug 15)
  - vi. Breaks will need periodic applications of lime, fertilizer and seed to maintain vigor
  - vii. Annually inspect the break and remove wood debris, perform maintenance on drainage, water bars and erosion control measures

**Planner Certification**

The Firebreak practice planned in this job sheet fulfills minimum requirements of Virginia NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 394.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Certification of Practice Completion**

The Firebreak practice planned in this job sheet has been completed and maintained according to Virginia NRCS specifications (indicate in Practice Specifications any changes to the planned activities and acreage).

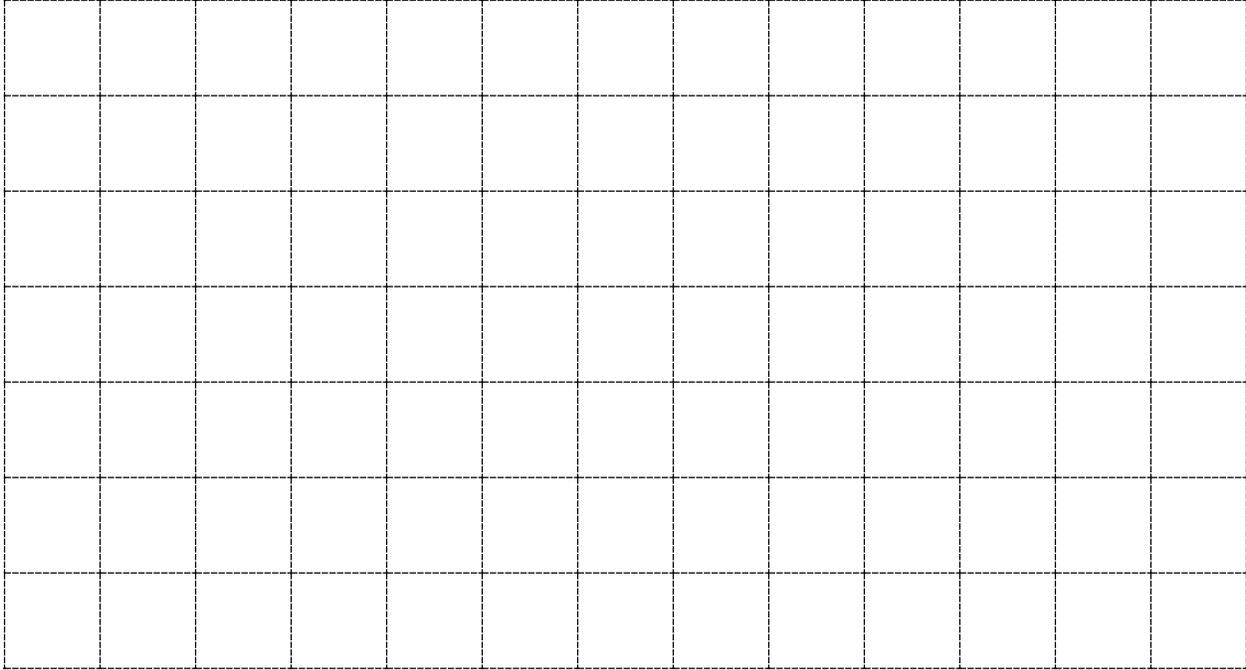
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If needed, an aerial view or a side view of the practice can be shown below. Other relevant information, complementary practices and measures, and additional specifications may be included.

Scale 1"= \_\_\_\_\_ ft. (NA indicates sketch not to scale: grid size=1/2" by 1/2")



**Additional Specifications and Notes:**


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