

1. State Building Code to be Amended:

- International Building Code
- ICC ANSI A117.1 Accessibility Code
- International Existing Building Code
- International Residential Code

- International Fire Code
- Uniform Plumbing Code

- International Mechanical Code
- International Fuel Gas Code
- NFPA 54 National Fuel Gas Code
- NFPA 58 Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code

- Wildland Urban Interface Code

For the Washington State Energy Code, please see specialized [energy code forms](#)

Section(s):

2021 IWUIC Section 603

Title:

Defensible Space

2. Proponent Name (Specific local government, organization or individual):

Proponent: State Building Code Council

Title:

Date: November 08, 2023

3. Designated Contact Person:

Name: Dustin Curb

Title: State Building Code Council Staff: Code Specialist

Address: 1500 Jefferson St SE, Olympia, WA 98501

Office Phone: ()

Cell: (360) 972-4158

E-Mail address: dustin.curb@des.wa.gov

4. Proposed Code Amendment. Reproduce the section to be amended by underlining all added language, striking through all deleted language. Insert new sections in the appropriate place in the code in order to continue the established numbering system of the code. If more than one section is proposed for amendment or more than one page is needed for reproducing the affected section of the code, additional pages may be attached.

Clearly state if the proposal modifies an existing amendment or if a new amendment is needed. If the proposal modifies an **existing amendment**, show the modifications to the existing amendment by underlining all added language and striking through all deleted language. If a new amendment is needed, show the modifications to the **model code** by underlining all added language and striking through all deleted language.

Code(s) 2021 WA IWUIC and Amendments **Section(s)** 603

Enforceable code language must be used.

Amend section to read as follows: See Attachment A, creating new State wide amendment to the 2021 IWUIC Section 603

5. Briefly explain your proposed amendment, including the purpose, benefits and problems addressed. Specifically note any impacts or benefits to business, and specify construction types, industries and services that would be affected. Finally, please note any potential impact on enforcement such as special reporting requirements or additional inspections required.

This amendment is needed to address concerns regarding tree removal required by the IWUIC as amended in WA. Currently the code requires too many trees to be removed across WA. This modification will reduce the number of trees removed while still encouraging a managed defensible space around structures. It also clarifies the intent to have two options of conformance with Section 603.2.

6. Specify what criteria this proposal meets. You may select more than one.

- The amendment is needed to address a critical life/safety need.
- The amendment clarifies the intent or application of the code.
- The amendment is needed to address a specific state policy or statute.
- The amendment is needed for consistency with state or federal regulations.
- The amendment is needed to address a unique character of the state.
- The amendment corrects errors and omissions.

7. Is there an economic impact: Yes No

If no, state reason:

There is already a requirement for defensible space in the IWUIC. This modification only clarifies application and addresses environmental concerns.

If yes, provide economic impact, costs and benefits as noted below in items a – f.

- a. **Life Cycle Cost.** Use the OFM Life Cycle Cost [Analysis tool](#) to estimate the life cycle cost of the proposal using one or more typical examples. Reference these [Instructions](#); use these [Inputs](#). Webinars on the tool can be found [Here](#) and [Here](#)). If the tool is used, submit a copy of the excel file with your proposal submission. If preferred, you may submit an alternate life cycle cost analysis.
- b. **Construction Cost.** Provide your best estimate of the construction cost (or cost savings) of your code change proposal.
- c. **Code Enforcement.** List any code enforcement time for additional plan review or inspections that your proposal will require, in hours per permit application:
Additional plan review and enforcement will not be required for this modification.
- d. **Small Business Impact.** Describe economic impacts to small businesses:
Small businesses may see an increase in work for land clearing activities. Other businesses will not be affected
- e. **Housing Affordability.** Describe economic impacts on housing affordability:
With an increase in
- f. **Other.** Describe other qualitative cost and benefits to owners, to occupants, to the public, to the environment, and to other stakeholders that have not yet been discussed:

Please send your completed proposal to: sbcc@des.wa.gov

All questions must be answered to be considered complete. Incomplete proposals will not be accepted.

Attachment A

SECTION 603 DEFENSIBLE SPACE

603.1 Objective. Provisions of this section are intended to modify the fuel load in areas adjacent to structures to create a defensible space.

Option 1

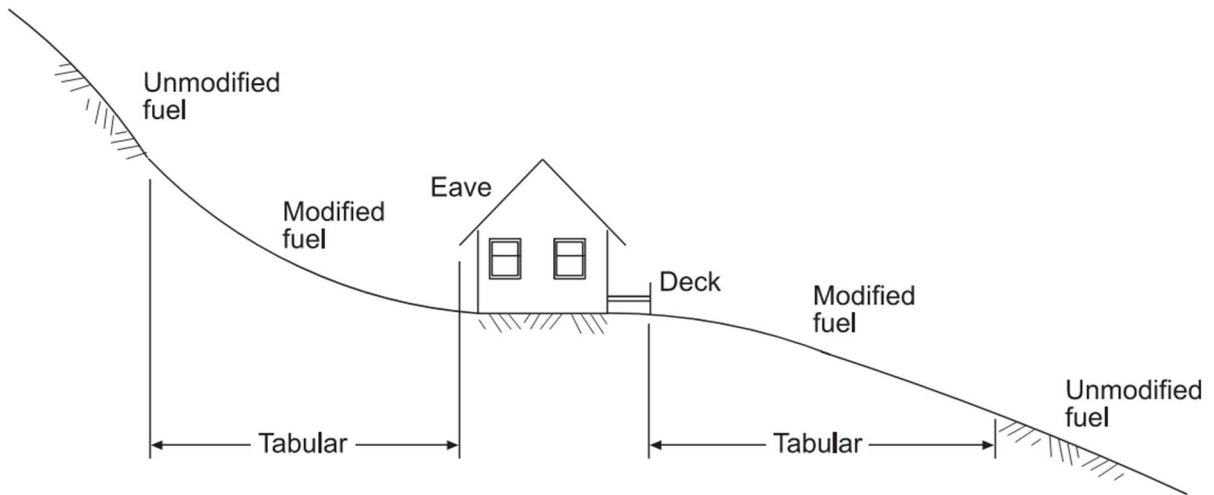
(NEW) 603.2 Fuel modification. ~~Where B~~ buildings or structures ~~are~~, constructed in compliance with the conforming defensible space category of Table 503.1, ~~they~~ shall comply with the fuel modification distances contained in Table 603.2. ~~Where buildings or structures are constructed in compliance with Sections 501.4 through 501.8 For all other purposes~~ the fuel modification distance shall be not less than 30 feet (9144 mm) or to the lot line, whichever is less. Fuel Modification Distances specified in Table 603.2 shall be measured on a horizontal plane from the perimeter or projection of the building or structure as shown in Figure 603.2. Distances specified in Table 603.2 are allowed to be increased by the code official because of a site-specific analysis based on local conditions and the fire protection plan.

Option 2

(NEW) 603.2 Fuel modification. Buildings or structures, constructed in compliance with the conforming defensible space category of Table 503.1, shall comply with the fuel modification distances contained in Table 603.2. For all other purposes the fuel modification distance shall be not less than 30 feet (9144 mm) or to the lot line, whichever is less. Distances specified in Table 603.2 shall be measured on a horizontal plane from the perimeter or projection of the building or structure as shown in Figure 603.2. Distances specified in Table 603.2 are allowed to be increased by the code official because of a site-specific analysis based on local conditions and the fire protection plan.

EXCEPTION: Structures constructed in compliance with the provisions of Section 501.4 through 501.8.

603.2.1 Responsible party. Persons owning, leasing, controlling, operating or maintaining buildings or structures requiring defensible spaces are responsible for modifying or removing nonfire-resistive vegetation on the property owned, leased or controlled by said person.



**FIGURE 603.2
MEASUREMENTS OF FUEL MODIFICATION DISTANCE**

**(NEW)
(TABLE 603.2**

CONFORMING REQUIRED DEFENSIBLE SPACE FOR TABLE 503.1

Wildland_Urban Interface Area	Fuel modification Distance (feet)^a
Moderate Hazard	30
High Hazard	50
Extreme Hazard	100

For SI: 1 foot = 304.8 mm.

a. Distances are allowed to be increased due to site-specific analysis based on local conditions and the fire protection plan.

(NEW) 603.2.2 Trees. Trees are allowed within the defensible space, provided that the horizontal distance between ~~crowns of adjacent trees and~~ crowns of trees and structures, or overhead electrical facilities ~~or unmodified fuel~~ is not less than 10 feet (3048 mm).

(NEW) 603.2.3 Ground cover. Deadwood and litter shall be regularly removed from mature trees to a height of 6 feet (1828 mm). Where ornamental vegetative fuels or cultivated ground cover, such as green grass, ivy, succulents or similar plants are used as ground cover, they are allowed to be within the designated defensible space, provided that they do not form a means of transmitting fire from the native growth to any structure.

SECTION 604

MAINTENANCE OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE

604.1 General. Defensible spaces required by Section 603 shall be maintained in accordance with Section 604.

604.2 Modified area. Nonfire-resistive vegetation or growth shall be kept clear of buildings or structures, in accordance with Section 603, in such a manner as to provide a clear area for fire suppression operations.

604.3 Responsibility. Persons owning, leasing, controlling, operating or maintaining buildings or structures are responsible for maintenance of defensible spaces. Maintenance of the defensible space shall include modifying or removing nonfire-resistive vegetation and keeping leaves, needles and other dead vegetative material regularly removed from roofs of buildings and structures.

604.4 Trees. Tree crowns extending to within 10 feet (3048 mm) of any structure shall be pruned to maintain a minimum horizontal clearance of 10 feet (3048 mm). Tree crowns within the defensible space shall be pruned to remove limbs located less than 6 feet (1829 mm) above the ground surface adjacent to the trees.

604.4.1 Chimney clearance. Portions of tree crowns that extend to within 10 feet (3048 mm) of the outlet of a chimney shall be pruned to maintain a minimum horizontal clearance of 10 feet (3048 mm).

604.4.2 Deadwood removed. Deadwood and litter shall be regularly removed from trees.