

# MOSIER FIRE DISTRICT

Fire name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

## STRUCTURAL TRIAGE

Address or description:

Contact:

		Y	/	N
<b>DRIVEWAY:</b>	Too narrow or too steep to back in – or -	—		—
	Branches overhanging driveway – or -	—		—
	Down or dead fuels line driveway	—		—
<b>ROOF:</b>	Already involved in fire	—		—

### IF YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, STOP! WRITE IT OFF!

		Y	/	N
<b>DRIVEWAY:</b>	Dead end or longer than 200 feet	—		—
<b>ROOF:</b>	Combustible (asphalt shingles or wood)	—		—
<b>ROOF:</b>	Wood shakes	—		—
<b>TREES:</b>	Overhanging roof	—		—
<b>TREES/BRUSH/GRASS:</b>	Not thinned/mowed w/in 30 ft of structure	—		—
<b>VEHICLES:</b>	Parked outside within 30 feet of structure	—		—
<b>SLOPE:</b>	> 20% anywhere w/in 30 feet of structure	—		—
<b>SLOPE:</b>	> 30% anywhere w/in 30 feet of structure	—		—
<b>DECK/STILT:</b>	Not enclosed underneath (to ground)	—		—
<b>POWERLINE:</b>	Overhead within 30 feet of structure	—		—

TOTAL: Number of YES checked \_\_\_\_\_

**0-2 DOESN'T NEED DEFENDING**  
**3-5 DEFEND AGGRESSIVELY**  
**6-7 DEFEND CAUTIOUSLY**  
**8-10 WRITE OFF!**

Write off sooner if wind speeds are over 30 mph

# MOSIER FIRE DISTRICT

## **STRUCTURAL TRIAGE**

During a wild fire, trained firefighters evaluate homes and outbuildings for defensibility, using this form, which comes from the Oregon State Fire Marshal.

We will personally visit each structure and go through the simple checklist above. Ideally we are doing this before the fire moves through, but it can be done even after the fire has reached the property. Depending on the number of items checked off, the fire department then has a very clear basis for grading the building into one of four categories:

1. no defense required (meaning the house is unlikely to be affected by the wild fire, and we may elect to send resources elsewhere),
2. defend aggressively,
3. defend cautiously, or
4. write off (meaning the structure cannot be defended safely, and we will not send firefighters to protect it).

The evaluation is called “triage”, from a French word meaning “to sort”. Triage is better known in the context of combat medicine, by which wounded troops are prioritized so that care is given first to those most in need and who are likely to survive only if treated with available resources.

This particular form derives from a National Fire Academy [paper](#) in 1994, led by a man who deserves recognition for saving countless lives: A. Kieth Brown, of Lake Dillon Fire Authority in Silverthorne, Colorado. Brown’s case studies and analysis of then-current literature identified the items on this checklist as the most reliable predictors of defensibility, both as a matter of fire affecting the home and as a matter of fire fighter safety. Fire fighter safety is why, for instance, the driveway figures prominently — an otherwise defensible structure might be written off if fire fighters could be overrun by fire on the way into or out of the property.

Mosier Fire District offers structural triage as a prevention tool, helping property owners to see the defensibility of their own buildings at any time during the year, while there is time to address deficiencies without the pressure of a fire bearing down. It is very helpful for us to work directly in this way, so that we learn your property ahead of time, and so questions and steps to make your property safer are communicated promptly and clearly. If we can visit most of the properties in our fire district on a five year rotation, we stand a chance of greatly improving the outcome of our next major wind-driven wild fire. If most homes in our district did not require defense, or were easily defended, everyone benefits immeasurably.

If you are interested in having the Fire Department visit and evaluate a property, please contact Chief Appleton at 541-478-3333, or [mosierfire@gmail.com](mailto:mosierfire@gmail.com)

We are also publishing our structural triage checklist in hopes that property owners and tenants will take a few moments to grade their own structures. This allows you to put yourself in our boots, seeing your home or business the way we do.