

**BMP 12**

# Fire Lines and Lanes

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## Purpose

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The purpose for constructing and maintaining fire lines and fire lanes is to restrict and control wildfire or to manage areas to be treated with prescribed burning in such a way as to minimize soil erosion and protect nearby bodies of water from sedimentation.

## Definitions

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A **fire line** is a line of varying width constructed through the litter on the forest floor down to mineral soil to control a fire. A **fire lane** is also constructed through the litter on the forest floor to mineral soil and is a precautionary effort to protect an area from wildfire. The construction method can be by hand tools or by use of mechanized equipment. In all cases, it should be noted that a fire line will cause less damage to water quality than the damage caused by a wildfire.

## Specifications

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### Layout and Construction

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Fire lanes constructed for fire protection and fire lines constructed to control an actual fire should be planned and installed to cause minimum soil disturbance and be no larger than actually needed to control a fire.

- **Avoid constructing fire lines and lanes at right angles to land contour**, except to control activity on a wildfire.
- **Minimize the grade** of fire control lines and lanes around slopes, except to control activity on a wildfire.
- **Do not construct the fire line deeper or wider than necessary** to control spread of a fire.

### Drainage

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**Plan and install water bars** as the fire line is being constructed or following control activity on a wildfire. Intervals between water bars are identical to those needed for skid trails. See Table 1-2 for recommended distances between water bars for retirement of skid trails.

**On sloping or steep land**, do not locate a fire line or lane so drainage is directed into a stream or sinkhole. Turn the line approximately 15 to 20 feet from the drainage so that the drainage is parallel to it. The final 15 to 20 feet should be lightly scraped of leaves and limbs leaving the mineral soil as undisturbed as possible. Use of foam retardant is also recommended in these areas. It is important that this section of line be sufficient to halt the spread of a fire.

## **Revegetation**

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Where there is a potential soil erosion problem on fire lines and lanes that are meant to be long lasting, permanent vegetation should be established and maintained (see BMP No. 2).

### **Summary: AWQA Minimum Requirements for BMP No. 12**

The AWQA plan does not contain this BMP.