



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FIRE

in cooperation with CAL FIRE

NEWS RELEASE

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CAL FIRE Asks Residents to Complete a Defensible Space & Home Hardening Self-Assessment

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Defensible space and home hardening are imperative to protecting communities from catastrophic wildfires. California residents in high-risk areas must do their part to protect their communities by creating and maintaining defensible space around their homes and structures.

With COVID-19 restrictions limiting CAL FIRE's ability to conduct annual defensible space inspections this year, property owners are urged to conduct a Defensible Space Self-Assessment.

Over the next few weeks, California property owners in wildland-urban-interface communities will receive a flyer with information on accessing the online Defensible Space Self-Assessment. The flyer also highlights steps for creating defensible space around homes and buildings, and ways to harden your home to be more wildfire resistant. The [self-assessment survey](#) is easy to use and should only take a short time to complete.

"This self-assessment helps our inspectors comply with social distancing recommendations while still collecting vital information," said Chief Thom Porter, CAL FIRE Director. "We urge you to participate in the survey and do your part to protect your community by creating defensible space and hardening your home to increase its chances of surviving a wildfire.

"It only takes one flying ember to bring wildfire to your home," emphasized Porter. "Fire can spread from house to house, especially in more densely populated areas, due to flying embers. Direct flames, as well as radiant heat from burning plants or structures can also catch a home on fire. This is why it is so important to create defensible space and harden homes – it's a community's best fighting chance against wildfire."

[Defensible Space](#) consists of two zones extending 100 feet from any home or structure cleared of dead trees, brush and vegetation. Maintenance of these two zones creates a buffer to slow or stop the spread of wildfire.

[Home Hardening](#) is preparing your home to increase its chance of surviving a wildfire. Upgrades of fire-ignition-resistant materials to roofs, eaves, vents, siding, windows, decks, fences and more can help prevent wildfire from destroying the house. Visit readyforwildfire.org for more information.

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WHERE ARE YOU WITH YOUR DEFENSIBLE SPACE?



PLEASE PARTICIPATE— DEFENSIBLE SPACE SELF-ASSESSMENT

WILDFIRE RISK IS INCREASING AND WITH STAY-AT-HOME ORDERS DUE TO COVID-19, TAKE TIME TO MAINTAIN DEFENSIBLE SPACE AROUND YOUR HOME.

Help our inspectors comply with social distancing by letting us know how you are progressing with your Defensible Space. Please complete our Defensible Space Self-Assessment. To access, scan the QR code or visit www.fire.ca.gov/Dspace.

TAKE THE SELF-ASSESSMENT
HERE:



These are the defensible space requirements for each property owner:

Zone 1 / Within 30 feet of all structures or to the property line (Refer to illustration below):

- A. Remove all branches within 10 feet of any chimney or stovepipe outlet.
- B. Remove leaves, needles or other vegetation on roofs, gutters, decks, porches, stairways, etc.
- C. Remove all dead and dying trees, branches and shrubs, or other plants adjacent to or overhanging buildings.
- D. Remove all dead and dying grass, plants, shrubs, trees, branches, leaves, weeds and needles.
- E. Remove or separate live flammable ground cover and shrubs.
- F. Remove flammable vegetation and items that could catch fire which are adjacent to, or below, combustible decks, balconies, and stairs.
- G. Relocate exposed wood piles outside of Zone 1 unless completely covered in a fire-resistant material.

Zone 2 / Within 30–100 feet of all structures or to the property line (Refer to illustration below):

- H. Cut annual grasses and forbs down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- I. Remove fuels in accordance with the Fuel Separation or Continuous Tree Canopy guidelines (see back).
- J. All exposed woodpiles must have a minimum of 10 feet clearance, down to bare mineral soil, in all directions.
- K. Dead and dying woody surface fuels and aerial fuels shall be removed. Loose surface litter, normally consisting of fallen leaves or needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches, shall be permitted to a maximum depth of 3 inches.

All Zones / Within 100 feet of all structures or to the property line (Refer to illustration below):

- L. Logs or stumps embedded in the soil must be removed or isolated from other vegetation.

Other Requirements:

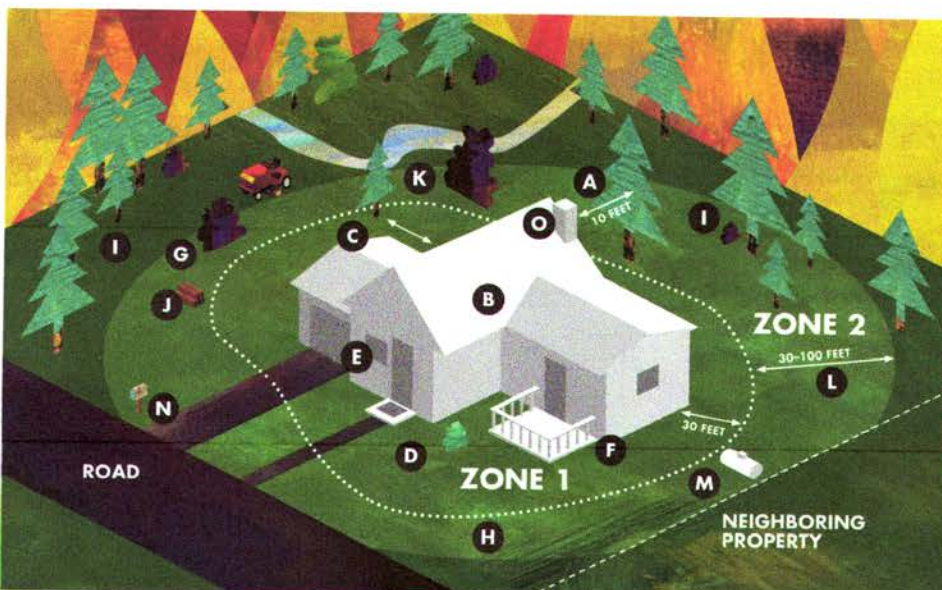
- M. Outbuildings and Liquid Propane Gas (LPG) storage tanks shall have 10 feet of clearance to bare mineral soil and no flammable vegetation for an additional 10 feet around their exterior.
- N. Address numbers shall be displayed in contrasting colors (4" min. size) and readable from the street or access road.
- O. Equip chimney or stovepipe openings with a metal screen having openings between 3/8 inch and 1/2 inch.

KNOW THE LAW BE FIRE SMART

100 feet of Defensible Space is required under the Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291. California Building Code Chapter 7A requires certain construction materials and methods for homes in wildland areas. Be sure to contact your local fire department for additional requirements to ensure your home is compliant with the law.

READYFORWILDFIRE.ORG/THELAW

PRC § 4119. The department, or its duly authorized agent, shall enforce the state forest and fire laws. The department may inspect all properties, except the interior of dwellings, subject to the state forest and fire laws, for the purpose of ascertaining compliance with such laws.



CREATE DEFENSIBLE SPACE. DO YOUR PART TO PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY.



THREE WAYS WILDFIRE CAN IGNITE YOUR HOME

Direct Flames from a wildfire or a burning neighboring home can spread to your home. In turn, flames from your house can ignite a fire on a neighboring house. The more populated the area, the greater the risk of fire spreading from house to house.

Radiant Heat from burning plants or structures can be hot enough to ignite a house without direct flame contact. Heat from one burning home can ignite a home next door, spreading from house to house. Radiant heat can break windows allowing embers to enter the home.

Flying Embers from a wildfire, which may be over a mile away, can directly ignite your home and surrounding vegetation and materials. Embers can enter a home through gaps and burn it from the inside out. Embers are responsible for the destruction of most homes during a wildfire.

HARDENING YOUR HOME

Priority list:

- **Roof:** Inspect and maintain. Plug gaps and remove debris. Replace with a Class A fire-rated roof.
- **Vents:** Cover and protect all openings with 1/16" - 1/8" metal mesh that resist embers and flames.
- **Adjacent Fuels:** Remove wood bark/mulch and other combustibles within 5' of your house.
- **Gutters:** Screen or enclose. Keep free of debris.
- **Eaves and Soffits:** Plug or caulk gaps. Enclose eaves if possible.
- **Windows:** Install dual-pane windows with one pane being tempered glass.
- **Exterior Walls:** Inspect all siding and plug or caulk gaps and joints.
- **Decks:** No combustibles under or next to decks. Limit combustibles on top of deck.
- **Patio Cover:** Consider using noncombustible or ignition-resistant materials within 5' of the house.
- **Fences:** Construct of noncombustible material within 5' of buildings.
- **Garage:** Install weather stripping to eliminate gaps around garage doors.
- **Driveways:** Ensure access to your home complies with local fire codes.
- **Water Supply:** Have multiple garden hoses long enough to reach all areas of your house.



ReadyforWildfire.org

DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Vertical Spacing

Eliminate opportunities for a vertical "fire ladder" by:

- Remove branches beneath large trees for a 6-foot minimum clearance.
- Create proper vertical spacing between shrubs and the lowest branches of trees by using the formula shown.



Horizontal Spacing

The spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees is crucial to reduce the spread of wildfire. The spacing needed is determined by the type and size of the shrubs and trees, as well as the slope of the land. For example, a property on a steep slope with larger plant life will require greater spacing between trees and shrubs than a level property that has small, sparse vegetation.

Fire-Safe Landscaping

Fire-safe landscaping isn't necessarily the same thing as a well-maintained yard. Fire-safe landscaping uses fire-resistant plants that are strategically planted to resist the spread of fire to your home.

Dead Tree Removal

If you have dead or dying trees on your property the entire tree needs to be removed to reduce wildfire risk. Visit ReadyforWildfire.org/dead-tree-removal to learn about permit requirements.

