



Fire Season 2020: Hazard Abatement Requirements

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The Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District is considered to be a very high fire hazard zone. With our Mediterranean climate, steep slopes and dense fuels, a wildfire can strike at any second. This flyer is intended to help residents with their 100 feet of defensible space. **Making the appropriate preparation *today* could help save lives and protect property from a wildfire *tomorrow*!**

As a property owner, you are responsible for reducing the fire risk around your home by adhering to the following requirements:

- **DEFENSIBLE SPACE AROUND STRUCTURES:** Create and maintain 100 feet of defensible space around all structures (including neighbor's) by removing dry grass, brush, and other flammable materials.
 - **(0-5 Feet)** Remove all combustibles from this zone including furniture, vegetation, and mulch and replant with minimal fire resistant vegetation not to exceed 18 inches in height. Keep roofs and gutters clear of combustible debris such as pine needles and leaf litter by cleaning as often as needed. Install non-combustible gutter screens as well. Studies have proven this zone to be the most important and vulnerable from flying embers.
 - **(5-50 Feet)** Only plant drought-tolerant, fire-resistive vegetation within 50 feet of all structures. Make sure new shrubs do not exceed 10 feet in height and trees do not exceed 30 feet in height. Irrigation is required in this zone. Prune existing trees back 10 feet from eaves, roof lines, chimneys, or outdoor barbecues. Overgrown trees play a significant role in structures lost during wildfires. Remove any dead vegetation as well.
 - **(50-100 Feet)** Cut dead weeds and remove any dead vegetation. Thin native vegetation to provide separation between shrubs or small groupings of shrubs that is equal to 3x the height of the shrub for flat areas, 4x the height for moderate slopes, and 6x the height for high-sloped areas. Limb up trees at least 6 feet above the ground. Remove dead palm fronds and eucalyptus debris.
- **ROADWAY, DRIVEWAY, & EASEMENT REQUIREMENTS:** Trees shall be limbed up along roadways to provide a vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches in height. Shrubs and bushes, shall not encroach into the roadway. Provide 20 feet of fuel modification on both sides of roadways, driveways, and easements along with repairing and filling any potholes or large cracks. This will ensure a safer escape route for residents and emergency response vehicles.
- **ORCHARDS, GROVES & VINEYARDS:** Remove combustible debris and vegetation, including dead or downed trees from all orchards, groves, and vineyards. Maintain a clear 10-foot wide firebreak down to bare mineral soil around the perimeter. Disc grasses and weeds in between rows to bare mineral soil as well.
- **EUCALYPTUS FORESTS & OAK WOODLANDS:** Remove all dead, dying, and diseased trees from the forest or woodland. This includes all trees and vegetation that have experienced decline from insects or disease. Limb up all trees so that there is at least 6 feet of separation from the lowest tree branch to the understory vegetation. Ideally, these trees should be removed the entire property, not just within defensible space.



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- **PALM FRONDS:** Remove all dead and dying palm fronds within 100 feet of a structure or 20 feet of a roadway. Palm fronds readily ignite create numerous flying embers in a wildfire. Remove fibrous tissues from the trunk and crown of palm trees along with leaf bases from trunks.
- **ORNAMENTAL GRASSES:** Grasses are a light, flashy fuel that should be planted 10 feet from any structure or

30 feet from a roadway. Maintain decorative grasses to 4 inches in height.

- **FIREWOOD STORAGE:** Neatly stack all firewood a minimum of 30 feet from any structure or property line as embers can easily ignite the firewood. Keep clear a 10 foot wide buffer free of vegetation around the perimeter of the firewood and 15 foot clearance from all tree branches.
- **ADDRESS REQUIREMENTS:** Post your county assigned address in contrasting color so it is visible from both sides of the street. Make sure the numbers are a minimum 4 inches in height with a minimum ½-inch brush stroke. Every second counts in an emergency, especially looking for an address!
- **GATES:** An automatic gate across a fire access roadway or driveway shall be equipped with an approved emergency key-operated switch allowing emergency responders access. The key switch can be ordered at www.knoxbox.com. Please contact our office for assistance.
- **PROPANE TANKS:** Remove weeds, grass, brush, trash, and other combustible material within 10 feet of a tank or container.
- **DUMPING:** Dispose of yard clippings, plant waste, trash, debris, and other combustible materials in an appropriate manner. Do not dump debris in canyons, creek beds, vacant lots, open space areas, and along roadways. Report all illegal dumping to the appropriate authority.
- **BRIDGES & ELEVATED SURFACES:** Bridges and elevated surfaces shall be designed to support 75,000 pounds. If not, vehicle load limits and vertical clearance limitations shall be posted at both entrances of bridges. Failure to have a posted weight limit may cause a delay in emergency vehicles accessing your property.

Whether it be a wildfire or other natural disaster, preparedness is key! Make sure you register your cell phone online with **[ALERT SAN DIEGO](#)** to receive text alerts with information pertaining to wildfires and natural disasters near your property. Also, download **[PULSE POINT](#)** and **[SAN DIEGO EMERGENCY](#)** on your cell phone for up to date notifications as well. Remember to pack your emergency items and follow your personal wildland fire action plan. Doing so will support your safety and allow firefighters the ability to maneuver resources to combat the fire.

The Fire District offers complimentary property inspections to those who are interested in learning about potential fire hazards that may exist on their property. Please visit our website **www.rsf-fire.org** to review our vegetation management Ordinance 2019-02 in its entirety.

In the next month, a Fire Prevention Specialist will be traveling the entire district to view possible fire hazards in association with vegetation management and hazard removal. You may see CAL FIRE conducting inspections as well. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Fire District.

To speak with a member in the Fire Prevention Bureau or to schedule an on-site appointment, please contact the Fire District at weedabatement@rsf-fire.org.