



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

FIRE DEPARTMENT

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P. MICHAEL FREEMAN
FIRE CHIEF
FORESTER & FIRE WARDEN

July 17, 2007

Dear Resident:

I am writing to advise you about this year's fire season and the important role that you play as a homeowner living in a very high fire hazard severity zone. The next four to five months will prove to be the most dangerous time of the year for destructive wildland fires because of low humidity, strong winds, and the critically dry vegetation and brush conditions that we are experiencing much earlier in the year than normal. Wildland fires are already burning with extreme intensity and spreading rapidly. We urge you to do all that you can to protect your home.

The most important thing that you can do to help your local firefighters to protect your home is to **properly clear brush located around the perimeter of your home**. Failure to do this will make it difficult if not impossible for firefighters to protect it. In the event of a brush fire, numerous firefighters, aircraft, and specialized equipment will respond as quickly as possible. If brush clearance is not done adequately and completely, our firefighters may be forced to retreat. Please do your part to help us meet our mission and keep everyone safe.

Especially during fire season, it is also important for you to **pay close attention to conditions in your neighborhood and immediately comply with instructions to evacuate in the event of a fire**. To help you learn more about evacuation and brush clearance procedures, enclosed is some helpful information for you to review with all members of your family. Take action now to prepare your family and protect your property.

For additional information, please contact your local fire station or call the Los Angeles County Fire Department Public Information Office at (323) 881-2411. Also, you may access our website at www.fire.lacounty.gov for additional safety information on this topic and many more.

On behalf of all of us at the Los Angeles County Fire Department, have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Very truly yours,

P. MICHAEL FREEMAN

SERVING THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF:

AGOURA HILLS
ARTESIA
AZUSA
BALDWIN PARK
BELL
BELL GARDENS
BELLFLOWER
BRADBURY

CALABASAS
CARSON
CERRITOS
CLAREMONT
COMMERCE
COVINA
CUDAHY

DIAMOND BAR
DUARTE
EL MONTE
GARDENA
GLENORA
HAWAIIAN GARDENS
HAWTHORNE

HIDDEN HILLS
HUNTINGTON PARK
INDUSTRY
INGLEWOOD
IRWINDALE
LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
LA HABRA

LA MIRADA
LA PUENTE
LAKEWOOD
LANCASTER
LAWNDALE
LOMITA
LYNWOOD

MALIBU
MAYWOOD
NORWALK
PALMDALE
PALOS VERDES ESTATES
PARAMOUNT
PICO RIVERA

POMONA
RANCHO PALOS VERDES
ROLLING HILLS
ROLLING HILLS ESTATES
ROSEMEAD
SAN DIMAS
SANTA CLARITA

SIGNAL HILL
SOUTH EL MONTE
SOUTH GATE
TEMPLE CITY
WALNUT
WEST HOLLYWOOD
WESTLAKE VILLAGE
WHITTIER



Los Angeles County Fire Department

Safety Tips for Living in a Brush Area

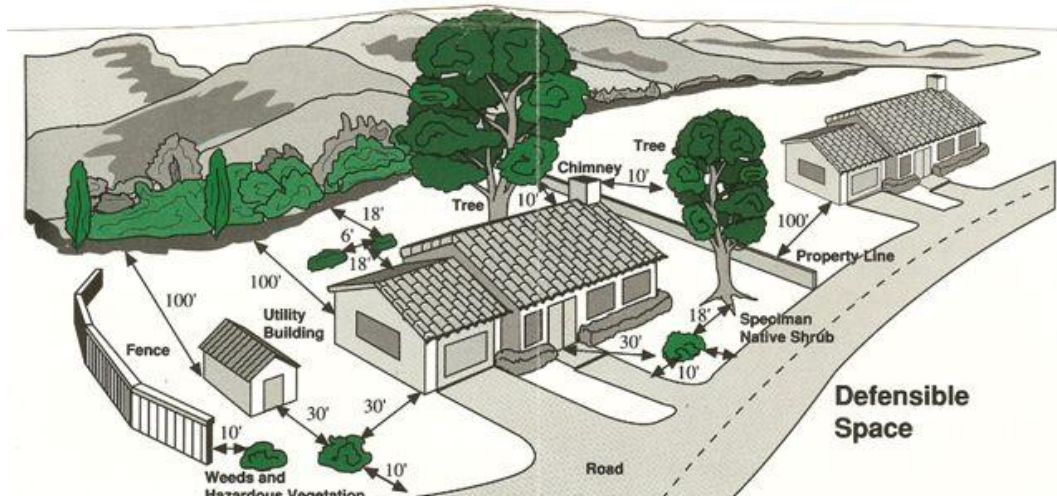
Home Landscaping and Yard

- Remove flammable vegetation dead material and other combustible growth within 30 ft. of any structures. Increase to 50 ft. in high hazard areas. Thin out or remove other vegetation an additional 70 ft. from structures for a total of 100 ft. (200 ft. in high hazard areas).
- Single trees, ornamental shrubbery and ground covers may be permitted provided they do not readily transmit fire from native vegetation to structures.
- Landscape with plants that are drought tolerant and fire resistant.
- Space small trees and large shrubs a minimum of 15 ft. between canopies or three times their height for smaller shrubs.
- Large trees should be spaced a minimum of 30 ft. between canopies at maturity.
- Trees taller than 18 ft, remove lower branches within 6 ft. of the ground.
- For trees and shrubs of less than 18 ft. remove lower branches to one-third of their height.
- Maintain all plants by regularly removing dead branches and leaves.

- Remove all stacks of combustible materials
- Remove debris from rain gutters.
- Stack wood at least 30 ft. from structures. Remove flammable vegetation within 10 ft. of woodpiles.
- Locate fixed butane/propane tanks at least 10 ft. from any structure and maintain 10 ft. of clearance.

Home Access

- Identify at least two exit routes from your neighborhood.
- Post road signs to show traffic restrictions such as dead-end roads and height and weight limits.
- Clear flammable vegetation at least 10 ft. from roads and driveways.
- Cut overhanging tree branches above roads to provide minimum of 16 ft. of vertical clearance.
- Make sure street names and numbers are visible at intersections.
- Post address on front of house. If your house is not visible from street, post sign next to the vehicle entrance or have your address on the curb.



Operation Evacuation

Evacuation Plan

Do you have one?

Emergency preparedness must be a priority for everyone that lives or works in a wildland-urban interface. A major part of your preparedness is to develop a well thought out and executed evacuation plan. A good evacuation plan includes the following:

- Predetermined routes of travel based on direction fire is moving.
- Identification of at least two (2) exit routes from your neighborhood.
- Knowledge of designated residential assembly points within your local area.
- Knowledge of local emergency contacts.
- Plan, review and practice with family and neighbors.

Preparation Ahead of the Fire

- Back the car in the garage heading out (windows closed and keys in the ignition).
- Close the garage door, leave it unlocked and disconnect the automatic garage door opener in case of power failure.
- Place important documents, photo albums, pets and other valuables inside your car in case you have to evacuate.
- Keep a flashlight and portable radio with you at all times and stay tuned to your local news station.

During Evacuation

- If you become trapped by fire while evacuating in your car, park in an area clear of vegetation, close all vehicle windows and vents, cover yourself with a blanket or jacket and lie on the floor.
- If you are trapped by fire while evacuating on foot, select an area clear of vegetation or lie faced down in a ditch.

If You Are Unable to Evacuate When a Fire Approaches

- Stay inside your house away from outside walls.
- Keep all doors closed but leave them unlocked.
- Keep your entire family together and REMAIN CALM. Remember if it gets in the house, it is four to five times hotter and more dangerous outside.

After the Fire Passes

- Check the exterior and roof immediately, extinguish all sparks and embers. If you must climb on the roof, use caution.
- Check inside the attic for hidden burning embers.
- Check your yard for burning woodpiles, trees, fence posts or other materials.

Have an Emergency Plan

Residents living in mountainous, foothill and brush areas should take the following action steps:

- Immediately report any sightings of smoke by calling 9-1-1.
- Maintain street signs and make sure that address numbers are visible from the street.
- Have an evacuation plan in place. Make sure that each person in your household is aware of two exit routes from your neighborhood.
- When evacuating your home, close all windows and doors around your home to prevent embers from blowing inside. Unlock all gates and fences around the perimeter to provide firefighters quick access.
- During a fire in your area, monitor radio and television news reports on the status of the fire. If a fire approaches your home, do not wait for Officials to evacuate you. Leave the fire area immediately and contact the American Red Cross for shelter locations if needed.

Brush Clearance Safety Tips For Homeowners

Firefighters need a defensible space to have a better chance to save your home in the event of a brush fire. Be in compliance with the local brush clearance requirements for your area.

Please remember that clearing your brush safely is also very important.

In the past brush fires in Los Angeles County have been sparked by homeowners attempting to clear their brush. One fire was started when a homeowner was illegally burning cut materials. Other fires have been started by the sparks coming from the metal blades on motorized equipment.

By following these simple guidelines brush clearance can be done safely:

- Avoid brush clearing activities during the heat of the day, between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
- Have a water source near by. A bucket of water is good but a garden hose would be better.
- Only use properly maintained motorized equipment and have a working spark arrester when required.
- Use monofilament line instead of metal blades on weed whips
- Always wear proper safety equipment. Goggles and work gloves are a must.
- Never burn any cut material, brush or grass. Dispose of these materials properly.