



FIRE DEPARTMENT SANTA CLARA COUNTY



14700 Winchester Blvd., Los Gatos, CA 95032-1818
(408) 378-4010 • (408) 341-4499 (fax) • www.sccfd.org

June 6, 2017

Dear Property Owner:

Wildfires are extremely costly, not only to property owners and residents, but also to local agencies. Wildfires pose a serious threat to the preservation of the public peace, health, or safety. The wildfire front is not the only source of risk since embers, or firebrands, travel far beyond the area impacted by the front and pose a risk of ignition to a structure or fuel on a site for a longer time.

The Santa Cruz Mountains have a significant fire history and you are either living in the mountains or adjacent to them, which means you are living with fire. It is imperative that you take steps to protect your home and all structures on your property from wildfire.

Your property is located in or near a Hazardous Fire Area and requires a defensible space of 30 feet around all structures as required by the Town of Los Altos Hills municipal code 4-2.116. Defensible space is created and maintained by removing the flammable brush, vegetation and dry grasses adjacent to all structures. The list below reflects the necessary steps to stay in compliance with required preventative measures. The additional safety recommendations (top of reverse side), while not required, will provide additional defensible space for your structures.

This year I want to introduce you to a new program "Be Ember Aware." The IBHS Research Center's extensive testing and investigation is showing how embers cause structures to ignite. An excellent source of information on the danger of embers is at www.livingwithfire.info and <https://disastersafety.org/wildfire/>

Los Altos Hills Municipal Code (Items A-G)

- A. Create **30 feet** of Defensible Space around your home. To accomplish this, you must clear all flammable vegetation a **minimum of 30 feet** around structures.
- B. Remove that portion of any tree which extends within ten (10) feet of the outlet of any chimney.
- C. Maintain any tree adjacent to or overhanging any building free of dead wood.
- D. Maintain the roof of any structure free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth.
- E. Remove flammable vegetation a minimum of ten (10) feet around liquefied petroleum gas tanks/containers.
- F. Cover chimney outlets or flues with a 1/2" mesh spark arrester.
- G. Post a clearly visible house address, using at least 4" high numbers, for easy identification.

Organized as the Santa Clara County Central Fire Protection District

Serving Santa Clara County and the communities of Campbell, Cupertino, Los Altos,
Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, and Saratoga

Additional Safety Recommendations

- Create a noncombustible area within 5 feet of structures.
- Clear 10 feet around and 15 feet above fuels (e.g. woodpiles, lumber, scrap, etc.) Move woodpiles as far away as possible from structures.
- Clear vegetation and other flammable material from underneath decks. Enclose elevated decks with fire-resistive materials.
- Trees 18-feet or taller should be limbed up 6-feet from the ground. Provide additional vertical clearance when trees have vegetation beneath it.
- If you have any trees near power lines, please contact PG&E at 1-800-PGE-5000 for a free inspection. State Law requires vegetation clearance from electrical lines. For more information, please visit www.PGE.com. In most cases PG&E will trim or remove the tree at no cost to you.

You are requested to perform the Enforced Safety Regulations (Items A-G). On the enclosed card please indicate by checking the appropriate box as to how the abatement will be performed, if there is a change in ownership or if you are requesting an inspection. Please sign and return the postcard on or before **June 16, 2017**. Beginning around the third week of June 2017, District staff will conduct inspections of properties. They will advise property owners who have not implemented the Fire Hazard Abatement Measures what work is necessary to comply with the Los Altos Hills Municipal Code. The inability to disc prior to July 15, 2017 will be taken into consideration during the inspection. If you are unable to complete the required work due to hardship, please contact our office as soon as possible.

When determining how to best perform the Fire Hazard Abatement Measures, consider the following:

- a) You may do the work yourself, or hire a contractor to do it. Note: the Los Altos Hills County Fire District operates a yard waste disposal event on the 3rd Saturday of each month at Foothill College, where residents can dispose of yard waste at no charge. For more information contact Green Waste Company at (408) 938-4916. Additionally, the Los Altos Hills County Fire District will be providing a brush chipping service for all properties within the Fire District this year (Note: brush must be cut and piled prior to chipping).
- b) You may have the District instruct its own contractor to do the work on your behalf, and have the cost placed on your property tax bill. This option can be implemented by filling out and mailing the enclosed post card or by calling (408) 378-4010 prior to **July 15, 2017**.

Note: follow-up inspections will begin on or after **July 15, 2017** for properties that did not comply at the time of the first inspection. If you fail to take the necessary action as of this date, the District will have its contractor do the work, and the cost will be placed on your property tax bill.

If you would like to schedule a courtesy inspection or if you have questions, please contact our Fire Prevention Division at (408) 378-4010 or 1-800-800-1793.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping to establish a fire-safe community.

Santa Clara County Fire Department