

BHA | WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

DID YOU KNOW?

- L.A. County ranks third in the country relative to the number of properties at risk of being burned by wildfire. *(U.S. Department of Forestry)*
- California leads the country with the most wildfires and number of acres burned. *(Insurance Information Institute)*
- 1.2 million homes in California are at risk for extreme wildfire. *(Insurance Information Institute)*

Now is the time for us to protect our community and prepare ourselves for the next wildfire. BHA is leading the effort by working with the LA Wildfire Alliance to become a recognized California Fire Safe Council. As a Fire Safe Council, BHA's objective is to

- Minimize risks to life, homes, and natural and human-made resources.
- Increase the insurability of property by increasing community safety.
- Forge strong partnerships with first responders.
- Acquire resources that can assist in fire prevention efforts.

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

GUEST SPEAKER

David Barrett

Executive Director, Commander

MySafe:LA

david.barrett@mysafela.org

MySafe:LA and the LAFD collaborate to help homeowners' associations to become more resilient against wildfire, and to be qualified for important benefits when reaching Fire Safe Council community status. We were honored to have Commander Barrett present the following information to our members June 20, 2023.



DON'T LET THE WILDFIRE WIN

DISCUSSION

Tonight, we're going to discuss the importance of home hardening and defensible space. These two activities are the keys to protecting your family, pets, and property from the threat of wildfire. There are many things you can do. However, we have tried to show a range of items that can be done inexpensively and easily, as well as those that require more effort and resources.



PREPARE: HARDEN YOUR HOME

WHY?

To reduce the chance of flames or embers igniting exposed flammable items, or heat, flames, and/or embers entering your home via exposed vents, chimneys, windows, doors, etc.



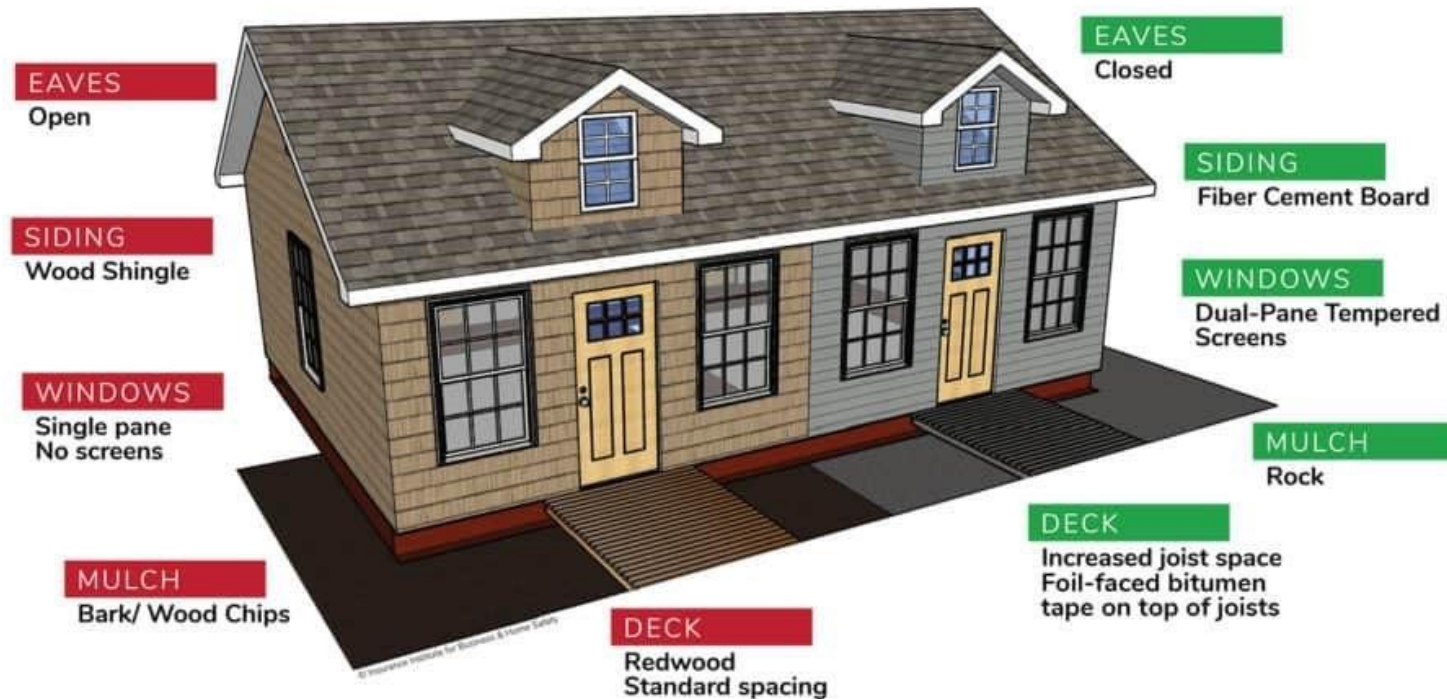
PREPARE: HARDEN YOUR HOME



This is an **Ember cast**. Embers can fly more than a mile in front or or behind a fire front. These embers can invade your home through openings in the roof, eaves, and vents and cause your home to burn.

PREPARE: HARDEN YOUR HOME

Wildfire-Resistance: Make the “RIGHT” Choices



PREPARE: HARDEN YOUR HOME

What's the easiest way to start the home hardening process?

Rain Gutters \$

Keep leaves, pine needles, and other debris from building up in your rain gutters. Do this every other month, and after every wind or rainstorm, and you'll have taken the first important step to reducing risk to your home. Even better, install covered gutter protection. It's not that expensive, and it prevents debris from filling in the gutter channels.

Garage \$

Install weather stripping around and under the garage door to prevent embers from blowing in. Make certain your garage door fits snugly against the ground. As added protection - even though this isn't hardening your home, keep an ABC fire extinguisher and tools such as a shovel, rake, bucket, and hose available for fire emergencies. Just keeping a bucket of water handy when the wind is blowing is good for peace of mind.

Firewood/Furniture/Toys \$

Avoid stacking firewood against any part of your home's structure. The same is true for furniture. If you have children, don't stack their toys against any part of your home. All of these things burn.

PREPARE: HARDEN YOUR HOME

Here are ways you can harden your home and make it more fire resistant:

Vents \$

Unprotected vents on homes create openings for fire and embers. Cover all vent openings with 1/8-inch metal mesh. Do not use fiberglass or plastic mesh because they may melt/burn.

Eaves and Soffits \$

Eaves and soffits should be protected with ignition-resistant or non-combustible materials.

Chimney \$\$

Cover your chimney and stovepipe outlets with a non-flammable screen. Use metal screen material with openings no smaller than 3/8-inch and no larger than 1/2-inch. Remember, embers can escape a fireplace, but can also fly into the chimney from a working wildfire.

Roof \$\$\$\$

While this is expensive, it's also one of the most resistant upgrades you can make to your home. The key is for you to install a "Class A" roof - utilizing fire resistant materials.

PREPARE: HARDEN YOUR HOME

Windows \$\$\$

Heat from a wildfire can cause windows to break even when flames or embers are dozens of feet away from your home. If heat shatters your windows, burning embers will rapidly enter the home. Older single pane windows, and large picture style window are especially vulnerable. Installing dual paned windows with one pane of tempered glass will reduce the chance of breakage when a wildfire approaches. Bonus: Dual pane windows are also likely to improve your home's ability to retain both heat (winter) and cool air (summer). If you can't replace your windows, consider adding screens to help resist the flames and embers.

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Install weather stripping around and under the garage door to prevent embers from blowing in. Make certain your garage door fits snugly against the ground. As added protection - even though this isn't hardening your home, keep an ABC fire extinguisher and tools such as a shovel, rake, bucket, and hose available for fire emergencies. Just keeping a bucket of water handy when the wind is blowing is good for peace of mind.

Decks \$\$

Surfaces within 10 feet of the building should be built with ignition-resistant, non-combustible, or other approved materials. Ensure that all combustible items are removed from underneath your deck.

PREPARE: ADDITIONAL STEPS

Address

Make sure your address is clearly visible from the road.

Patio Cover

Use the same ignition-resistant materials for patio coverings as a roof.

Fences

Consider using ignition-resistant or non-combustible fence materials to protect your home during a wildfire.

Driveways and Access Roads

Driveways should be built and maintained in accordance with state and local codes to allow fire and emergency vehicles to reach your home. Ensure that all gates open inward and are wide enough to accommodate emergency equipment. Trim trees and shrubs overhanging the road to allow emergency vehicles to pass.

Water Supply

If you have a pool or well, consider getting a pump.

CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY BILL 38

WHAT IS IT?

AB 38 states the seller of a residential property located in specified high Fire Risk (doesn't need to be VHFSZ) zones must submit documentation of compliance with locally adopted defensible space requirements prior to the close of escrow.

NOTE: This applies to all homes built before January 01, 2020.



California Assembly Bill 38

HOW DOES IT WORK?

If you're going to sell your home, it must be inspected to ensure it complies with the California State Fire Marshal and AB 38 requirements. This inspection will highlight home hardening improvements on the property and a list of specified features that may make the home vulnerable to wildfire and flying embers and which features, if any, that exist on the home and property of which the seller is aware.

NOTE: If a property fails the fire department or inspector inspection, it could be detrimental to the final closing of the sale of the property.



California Assembly Bill 38

To request a supplemental inspection, please contact **Captain Bryan Nassour** at the LAFD Brush unit at LAFD.AB38Inspection@lacity.org.

Captain Nassour was the special guest of MySafe:LA during the May Fire Safe Council Town Hall meeting. He explained all of the LAFD's requirements and concerns in detail.

To listen to the Town Hall, visit <http://www.mysafela.org/wildfire/>

To read the bill: <https://openstates.org/ca/bills/20192020/AB38>

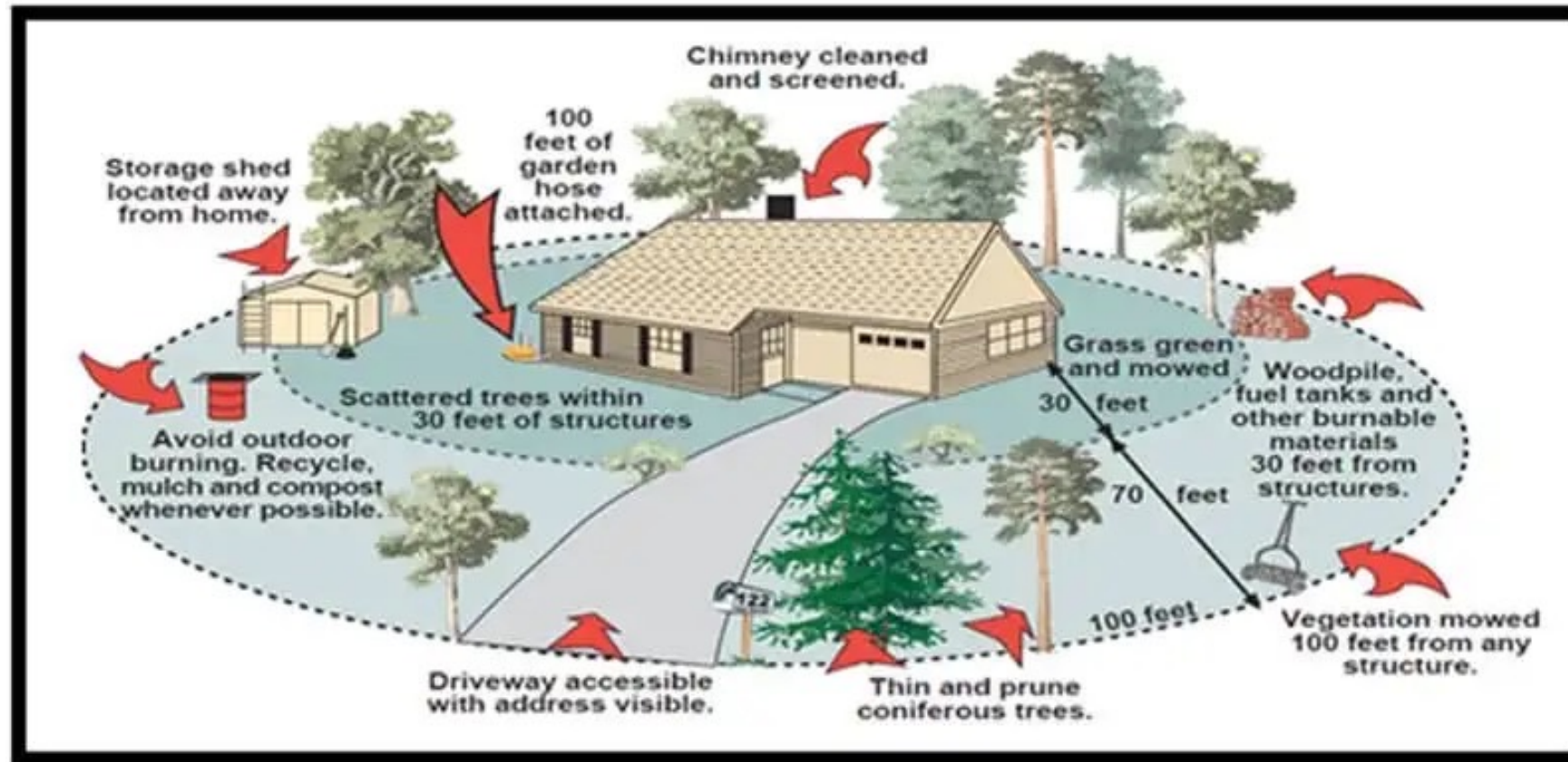
PREPARE: DEFENSIBLE SPACE

WHY?

By creating a natural barrier between your home and a wildfire, you reduce the opportunity for natural vegetation or flammable items to become points of combustion that may lead to your home being directly impacted by fire and embers.



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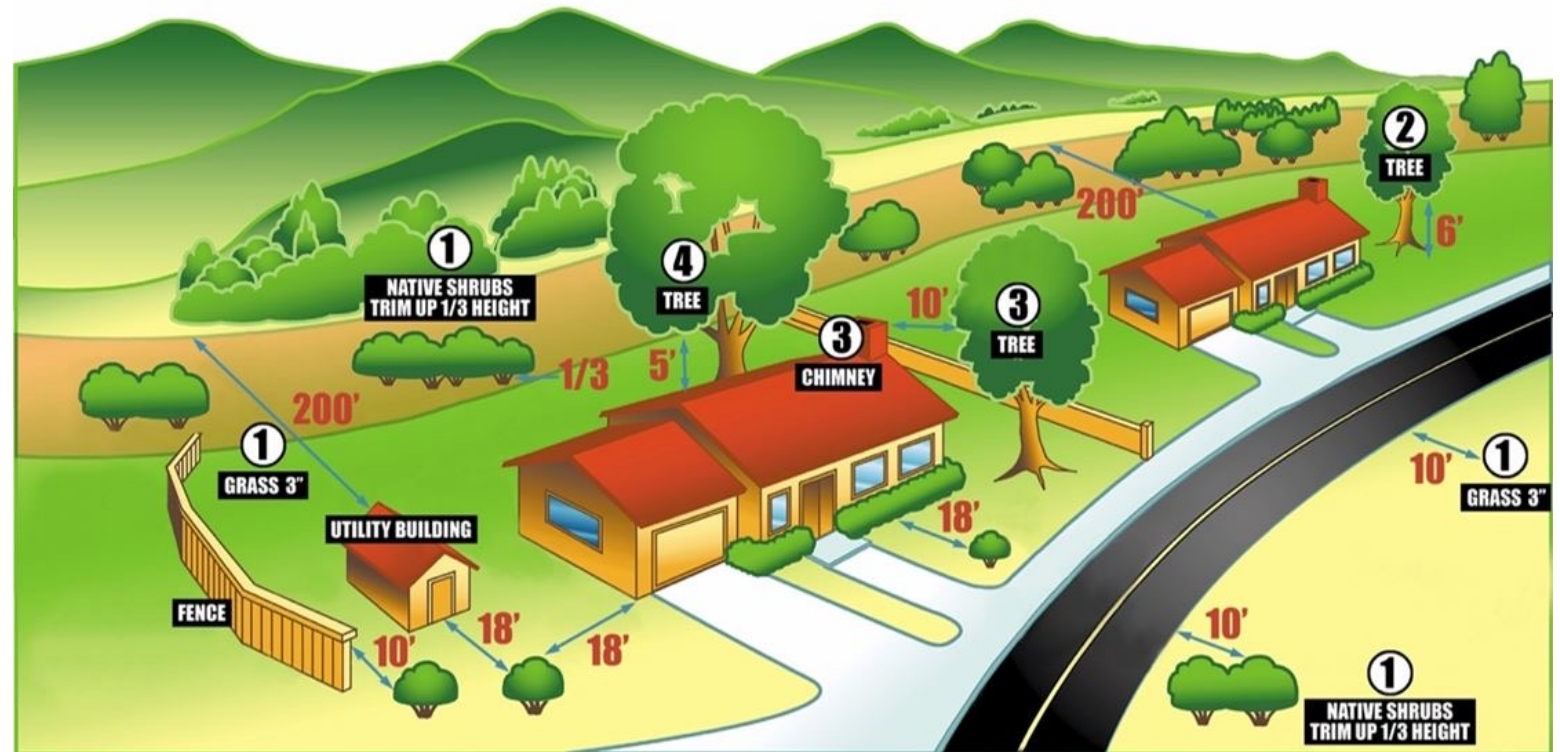
Water Supply

Consider having multiple garden hoses that are long enough to reach all areas of your home and other structures on your property. If you have a pool or well, consider getting a pump.

PREPARE: BRUSH CLEARANCE

Mandatory for owners of property located in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).

Year-round compliance shall be maintained as described below on all native brush, weeds, grass, trees and hazardous vegetation within 200 feet of any structures/buildings, whether those structures are on the owner's property or adjoining properties, and within 10 feet of any combustible fence or roadway/driveway used for vehicular travel.



For a list of brush clearance contractors

<http://lafd.org/fire-prevention/brush/clearance-contractor-list>

PREPARE: BRUSH CLEARANCE

FIRE CODE REQUIREMENTS

1. Maintain all weeds and grasses at a maximum height of 3 inches.
2. Maintain the lower 1/3rd of trees and shrubs by removing all leafy foliage, twigs, and branches up to a maximum of 6 feet from the ground (i.e., any tree 18 feet or higher requires only 6 feet of clearance).
3. Remove all dead trees and shrubs.
4. Maintain 5 feet of vertical clearance between roof surfaces and portions of overhanging trees and shrubs (any overhanging foliage must be at least 5 feet above the roof).
5. Remove any portion of a tree or shrub within 10-foot radius of a chimney outlet.
6. Maintain the roofs of all structures free of leaves, needles, twigs and other combustible matter.
7. Remove all dead/dry undergrowth and material within trees and shrubs to include all dead or dry palm fronds/branches.

PREPARE: BRUSH CLEARANCE

FIRE CODE REQUIREMENTS (cont'd)

8. Once brush clearance is conducted, remove and safely dispose of all cut or bagged vegetation, all dead trees and all debris. This includes all combustible junk, trash or debris that may be on your property, regardless of how it got there. Combustible debris may include, but is not limited to, paper trash, cardboard boxes, household trash, fabric/clothing, plastic, rubber/tires, or piles of yard waste.
9. Cut vegetation may be machine processed (chipped) and spread as ground cover (mulch) so it does not exceed 3 inches in depth within 30 feet of structures and no more than 6 inches in depth 30+ feet from structures/buildings. Machine processed/chipped material shall not be placed within 10 feet of combustible fences or road surfaces.

GET THE LATEST L.A. CITY FIRE CODE:

https://www.wildfirela.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/LACityFireCodeReqDoc_v2.pdf

CONTACT THE LAFD BRUSH CLEARANCE UNIT

CHECK TO SEE IF YOU'RE IN COMPLIANCE

vms3.lafd.org

(YOU WILL NEED THE APN AND PIN FROM THE CARD SENT TO YOU IN MARCH.)

Mail/Walk In

6262 Van Nuys Blvd.
#451
Van Nuys, CA 91401

(800) 994-4444
Hours: 8:00am to 3:00pm
Email: lafdbrush@lacity.org

Accounting Services

Billing questions: (213) 978-3424
Hours: 8:00am to 4:00pm
Email: lafd.brushacctg@lacity.org

ADDITIONAL INFO:

www.mysafela.org/wildfire/

QUESTIONS?

