



READY, SET, GO!

Your Personal Wildfire Action Plan



Santa Barbara City Fire Department

Ready, Set, Go!

Wildfire Action Plan: Saving Lives and Property Through Advance Planning

The Santa Barbara community, where the mountains meet the sea, is a unique natural environment. It embraces beauty at the same time as it has the potential for year round disasters. Wildfires that have impacted our communities in recent years are stark evidence that we need to recognize, understand and actively work to mitigate the potential of wildfire's impact to our homes and lives.

The Santa Barbara City Fire Department prides itself in providing the highest level of protection for you and your property; in planning, preparation and response to fires that occur in our community. Working with our partners in the California mutual aid system, we are able to achieve many positive outcomes while fighting fire in some of the toughest conditions and terrain that can be encountered due to our local winds, fuels and steep topography. With these factors there are still times when even our best efforts may not be enough. It is your personal understanding and involvement, that you take before and during a wildfire, that will truly make the difference.

This brochure gives you the tips and tools to successfully prepare for a wildfire. It provides you and your family guidance so your home has the greatest potential for survival. In addition, it will help you and your household plan ahead so that you can leave early, well ahead of a fast approaching wildfire. Early evacuations are critical in the Santa Barbara High Fire Hazard Areas. We have a history of fires that take only minutes to turn into conflagrations. By following the enclosed checklists and creating your own Personal Wildfire Action Plan, you will be ready and have the peace of mind knowing you've done everything possible to ensure your household safety and your home's survival.

There are some things in our lives that we cannot change. We know our mountains will always face south, be steep, and be covered with dense chaparral. We live in our homes located in the foothills and coastal areas where our weather will periodically create high winds that we call Sundowners. Wildfires are part of our environment. Our challenge, and what we must do, is to change the way we understand, prepare and react to wildfires in our community. The most important person in protecting your life and property is not the firefighter, but yourself. Through advanced planning and preparation, we can all be ready for the next wildfire.

— Santa Barbara City Fire Department

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Get READY — Create a Defensible Home

Living in the Wildland Urban Interface and the Ember Zone

Ready, Set, Go! begins with a house that firefighters can defend.

WHAT IS DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Defensible space is the area around a structure that is free of flammable plants and objects. Defensible space creates a zone around the structure that provides a key point of defense from an approaching wildfire, while allowing firefighters to operate safely to help protect your structure. Defensible space must be wide enough to prevent direct flame impingement and reduce the amount of radiant heat.



THE EMBER ZONE

A home within one mile of a natural area is in the Ember Zone. Wind-driven embers can attack your home. You and your home must be prepared well before a fire occurs. Ember fires can destroy homes or neighborhoods far from the actual flame front of the wildfire.

Defensible Space Inspections Begin June 15

Being fire safe isn't only a good idea, it's also the law. Authority: California State Fire Code Section 4908 for Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) and Santa Barbara City Municipal Code, Title 8. VIOLATIONS SUBJECT TO CITATION.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE WORKS!

If you live in the Wildland Urban Interface, you must provide firefighters with the defensible space they need to protect your home. The buffer zone you create by removing weeds, brush and other vegetation helps to keep the fire away.

Santa Barbara City High Fire Hazard Area Defensible Space Requirements

Extreme Foothill Zone: 150 feet
Foothill Zone: 100 feet
Coastal Zone: 50 to 70 feet
Coastal Interior Zone: 30 to 50 feet

Not sure which zone you are in?
Contact the Santa Barbara City
Fire Department at (805) 965-5254.

Zone Zero: 0'–5'

0

This area starts at your roof and extends 5 feet from walls. Embers are your home's biggest threat!

Remove all combustible materials and protect vents and openings where wind-blown embers can enter.

1. Use only inorganic, non-combustible mulches such as stone or gravel.
2. Remove combustible outdoor furniture. Replace with metal or non-combustible varieties.
3. Replace jute or natural fiber doormats with heavy rubber or metal grates.
4. Remove or relocate all combustible materials including garbage and recycling containers, lumber, trash and patio accessories.
5. Clean all fallen leaves and needles.
6. No vegetation is recommended within 5' of any structure.
7. Remove tree limbs that extend into this zone. Fire prone tree varieties should be removed if they extend into this zone.
8. Do not store firewood, lumber or combustibles here, even (especially) under decks or overhangs. Move stored combustibles inside or at least 30' from any structure.
9. Hardscaping is strongly recommended around the base of structures.

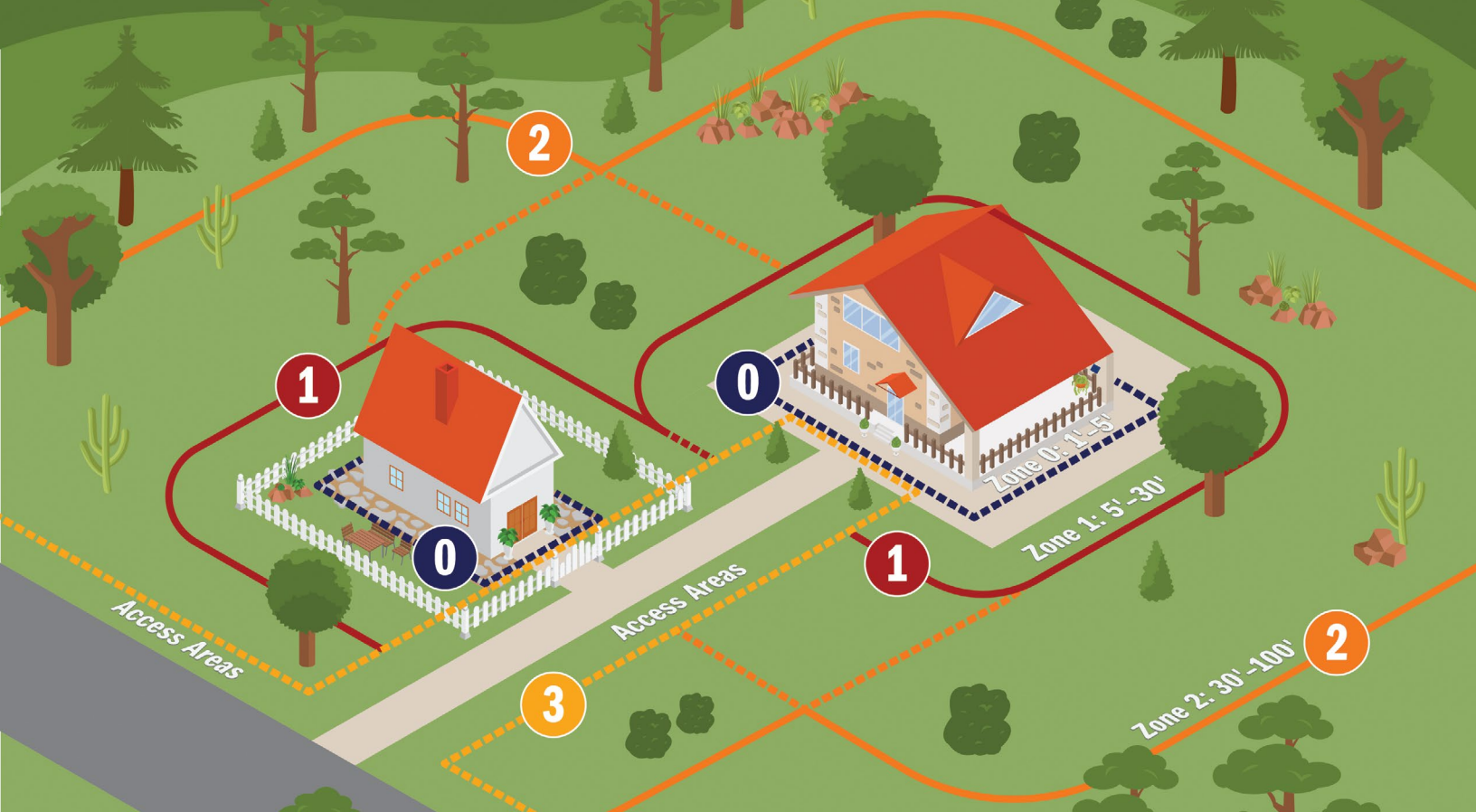
Zone 1: 5'–30'

1

Zone 1 extends 30 feet out from buildings, decks and other structures.

Keep this area "Lean, Clean and Green," and be sure to maintain regularly throughout fire season!

1. Remove all dead grasses, weeds, plants and foliage.
2. Remove fire-prone plant varieties.
3. Remove all fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones and branches.
4. Remove "Gorilla Hair" or shredded bark mulch. Use only compost or heavy bark mulch to maintain soil moisture, or for erosion control.
5. Choose only fire resistant plants, and keep them healthy and well irrigated.
6. Provide spacing between shrubs, and add space on steeper slopes.
7. Remove limbs 6' to 10' from the ground.
8. Remove branches that overhang your roof or within 10' of chimneys.
9. Move firewood and lumber out of Zone 1.
10. Remove combustibles around and under decks and awnings.
11. Clear vegetation around fences, sheds, outdoor furniture and play structures.
12. Outbuildings and LPG tanks should have at least 10' of clearance.



Zone 2: 30'–100'

2

Zone 2 is the space extending 30 to 100 feet from buildings, decks and other structures.

Reduce fuel for fire and separate trees and shrubs in the area. Remove dead vegetation regularly.

1. Cut annual grasses and weeds to a maximum height of 4".
2. Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
3. Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs and lower tree limbs.
4. Allow no more than 3" of loose surface litter (consisting of fallen leaves, needles, twigs, cones and small branches), if needed, to protect from erosion.
5. Remove all piles of dead vegetation.

Work With Your Neighbors

Many homes do not have 100' of space between structures and parcel lines. Property owners are required to maintain defensible space only to their property line.

Work with neighbors to help provide defensible space for their homes, and ask neighbors for help if their property threatens yours. In most cases, the most effective solution is a cooperative approach between neighbors.

Access Areas

3

Property owners are responsible for vegetation adjacent to roads and driveways.

Access roads are critical for evacuation and first responder access. Maintenance is required year-round.

1. Clear vegetation 13.5' overhead and 10' from sides of roads and driveways in the same manner as Defensible Space Zone 1.
2. Maintain 12' of unobstructed pavement for passage of vehicles.
3. Within this area, choose only fire resistant plant varieties and ensure that they do not extend into the roadway.
4. 13.5' of clearance is required above the roadway for emergency vehicle access.
5. Address numbers must be clearly visible from the road, with at least 4" numbers on a contrasting background. Reflective or lighted numbers are best.
6. Create vertical spacing between shrubs and lower tree limbs.

Public Right of Way

Many property owners mistakenly believe that they are not responsible for roadside vegetation fronting their property. Property owners are responsible for vegetation adjacent to roads and driveways, even in the public right of way. Ensure that vegetation is maintained on all sides of your property.

Tour a Wildfire-Ready Home

SAFEGUARD OR “HARDEN” YOUR HOME

The ability of your home to survive a wildfire depends on the materials your home is constructed of and the quality of the “defensible space” surrounding it. Windblown embers from a wildfire will find the weak link in your home’s fire protection scheme and gain the upper hand because of a small, overlooked, or seemingly inconsequential factor. However, there are measures you can take to safeguard your home from wildfire. While you may not be able to accomplish all of the measures listed below, each will increase your home’s—and possibly your family’s—safety and survival.

Address 1

- Make sure your address is clearly visible from the road and made of non-flammable material. The address needs to be a contrasting color to the surface that it is mounted on, so it can be seen.

Chimney 2

- Cover your chimney and stovepipe outlets with a non-flammable screen of 1/8-inch wire mesh or smaller to prevent embers from escaping and igniting a fire.
- Tree branches must be removed within 10 feet of chimneys.

Deck/Patio Cover 3

- Use heavy timber or non-flammable construction material for decks and patio covers, especially within the first 10 feet of the home.
- Enclose the underside of balconies and decks with fire-resistant materials to prevent embers from blowing underneath.
- Keep your deck clear of combustible items, such as baskets, dried flower arrangements, and other debris.

Driveways and Access Roads 4

- Driveways should be designed to allow fire and emergency vehicles and equipment to reach your home (current fire code requirement is 12 feet wide).
- Access roads should have a minimum 10-foot clearance of flammable vegetation on either side of the traveled section of the roadway and should allow for two-way traffic.
- Trim trees and shrubs above all roads to maintain 13½ (13.5) feet of vertical clearance.



- Locked or electrical gates should have a disconnect or lock box that can be accessed by the fire department.
- Ensure that all gates open inward and are wide enough to accommodate emergency equipment.

Garage 5

- Have a fire extinguisher and tools, such as a shovel, rake, bucket, and hoe, available for fire emergencies.
- Install a solid door with self-closing hinges between living areas and the garage. Install weather stripping around and under the doors to prevent ember intrusion.
- Store all combustibles and flammable liquids away from ignition sources.
- Keep the garage closed whenever possible.

Home Site and Yard 6

- Ensure you have adequate defensible space (cleared vegetation) around your home up to 150 feet, depending on which High Fire Hazard Zone you live in. If the 100-foot distance is on adjacent property, contact your local fire station for assistance in obtaining adequate clearance.
- Cut dry weeds and grass before noon when temperatures are cooler to reduce the chance of sparking a fire when using metal tools.
- Landscape with fire-resistant plants that are low-growing with high-moisture content.
- Keep woodpiles, propane tanks, and combustible materials away from your home and other structures, such as garages, barns, and sheds (recommended 30 feet).
- Ensure trees and branches are at least four feet away from power lines. Notify your power company if this condition exists.

Inside

- Keep a working fire extinguisher on hand and train your family how to use it. Store in an easily accessible location (check expiration date regularly).
- Install smoke alarms on each level of your home and adjacent to the bedrooms. Test them monthly and change the batteries twice a year.



Non-Combustible Boxed-In (Soffit) Eaves

- Box-in eaves with non-combustible materials to prevent accumulation of embers.



Non-Combustible Fencing 7

- Make sure to use non-combustible fencing to protect your home during a wildfire.

Rain Gutters

- Screen or enclose rain gutters to prevent accumulation of plant debris.



Roof 8

- Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home because it can easily catch fire from windblown embers.
- Homes with wood shake or shingle roofs are at a higher risk of being destroyed during a wildfire.
- Build your roof or re-roof with fire-resistant materials that include composition, metal, or tile.
- Block any spaces between roof decking and covering to prevent ember intrusion.
- Clear pine needles, leaves, and other debris from your roof and gutters.
- Cut any tree branches within 10 feet of your roof.

Vents

- Vents on homes are particularly vulnerable to flying embers.
- All vent openings should be covered with 1/8-inch or smaller metal mesh. Do not use fiberglass or plastic mesh because they can melt and burn.
- Attic vents in eaves or cornices should be baffled or have ember resistant vents installed to prevent ember intrusion.



Walls 9

- Wood products, such as boards, panels, or shingles, are common siding materials. However, they are combustible and not good choices for fire-prone areas.
- Build or remodel with fire-resistant building materials, such as brick, cement, masonry, or stucco.
- Be sure to extend materials from foundation to roof.

Water Supply 10

- Have multiple garden hoses that are long enough to reach any area of your home and other structures on your property.



Windows 11

- Heat from a wildfire can cause windows to break even before the home ignites. This allows burning embers to enter and start internal fires. Single-paned and large windows are particularly vulnerable.
- Install dual-paned windows with an exterior pane of tempered glass to reduce the chance of breakage in a fire.
- Limit the size and number of windows in your home that face large areas of vegetation.

Utilities

- Ensure that your family knows where your gas, electric, and water main shut-off controls are and how to safely shut them down in an emergency.



Create a Personal Wildfire Action Plan

A Personal Wildfire Action Plan must be prepared with all members of your household well in advance of a fire.

Get SET — Prepare Your Family

Use the following checklists to help you prepare your Personal Wildfire Action Plan.

Each household's plan will be different, depending on your situation.

Once your plan is finished, rehearse it regularly with your household. Keep it in a safe and accessible place for quick implementation.

- ☐ **Create a Wildfire Action Plan** that includes meeting locations and communication plans. Rehearse it regularly. Include in your plan the evacuation of large animals, such as horses.
- ☐ Have fire extinguishers on hand and train your household how to use them.
- ☐ Ensure that your household knows where your gas, electric and water main shut-off controls are and how to use them.
- ☐ Plan several different escape routes.
- ☐ Designate an emergency meeting location outside of the fire hazard area.
- ☐ Assemble a disaster supply kit. Go to <https://www.ready.gov/kit> for information on how to assemble a kit.
- ☐ Appoint an out-of-area friend or relative as a point of contact so that you can communicate with household members who have relocated.
- ☐ Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers posted near your phone and in your disaster supply kit.
- ☐ Keep an extra disaster supply kit in your car in the event you can not get to your home because of fire.
- ☐ Have a portable radio or scanner so that you can stay updated on the fire.
- ☐ Register to receive local Santa Barbara County emergency notifications. Go to www.ReadySBC.org



AS THE FIRE APPROACHES

- ☐ Alert your household and neighbors.
- ☐ Dress in long sleeves and long pants made of natural fibers. Wear work boots. Have goggles and a dry bandana or particle mask handy.
- ☐ Ensure you have your disaster supplies kit on hand. Including such items as a battery-powered radio, spare batteries, emergency contact numbers, and ample drinking water.
- ☐ Stay tuned to your TV or local radio stations for updates, or check the Fire Department website at www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Fire.
- ☐ Remain close to your house, drink plenty of water and keep an eye on household members.
- ☐ Keep animals secured in appropriate carriers so you can find them when you need to evacuate.

Outdoor Checklist

- ☐ Gather up flammable items from the exterior of the house and bring them inside (e.g., patio furniture, children's toys, doormats, etc.) or place them in your pool.
- ☐ Turn off propane tanks.
- ☐ Connect garden hoses to outside taps.
- ☐ Don't leave sprinklers on or water running—they waste critical water pressure.
- ☐ Leave exterior lights on.
- ☐ Back your car into the garage to safely exit if you are evacuated. Shut car doors and roll up windows.
- ☐ Have a ladder available.
- ☐ Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals.

Indoor Checklist

- ☐ Shut all windows and doors, leaving them unlocked.
- ☐ Remove flammable window shades and/or curtains and close metal shutters.
- ☐ Move flammable furniture to the center of the room, away from windows and doors.
- ☐ Shut off gas as the meter. Turn off pilot lights.
- ☐ Keep your lights on so firefighters can see your house under smoky conditions.
- ☐ Shut off the air conditioning.

If You are Trapped: Survival Tips

- ☐ Shelter away from outside walls.
- ☐ Patrol inside your home for spot fires and extinguish them.
- ☐ Wear long sleeves and long pants made of natural fibers such as cotton.
- ☐ Stay hydrated.
- ☐ Ensure you can exit the home if it catches fire (remember if it's hot inside the house it is four to five times hotter outside).
- ☐ After the fire has passed, check your roof and extinguish any fires, sparks or embers.
- ☐ Check inside the attic for hidden embers.
- ☐ Patrol your property and extinguish small fires.
- ☐ If there are fires that you cannot extinguish with a small amount of water or in a short period of time, call 911.

SIX "P'S" TO REMEMBER

Keep the six "P's" ready, in case an immediate evacuation is required:

- ☐ **People** and pets
- ☐ **Papers**, phone numbers, and important documents
- ☐ **Prescriptions**, vitamins, and eyeglasses
- ☐ **Pictures** and irreplaceable memorabilia
- ☐ **Personal computers** (info. on hard drive and disks)
- ☐ **"Plastic"** (credit cards, ATM cards) and cash

By leaving early, you will give your household the best chance of surviving a wildfire.

You also help firefighters by keeping roads clear of congestion, enabling them to move more freely and do their job.



GO Early — Stay Aware

Use this section and previous tips and tools to develop your own Personal Wildfire Action Plan.

WHEN TO GO

- ☐ Leave early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke, or road congestion.
- ☐ Don't wait to be told by authorities to leave. In an intense wildfire, there may not be time to knock on every door.
- ☐ If you are advised to leave, don't hesitate!
- ☐ If a Red Flag Alert is issued, leave early if possible.
- ☐ Evaluate possible fire situations with your household and determine at what point you will go.

WHERE TO GO

- ☐ Leave to a predetermined emergency meeting location. This location should be located well outside of the fire risk area. Consider a friend or relative's house, a Red Cross shelter or evacuation center, a hotel, etc.
- ☐ Contact your out of area friend or relative and make them aware of your location.

HOW TO GET THERE

- ☐ Determine routes of travel to get to your emergency meeting location.
- ☐ Make sure you develop more than one route of travel, in case one route is blocked by the fire or by emergency vehicles and equipment.
- ☐ Choose a route of travel well away from the fire.

WHAT TO TAKE

- ☐ Take your disaster supply kit and your six "P's" items as outlined on page 9.
- ☐ Take all animals with you and make sure they are safely secured so they do not escape.
- ☐ Determine any additional items that are important for you to take.
- ☐ Organize your household members.

Register to receive local Santa Barbara City emergency notifications at www.ReadySBC.org.

My Personal Wildfire Action Plan

Write up your Personal Wildfire Action Plan and post it in a location where every member of your household can see it. Rehearse it with your household.

During high fire hazard days or during a Red Flag Alert in your area, monitor your local media for information on brush fires and be ready to implement your plan. Hot, dry, and windy conditions create the perfect environment for a wildfire.

GO Early

When to go: _____

Where to go: _____

How to get there: _____

What to take: ☐ Insurance Papers ☐ Photos ☐ Prescriptions ☐ Important Documents ☐ "Plastic"/Cash

Who to tell (before and after): _____

Important Phone Numbers

Emergency: _____

School: _____

Household: _____

Friends: _____

Animal Shelter: _____



City of Santa Barbara, Fire Department
If you have an emergency, call **911**
Office: **805-965-5254**
Website: **www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Fire**



City of Santa Barbara, Fire Department
121 W. Carillo St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

A photograph showing two firefighters in silhouette on a hillside at night. They are looking down at a city below, which is illuminated by many lights. The sky is dark with some light clouds.

Ready, Set, Go!

Additional Resources On The Web

City of Santa Barbara Fire Department
www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Wildland

American Red Cross
www.redcross.org

Federal Emergency Management Agency
www.fema.gov

Firewise Communities
www.firewise.org

California Fire Safe Council
www.firesafecouncil.org

California Department of Forestry and Fire
Protection - CAL FIRE
www.fire.ca.gov

California Department of Insurance
www.insurance.ca.gov

National Fire Protection Association
www.nfpa.org

ReadySBC
www.ReadySBC.org