

IMPORTANT: ACTION REQUIRED

- Annual Inspection Notice
- Wildfire Mitigation Compliance Standards



SAN RAFAEL FIRE DEPARTMENT

1375 Fifth Ave
San Rafael, CA 94901

www.srfd.org

Dear San Rafael Neighbor,

Your safety is our priority, passion, and mission – but we need your help! Over the past few years we have all seen the devastating impact of wildfires. To help protect your family, friends, homes, businesses and community, the City has adopted new vegetation standards. Fire knows no boundaries and therefore vegetation standards now apply to all structures and property Citywide.

We hope this notice is helpful in understanding the updated standards. Focus your efforts closest to your structure and work your way out following a ‘house-out’ approach. Various assistance, including Chipper Days and one-on-one assessments with our staff, are available to all residents.

Property owners in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) have until **August 2021** to adjust their landscape to comply. Those in all other areas of the City have until **April 2022**. Single plant exemptions may be possible following a site assessment and approval of the Fire Chief or a designee.

Supported by current research, **Defensible Space** and **Home Hardening** are critical to help protect your family, home, and business from wildfire. To learn more about how to reduce wildfire risk, the support available, information about our other wildfire risk-reduction efforts, and to check if your property is located in the WUI, see the resources section of this document or contact us.

Together, we can help San Rafael adapt to living with fire.

Sincerely,

Darin White, Fire Chief

Quinn Gardner, Emergency Manager

COMPLIANCE: IT'S THE LAW!

In accordance with San Rafael Municipal Code (SRMC) Chapter 4.12, property owners have a **year-round responsibility** to maintain their vegetation in an effort to reduce wildfire risk.

The San Rafael Fire Department offers year-round compliance assessments, with an increased effort starting each spring. **If you are not in compliance** at the time of an initial assessment, you will be issued a Notice of Violation and a timeline for re-assessment.

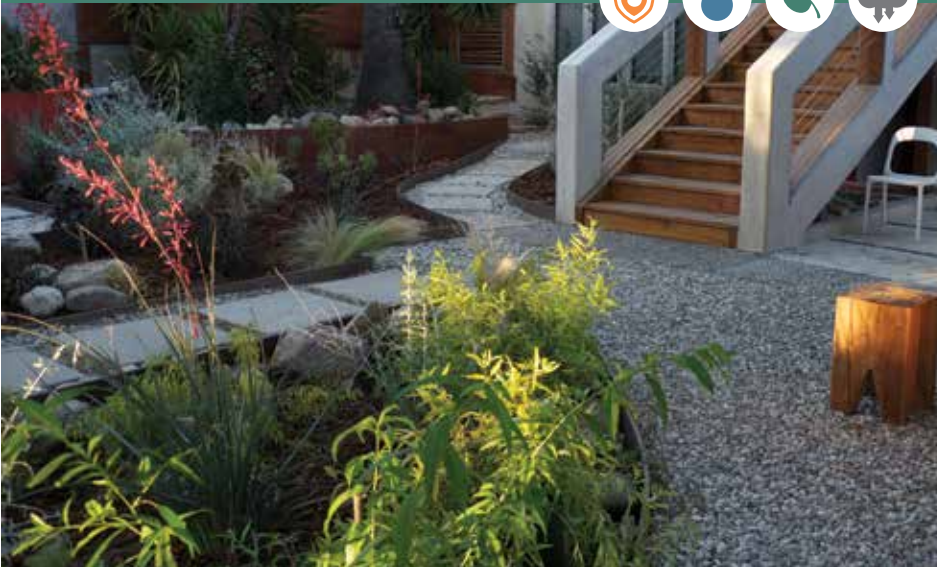
Failure to meet the standards during the re-assessment may result in fines and/or abatement costs as per SRMC 4.12.050 and 4.12.060.

We encourage residents to take advantage of the various resources available to help you comply and avoid any enforcement action. **If you rent or lease**, please review the terms of your lease and work with your property owner to achieve compliance.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND PRACTICES FOR DEFENSIBLE SPACE

The San Rafael Fire Department recognizes the importance of caring for and maintaining the City's unique and biodiverse natural landscapes. During the process of creating a more fire-resilient community, the City and residents should also prioritize ecological health. Defensible space should be created in a fire-smart, water-wise, and habitat and climate-friendly manner whenever possible.

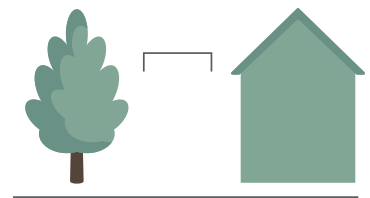
When creating defensible space around homes and structures, focus on the removal of fire-hazardous and non-native plants. Well-spaced, appropriate, fire-smart replacement plants can help create ecological benefits that include wildlife habitat, attraction of pollinators, conservation of water, and long-term carbon storage. *Review the resources provided to learn more about fire smart planting and maintenance.*



CC BY 2.0 Grey Water Garden by Jeremy Levine Design

WHAT IS DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

Defensible Space (D-space) is at least a 100-foot buffer around structures to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and help protect your home from catching fire. Using specific standards for each zone, D-space advocates for fire-smart plant and ground cover selection as well as adequate spacing and maintenance, NOT the complete removal of all vegetation. *See Protect Your Home and Community from Wildfire section for D-space guidance.*



We Are Here To Help

SRFD.org

srfd.dspace@cityofsanrafael.org

Info Line: 415-721-2875

¿Hablas español?

Visite srfd.org/espanol

REMOVE COMBUSTIBLE VEGETATION

The plants below are considered Combustible Vegetation by the City of San Rafael (SRMC 4.12.020) and must be removed within 30 feet of structures:



Juniper (genus Juniperus)



Acacia (genus Acacia)



Bamboo (genus Bambusa)



Italian Cypress
(Cupressus sempervirens)

Combustible Vegetation and additional fire hazardous plants include: Black Sage; Chamise/Grease-wood; Chaparral Pea; Chinquapin, Giant; Coyote Brush;

California Sagebrush; Scrub Oak (brushy oaks); Bluegum Eucalyptus; Gorse; Pampas Grass; French, Scotch, and Spanish Broom.

Protect Your Home and Community from Wildfire

CREATE AND MAINTAIN DEFENSIBLE SPACE

San Rafael's specific requirements are summarized here. For the full text, please visit www.srfd.org

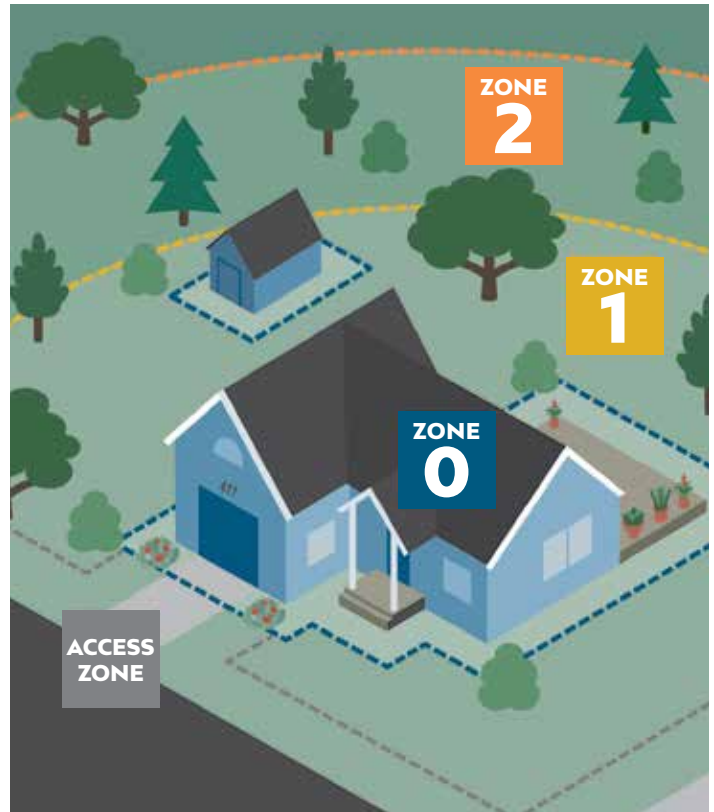
ZONE 0: The Immediate Zone | within 5'

- Remove accumulated leaves, needles and dead vegetative growth from the roof, gutters, decks, porches, and stairways.
- All vegetation in this zone shall be well-irrigated and free from dead or dying material. Trim to avoid contact with structure.
- Maintain adequate space between tree canopies. Remove all dead and dying branches.
- Remove all Combustible Vegetation. Remaining plants shall not be continuous. See *Remove Combustible Vegetation* section.
- Avoid fire-hazardous plants, particularly under or near windows.
- Mulch should not make contact with structure. Rock and pavers are encouraged.

ZONE 1: Intermediate Zone | within 30'

- Remove all Junipers, Bamboo, Acacia, and Italian Cypress.
- Remove all vegetation within 10 feet of chimney or stovepipe.
- Keep woodpiles and other highly combustible material at least 10 feet from structures.

Keep it lean, green, and clean.
In every zone, remove lower tree branches, maintain adequate space between plants and trees, keep highly combustible material away from structures and remove dead vegetation. Choose fire smart plants.



ZONE 2: Extended Zone | within 100'

- Remove lower tree branches within 5 feet of the ground, not to exceed $\frac{1}{3}$ of the tree's total height.
- Cut and remove grasses and weeds to a maximum height of 3 inches.
- Loose surface material, including leaves, twigs, and mulch, should be no more than 3 inches deep.
- Remove all Combustible Vegetation (single-specimen exemptions may apply). See *Remove Combustible Vegetation* section.
- Considering slope, maintain adequate horizontal and vertical spacing to prevent a "fire bridge" or "ladder." See *Plant and Tree Spacing* section.
- Remove piles of dead vegetation.

ACCESS ZONE | roadways & driveways

- Assure safe access and egress by maintaining vegetation within 10 feet of roadways and driveways similarly to the Immediate Zone. Provide for $13\frac{1}{2}$ foot clearance above roadway.

PLANT AND TREE SPACING

Spacing between grass, shrubs, trees, and combustible materials is crucial to reduce the spread of wildfires.

VERTICAL SPACING

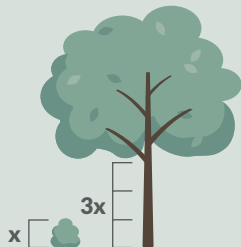
Remove all tree branches at least 5 feet from the ground.



Shrubs can act as a fire ladder or bridge that spreads fire to trees

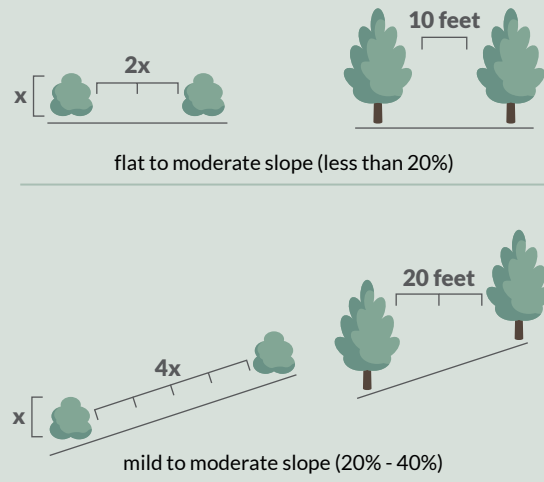


Maintain minimum vertical clearance, as shown in diagram.



HORIZONTAL SPACING

Horizontal spacing depends on the slope of the land and the height of the shrubs or trees. Check the chart below to determine spacing distance.



Since fire moves faster up slope, greater plant and tree spacing is required on steeper slopes.

HARDEN YOUR HOME AND PROTECT AGAINST EMBER IGNITIONS



Photo © Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety



CC BY USFWS Northeast Region




Photo: ucan.redu/sites/fire

Follow the suggestions below to help protect your home and business from ember ignitions.

- Clean roofs, gutters, and vents of dead leaves, pine needles, and debris.
- Enclose or cover gaps over $\frac{1}{8}$ inch with metal mesh. This includes vents, eaves, and soffits.
- Screen or box in areas under patios and decks to prevent debris from accumulating. Remove anything stored underneath.
- Move combustible material away from exterior walls.
- Prevent ember penetration: Seal gaps around openings and reaffix missing shingles.
- Install spark arrester on chimneys (even if not used).
- Consider replacing or treating combustible building materials, such as wood shingles, wood siding, and poorly maintained wood decks or steps.

EMERGENCY ALERTS

 Residents must register for these opt-in systems to receive critical evacuation and fire information.

ALERT MARIN www.alertmarin.org

All Marin residents must register their cell phones, VoIP phones and landlines to receive emergency alerts by call, text, email, or app. Register contact numbers for all family members so they'll receive warning when emergencies threaten.



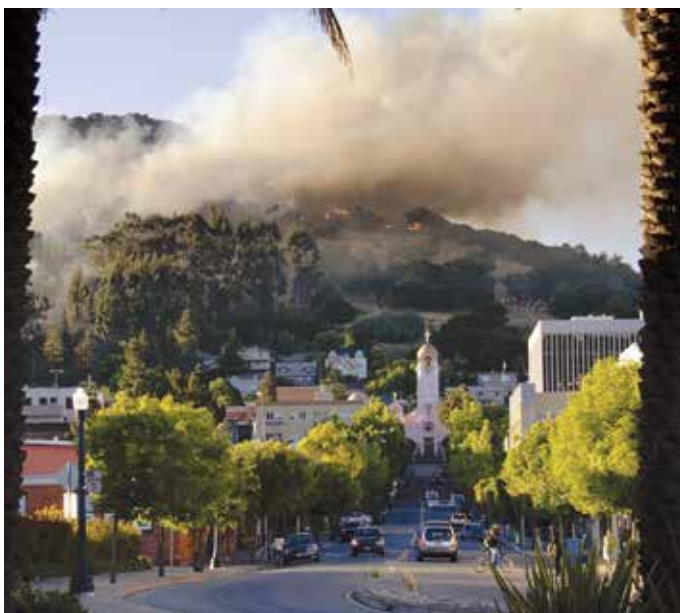
[Sign up for Alert Marin](#)



[Regístrese para Alerta Marin](#)

NIXLE nixle.com or text 5 digit zip code to 888-777

Used to provide **incident information** for a **specific zip code** such as road closures, general updates, issues affecting larger areas, post-disaster information, police activity and general public safety information.



CC BY San Rafael Fire by Chris Smith

WILDFIRE PREVENTION & PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

EMERGENCY: DIAL 9-1-1

- FireSafeMarin
firesafemarin.org
- Firewise USA
nfpa.org/Firewise
- CalFire
readyforwildfire.org
- San Rafael Office of Emergency Services
sroes.org

PLANT RESOURCES

Learn more about fire smart and fire hazardous plants

- UC Marin Master Gardeners
marinmg.ucanr.edu
- Marin Chapter California Native Plant Society
cnpsmarin.org
- San Rafael is a Tree City
cityofsanrafael.org/tree-city
- Fire Smart Planting
firesafemarin.org/plants

OTHER RESOURCES

- Am I in the WUI?
SRFD.org/wuimap
- Report a Concern
cityofsanrafael.org/#/city/report
- PG&E: Trees in Powerlines & PSPS
1-800-743-5000 | pge.com/safety
- Yard Trimmings and Waste
415-456-2601
marinsanitaryservice.com/residential-compostables/