

AGENDA
SAN RAFAEL FIRE COMMISSION

Wednesday, February 14, 2024 @ 4:00 P.M.
Public Safety Center, Lobby Conference Room
1375 5th Ave, San Rafael, CA 94901

Watch on Zoom: <https://cityofsanrafael-org.zoom.us/j/83441506482>

Webinar ID: 834 4150 6482

Listen by phone: +1 669 900 9128

Members of the Public May Speak on Agenda Items

1. Open Time for Public Expression

The public is welcome to address the Fire Commission at this time on matters not on the agenda that are within its jurisdiction. Please be advised that pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2, the Fire Commission is not permitted to discuss or take action on any matter not on the agenda unless it determines that an emergency exists, or that there is a need to take immediate action which arose following posting of the agenda. Comments may be no longer than two minutes and should be respectful to the community.

2. Approval of Minutes – January 10, 2024

Recommended Action: Amend and or approve as submitted.

3. Annual Wildfire Safety Mailer – Presentation

Recommended Action: Provide input and accept presentation.

4. Fire Foundation – Verbal Update from Commissioner Donna McCusker

Recommended Action: Accept Verbal Report and take appropriate action.

5. Current Media Coverage

Sonoma County Fire District to launch 911 ambulance service – Sonoma County Gazette

6. Chair and Commission Member Reports:

-  Stan Burford– Chair
-  David Fonkalsrud- Vice Chair
-  Ken Johnson
-  Thomas Weathers
-  Donna McCusker
-  John Chung
-  Brian Waterbury

Informational only. No action to be taken on these items.

7. Fire Chief Report

Informational only. No action to be taken.

Any records relating to an agenda item, received by a majority or more of the board or commission less than 72 hours before the meeting, shall be available for inspection at San Rafael Fire Department's Administrative Office, 1375 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, CA. Sign Language interpreters and assistive listening devices may be requested by calling (415) 485-3066 (voice), emailing Lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org or using the California Telecommunications Relay Service by dialing "711", at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Copies of documents are available in accessible formats upon request. Public transportation is available through Golden Gate Transit, Line 22 or 23. Paratransit is available by calling Whistlestop. Wheels at (415) 454-0964. To allow individuals with environmental illness or multiple chemical sensitivity to attend the meeting/hearing, individuals are requested to refrain from wearing scented products.

CITY OF SAN RAFAEL

FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

January 10, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

In person meeting at 1375 Fifth Ave, San Rafael, CA 94901

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Chair Burford

Present:

Chair Stan Burford
Commissioner Donna McCusker
Commissioner Ken Johnson
Commissioner Dave Fonkalsrud
Commissioner Waterbury
Commissioner Chung
Chief Sinnott
Thomas Wong

1. Open Time for Public Expression

No public comments

2. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Fonkalsrud makes a motion to approve the draft minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson.

The minutes are adopted unanimously.

3. Appoint Chair and Vice-Chair for 2024

Commissioner Johnson motions to reelect Chair Burford and Vice-Chair Fonkalsrud in their current role. Commissioner Chung seconds. Commission unanimously approved to reelect Chair Burford and Vice-Chair Fonkalsrud for 2024.

4. Fire Foundation

Commissioner McCusker announces her donation from the Fire Foundation to start the San Rafael Fire Department's first drone program. The program will be in honor of her late brother, San Rafael Firefighter Michael McCusker and the drone will be named "Big Mac". Battalion Chief Kyle Hamilton assisted in getting the approvals to make the program come true.

5. Current Media Coverage

Marin mental crisis team fortifies public safety system – Marin Independent Journal

Commissioner Fonkalsrud shares an article about a nine person response team that is assisting those that the fire department respond to often, for non-emergency calls.

7. Commissioners' Report

Commissioner Fonkalsrud reports that he helped provide gifts to station 55 which they appreciated. He asks whether SRFD has any volunteer firefighter program. Chief Roman says we do not have a program, but SRFD is looking at doing something like that as it is a good feeder program. Marinwood has one and Chief Roman is interested in working with them as it could work as a good feeder for SRFD. The department does have Explorers and a new cadet program.

Commissioner Johnson commends the drone program. He talks about the drone program at FAIRA and will put the department in touch with his contact there.

Commissioner Chung visited Station 51 and took out Fire Admin to lunch for the holidays.

Commissioner Waterbury went through his old items and provided Fire Management Plans from the early 2000's.

Chair Burford did a station visit at 57 and enjoyed it. The crew was friendly, and they chatted for a long time.

8. Fire Chief's Report

Chief Sinnott provides department wide updates including there were no holiday tragedies this year, Station 54 opened on January 3rd, and offer letters for new FF/PM candidates are going out.

Meeting adjourned at 5:22 PM



San Rafael Fire Commission Meeting

February 14, 2024

Agenda Item 3 – Annual Wildfire Safety Mailer

For the past three years, the San Rafael Wildfire Prevention Team has sent direct mail to all San Rafael residents and property owners to help prepare for fire season. The design, print, and mailing cost of the mailers are part of our Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) budget. These mailers have served multiple goals including but not limited to:

- Informing property owners of their legal responsibilities as it related to defensible space and San Rafael Municipal Code 4.12 requirements
- Providing information on support resources such as grants and direct assistance
- Providing educational and actionable information
- Encouraging emergency alert registration
- Serve as a year round reference/educational resource

The [2021 mailer](#) was a fold up that provided the most extensive information. It was the first sent after SRMC 4.12 was updated. Opened to 11x16 and mailed as a 5.5x8

The [2022 mailer](#) was a larger post card (6.5x11) format that focused on providing information on resources and providing a blueprint for actionable information

The [2023 mailer](#) was a larger post card that highlighted successes to apply peer pressure towards action. It also included information on resources and actionable steps to take.

As we plan our design for 2024 we are seeking your input on how we can further inspire change and share the successes of the MWPA. Some specific considerations include:

- What format and size should we use- postcard, brochure, fold up letter, etc.
- What should the overall intent and feeling be? Fear based, helpful, peer pressure, fine threatening, educational, or other? Some ‘themes’ could be:
 - Enforcement is underway, avoid fines
 - We are here to help
 - Take action or face risk
 - Did you know?
- How to support language access and overcome the digital divide?
- Should the mailer be limited to the City of San Rafael or include Marinwood and/or the CSAs?

Your feedback will help provide direction for the tone and visuals of the 2024 mailer.



HELP SAN RAFAEL REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK

It's your responsibility. It's the law.

Complete Seasonal Maintenance

- Clear gutters, cut tall grasses, and prune vegetation
- Remove dead and dying vegetation from your property
- Fill your green cart up every week
- Sign up for a Chipper Day: www.chipperday.com/marin



Schedule a Wildfire Safety Evaluation

Get a customized checklist of steps to reduce wildfire risk. Sign up at srfd.org.



Create and Maintain Defensible Space

- Create a buffer between buildings & vegetation
- Keep things "Lean, Clean, and Green"
- Install gutter guards and ember resistant vents



Make an Evacuation Plan

- Sign up for Emergency Alerts at www.alertmarin.org
- Stay informed at www.emergency.marincounty.org
- Map your evacuation route at www.aware.zonehaven.com



The Fire Department can assist! Learn more at srfd.org.

Grant Funding

Get up to \$1000 back for risk reduction work.

Eligible expenses can include:

- Vegetation removal
- Pruning
- Installation of gutter guards
- Ember-safe vents
- ...and much more!

Direct Assistance

The Fire Department's team can help remove vegetation for free. Reach out for more information!

Citations are being issued. * Protect your home today!

*In March of 2019, City Council adopted citywide wildfire safety vegetation standards. SRMC 4.12 requires all property owners to comply with the standards for community safety or face monetary penalties.



SAN RAFAEL FIRE DEPARTMENT

1375 Fifth Ave
San Rafael, CA 94901
www.srfd.org
(415) 485-3304



Stay Connected

- facebook.com/sanrafaelfd
- twitter.com/srfd
- instagram.com/sanrafaelfd

¿Hablas español?
Visite srfd.org/espanol.



Working Hard for Our Community

8,400+

Wildfire safety evaluations conducted in 2022



Juniper, Italian Cypress, bamboo, and vegetation too close to structures were some of the most common risks

1541 cubic yards

Hazardous vegetation removed during 2022 Chipper Days

Over 600 🏠

Households have received grants or direct assistance from the San Rafael Fire Department

\$150,000+

Grant dollars issued directly to residents



To learn more, visit the San Rafael Fire Department website by scanning the QR code.




SAN RAFAEL FIRE DEPARTMENT
 1375 Fifth Avenue
 San Rafael, CA 94901
 415-485-3054
 www.srfd.org



We are here to help you adapt to living with wildfire:

- Grants for Residents
- Free Chipper Days
- Free Direct Assistance
- Free Annual Wildfire Hazard Evaluations
- Education, Preparedness, and Evacuation Resources

PSRST STD
US POSTAGE
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SAN RAFAEL,
CA
PERMIT NO. 212

POSTAL CUSTOMER
SAN RAFAEL, CA

ADAPT TO WILDFIRE

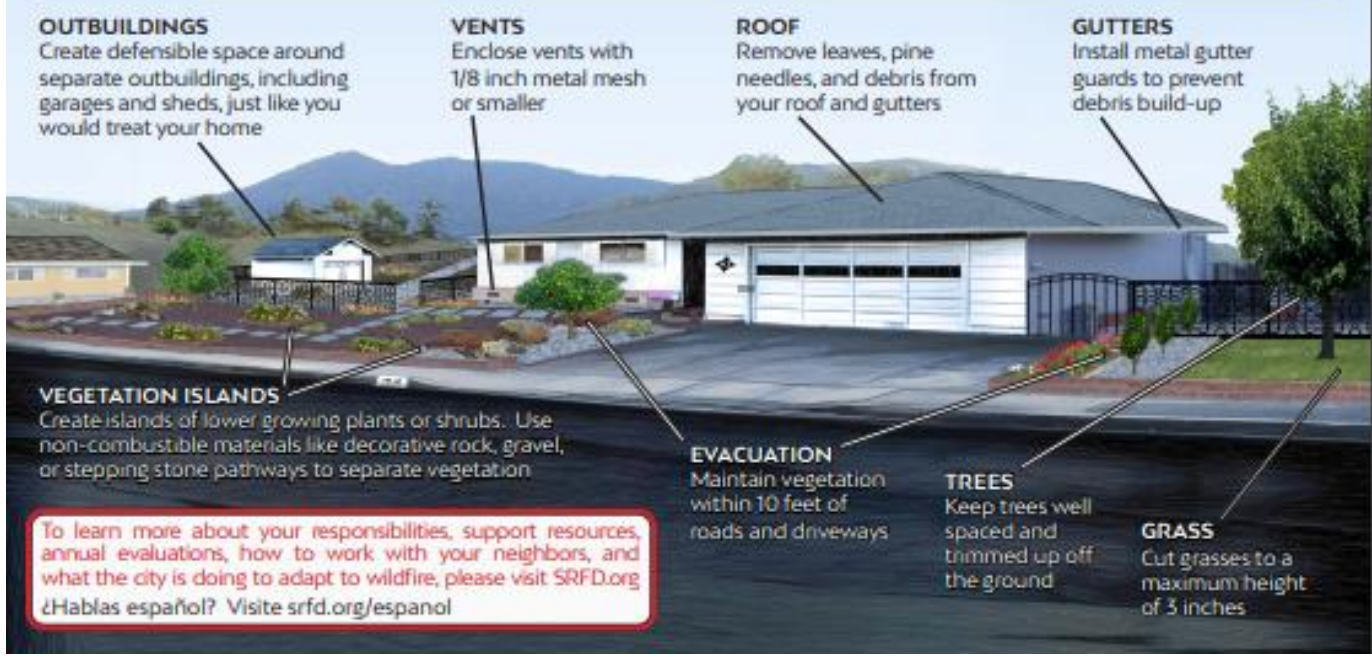
PROPERTY OWNERS HAVE A YEAR-ROUND RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN THEIR VEGETATION IN AN EFFORT TO REDUCE FIRE RISK. FAILURE TO MEET THE STANDARDS MAY RESULT IN FINES AND/OR ABATEMENT COSTS PER SRMC 4.12.

 YOUR
FIRE FUNDS
AT WORK
marinwildfire.org



START FROM THE HOUSE OUT AND KEEP IT GREEN, LEAN, and CLEAN

Take action now to reduce the wildfire risk to your home



OUTBUILDINGS
Create defensible space around separate outbuildings, including garages and sheds, just like you would treat your home

VENTS
Enclose vents with 1/8 inch metal mesh or smaller

ROOF
Remove leaves, pine needles, and debris from your roof and gutters

GUTTERS
Install metal gutter guards to prevent debris build-up

VEGETATION ISLANDS
Create islands of lower growing plants or shrubs. Use non-combustible materials like decorative rock, gravel, or stepping stone pathways to separate vegetation

EVACUATION
Maintain vegetation within 10 feet of roads and driveways

TREES
Keep trees well spaced and trimmed up off the ground

GRASS
Cut grasses to a maximum height of 3 inches

To learn more about your responsibilities, support resources, annual evaluations, how to work with your neighbors, and what the city is doing to adapt to wildfire, please visit SRFD.org
¿Hablas español? Visite srfd.org/espanol



PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
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SAN RAFAEL FIRE DEPARTMENT

1375 Fifth Ave
San Rafael, CA 94901

www.srfd.org


**IMPORTANT:
ACTION REQUIRED**

- Annual Inspection Notice
- Wildfire Mitigation Compliance Standards

FUNDED BY

MARIN WILDFIRE
 PREVENTION AUTHORITY
www.marinwildfire.org

EMERGENCY ALERTS

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

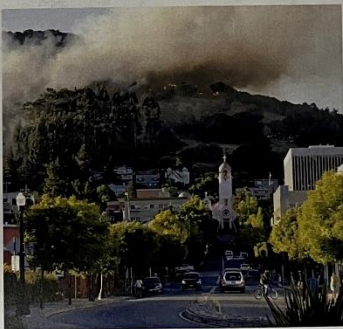
ALERT MARIN www.alertmarin.org

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.



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

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



WILDFIRE PREVENTION & PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

EMERGENCY: DIAL 9-1-1

- FireSafeMarin firesafemarin.org
- Firewise USA nfpa.org/Firewise
- CalFire readyforwildfire.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/

When mailed- this folded in half, so if the seal was never opened this was all that was seen.

Open 8x11. When mailed 8x5.5

This was the full opened information. 11x16

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 sidebar*.
- 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.

ZONE 2: Extended Zone | within 100'

- Remove lower tree branches within 5 feet of the ground, not to exceed 1/3 of the tree's total height.
- Cut 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 sidebar*.
- Considering slope, maintain adequate horizontal and vertical spacing to prevent a "fire bridge". See *Plant and Tree Spacing sidebar*.
- 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' foot clearance above roadway.

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:



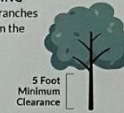
Combustible Vegetation and additional fire hazardous plants include Black Sage, Chamise/Greasewood, Chaparral Pea, Chincapin, Giant Coyote Brush, Sagebrush (California), Scrub Oak (brushy oaks), Bluegum Eucalyptus, Gorse, Pampas Grass, French, Scotch, and Spanish Broom

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 fire "ladders" that spread to trees.

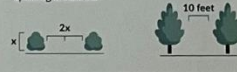


Maintain minimum vertical clearance, as shown in diagram.



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.



mild to moderate slope (20% - 40%)



moderate to steep slope (greater than 40%)

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

HARDEN YOUR HOME AND PROTECT AGAINST EMBER IGNITIONS



Following the suggestions below will help protect your home from ember ignitions.

- Clean roofs, gutters, and vents of dead leaves, pine needles, and debris.
- Seal or cover gaps over 1/4 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 reattach missing shingles.
- Install spark arrester on chimneys (even if not used).
- Consider replacing or treating combustible building materials, such as wood shingles, wood siding, or poorly maintained wood decks or steps.

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**. Exemptions are 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 mailer 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.

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. Visit the resources section of this mailer to learn more about fire smart planting.



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 mailer interior 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/XXXXXXXXXX