



Brush Clearance Annual Notice FAQs

Residents of the Palos Verdes Peninsula have recently received a Defensible Space Annual Notice (formerly known as the Brush Clearance Annual Notice) from the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD). Some homeowners are receiving this notice for the first time. Consequently, the Peninsula Cities received a significant number of reports from residents who were confused or frustrated about their expectations for brush clearing this year. In partnership with the (LACoFD), the four cities of the Palos Verdes Peninsula are writing to provide residents with additional information regarding the current requirements for brush clearance.

Why Did I Receive This Notice?

- Your property is located within a Very High fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ) identified by The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).
- California Public Resources Code 4291 requires single-family dwellings within the VHFHSZ to maintain defensible space at all times around these structures.
- The LACoFD primarily conducts defensible space inspections on residential single-family dwellings; and will be focusing on single-family dwellings this year, then adding multifamily homes and condominiums next year.

What Is a Fire Hazard Severity Zone?

- CAL FIRE is required by law to map significant fire hazard areas based on fuels, terrain, local weather, and other factors.
- These designations, known as Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ), mandate how people construct buildings and protect property to reduce the risk of wildfires.
- The Palos Verdes Peninsula is almost entirely designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).

Why Is This the First Time I Am Receiving This Notice?

- In the past two years, the LACoFD has integrated mapping technology into its Defensible Space Inspection Program using a geospatial database that is significantly more accurate than the visual identification that had been used previously.
- Using this criteria-based mapping system, numerous uninspected parcels within the Palos Verdes Peninsula have been identified. These are the homeowners receiving the inspection notice for the very first time

When Will My Property Be Inspected?

- Your local fire station will begin inspections on June 1st, 2023.

Is There a Fee For The Inspection?

- Yes, In December of 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved an inspection fee \$151.00 to be applied to your November Tax Bill. However, the fee will be phased in over 3 years (2021 - \$50.00, 2022 - \$100.00, and 2023 - \$151.00).



Will I Receive a Report?

- Yes, a report showing Compliance or Violation will be left hanging on your door.

Do I Have to Be Home For The Inspection?

- No, your local fire station will attempt to complete the inspection through only unlocked and open access.

Will I Receive a Report Showing If My Property Is In Compliance?

- Yes, all property owners will receive an inspection report showing either ‘In Compliance’ or the violations that need to be corrected.

How much time will I have to make corrections?

- Owners have a minimum of 30 days to complete corrections.

Can I Call Someone If I Need Clarity on Requirements?

- Yes, prior to your inspection, please call the Brush Clearance Unit at (626) 969-2375. After your inspection, please call the phone number listed on your inspection report

What Is Assembly Bill 38 (AB 38)?

- Assembly Bill 38 (AB-38), commonly referred to as Real Estate Inspections, took effect on July 1, 2021. AB-38 requires, during escrow, that the seller of a property in the VHFHSZ submit documentation of a compliant defensible space inspection prior to closing. Homes that received their annual brush inspection within six months of closing can use that inspection, if compliant, to satisfy this requirement

What Is Assembly Bill 3074 (AB 3074)?

- State Assembly Bill 3074 (AB-3074) establishes Zone 0, which is a 5 foot Ember Resistant Zone that requires removal of all flammable materials within 5 feet of any structure.
- Zone 0 requirements will not be enforced until 2024, the LACoFD will be using this year’s inspections to educate property owners on what they need to do to become compliant with next year’s Zone 0 requirements.

Where Can I Get More Information?

- <https://fire.lacounty.gov/fire-hazard-reduction-programs/>
- <https://fire.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Defensible-Space-booklet-2021WEB.pdf>
- <https://openstates.org/ca/bills/20192020/AB3074/>

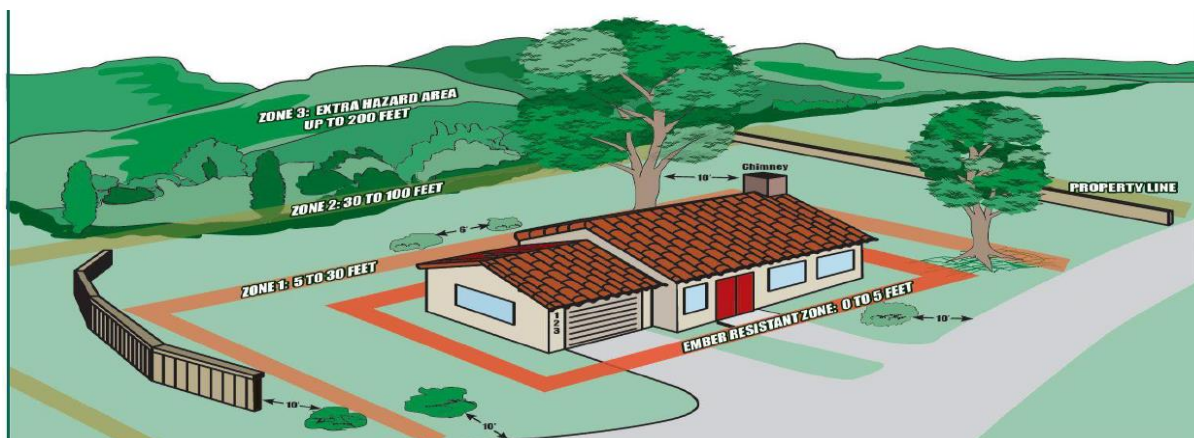


BRUSH CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS

It is your legal responsibility to take the necessary action by clearing vegetation around all structures at risk. A fire safe landscape creates a defensible space to help protect against approaching wildfires.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Establish a 5-foot Ember Resistant Zone around all structures. Eliminate all vegetation and materials that could be ignited by embers from a wildfire. **This is a new requirement imposed by the State of California via AB 3074. Enforcement of this requirement will begin in 2024. Informational only for 2023.**
- Removal of flammable vegetation within 50 feet of any structure. Native and ornamental vegetation known to be flammable, including but not limited to Acacia, Cedar, Cypress, Eucalyptus, Juniper, Pine, and Pampas Grass. ornamental grasses and ground cover should be maintained at no higher than 3 inches
- Thin remaining vegetation for the next 150 feet (or up to property line), for a total of 200 feet, around any structure by clearing, trimming, thinning, limbing up removing flammable vegetation and dead wood.
 - Specimen native trees and shrubs are permitted, provided they are spaced to not allow transmission of fire to a structure.
 - It is recommended that specimen shall be spaced a minimum of 15 feet or 3 times diameter from other specimens, structures or surrounding native brush.
- Access road shall be maintained with a minimum of 10 feet of brush clearance on each side. Fire access roads shall have an unobstructed vertical clearance to the sky. Trees overhanging fire access road shall be maintained to provide adequate vertical clearance.
- Fire hydrants shall maintain clearance of 3 feet.
- All trees and shrubs shall be maintained free of deadwood and litter.
 - Shrubs shall be trimmed up from the ground 1/3 of their height.
 - Trees shall be trimmed up to a minimum of 6 feet or 1/3 their height up to 40 feet.



PREPARE FOR WILDFIRES: CREATE AND MAINTAIN A DEFENSIBLE SPACE