

ESP

F O C U S

Wildfires

Get Ready, Set, Go!

On August 26, 2009, an arsonist ignited the Station Fire in the Angeles National Forest bordering Los Angeles County, and became the largest wildfire in its recorded history. It burned 160,577

acres – roughly the size of the City of Chicago – killed two Los Angeles County firefighters, and burned until mid-October. Fire is, and always has been, a natural part of Southern California’s landscape. These wildfires are often fueled by dry vegetation and driven by hot, dry “Santa Ana” winds, making them extremely dangerous and impossible to control. Fire season is now year-round and requires everyone to be on heightened alert, especially for those living in wildland area communities.

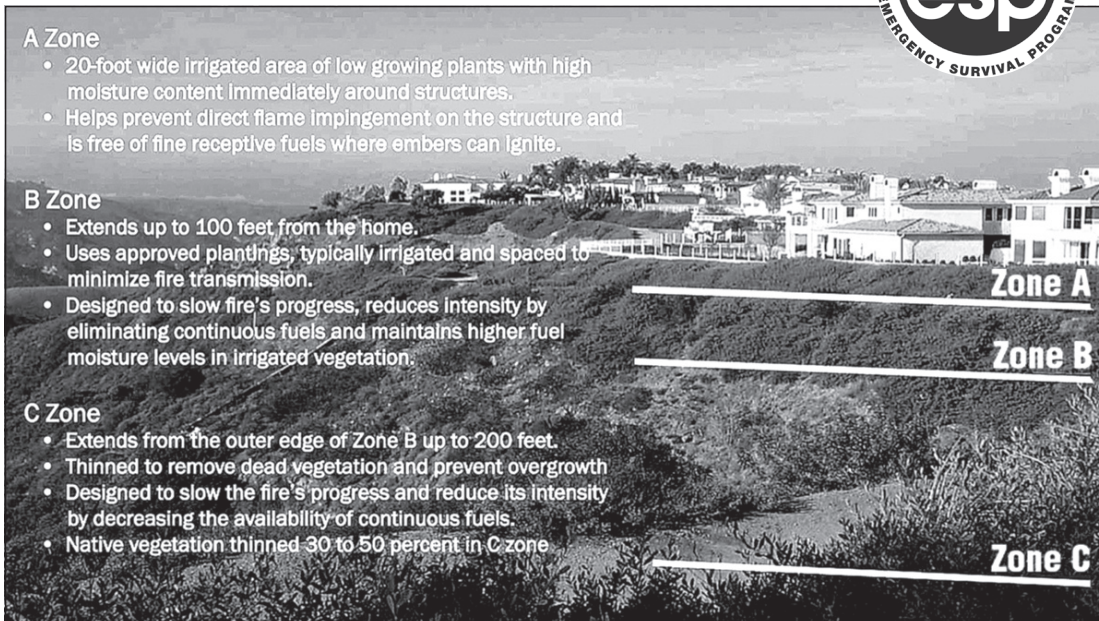


Following these simple steps from the County’s new Ready, Set, Go! Personal Wildfire Action Plan may save your life, your family, and protect your home from a devastating wildfire.

Get READY...Get in the Zone!

You can make your home more defensible so that it has the greatest chance of surviving a wildfire. For homes in High Fire Hazard Areas, the Los Angeles County Fire Department’s Fuel Modification Program helps protect homes and neighborhoods by requiring specific vegetation planted in three zones (Zones A, B, and C), as featured in the photo below.

Take a look at these three zones to become more familiar with what should be planted around your home. When added up, these zones extend over 300 feet from your home, and each is designed to keep wildfire from reaching your home.



A Zone

- 20-foot wide irrigated area of low growing plants with high moisture content immediately around structures.
- Helps prevent direct flame impingement on the structure and is free of fine receptive fuels where embers can ignite.

B Zone

- Extends up to 100 feet from the home.
- Uses approved plantings, typically irrigated and spaced to minimize fire transmission.
- Designed to slow fire’s progress, reduces intensity by eliminating continuous fuels and maintains higher fuel moisture levels in irrigated vegetation.

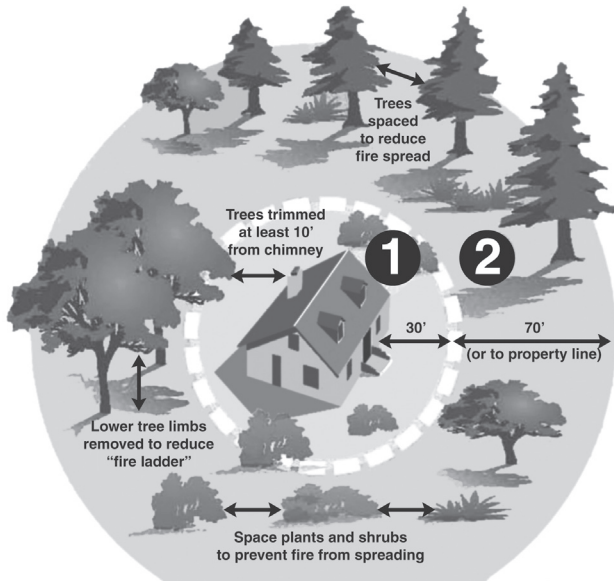
C Zone

- Extends from the outer edge of Zone B up to 200 feet.
- Thinned to remove dead vegetation and prevent overgrowth
- Designed to slow the fire’s progress and reduce its intensity by decreasing the availability of continuous fuels.
- Native vegetation thinned 30 to 50 percent in C zone

NOVEMBER

Check these websites

- www.fire.lacounty.gov/SafetyPreparedness/ReadySetGo/home.asp
- www.fema.gov (Federal Emergency Management Agency)
- www.calema.ca.gov (California Emergency Management Agency Cal-EMA)
- www.noaa.com (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)
- www.firesafecouncil.org (The Fire Safe Council)
- www.fire.ca.gov (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection)



Create Defensible Space Around Your Home

Defensible space is the area around your home that is free of flammable plants and objects. This space is wide enough to prevent the flames and heat from a wildfire to reach your home. There are two zones to help protect your property, as you can see in the diagram above. Zone 1 extends 30 feet out from all buildings, structures, decks, etc. To increase your protection, remove flammable vegetation within 30 feet of your home, or 50 feet if you live in areas determined to be “High Hazard.”

In Zone 2, thin out or remove vegetation an additional 70 feet from your home, for a total of 100 feet. High Hazard Areas may require up to 100 additional feet, for a total of 200 feet.

Learn How to “Harden” Your Home

Embers from a wildfire will find the weak link in your home’s construction and the quality of the “defensible space” surrounding it. You can safeguard your home by assessing it and taking these steps to “harden” it from the threat of wildfire:

- Roof your home with fire-resistant material.
- Block any spaces to prevent ember intrusion.
- All vent openings should be covered with 1/8 inch metal mesh. Fiberglass will melt and burn.
- Ensure that all trees are far away from power lines.
- Install dual-paned with exterior tempered glass to reduce breakage in a fire. Heat from a wildfire can cause windows to break before the home ignites.
- Fire-resistant building materials, such as brick, cement, masonry, or stucco, provide more protection than wood-siding.
- Keep a fire extinguisher and tools, such as a shovel, rake, bucket, and hoe, easily accessible.
- Screen or enclose rain gutters to prevent accumulation of plant debris.
- Have multiple garden hoses long enough to reach any area of your home.

Get SET – Prepare your Family

Your Wildfire Action Plan should be prepared with all members of your household well in advance of a fire. Once you finish your plan, rehearse it regularly with your family and keep it in a safe, accessible place. Below is a partial checklist; more preparation lists are available at www.fire.lacounty.gov.

- Create and rehearse a Family Disaster Plan that includes meeting locations and communication plans.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand and train your family on how to use them.
- Make sure your family knows where the gas, electric and water main shut-off controls are and how to use them.
- Plan several different escape routes.
- Assemble an emergency supply kit and keep an extra one in your car.
- Maintain emergency contact numbers.
- Appoint an out-of-state friend or relative as a point of contact.
- Keep a portable radio or scanner available.

GO Early – Don’t Hesitate!

Don’t wait until the fire comes to your neighborhood. By leaving early, you will give your family the best chance of survival. You will also help County firefighters by keeping the roads clear of congestion, which will help them move more freely and do their job to save your home! To get started, make a kit of the following items:

- Keep a pair of old shoes and a flashlight handy for a night evacuation.
- Keep the six “P’s” ready for immediate evacuation:
 - o People and pets
 - o Papers, phone numbers and important documents.
 - o Prescriptions, vitamins, and eyeglasses.
 - o Pictures and irreplaceable memorabilia
 - o Personal computers (information on hard drive and discs).
 - o “Plastic” (credit cards, ATM cards) and cash.
- Leave early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke, or road congestion.
- Don’t wait to be told by authorities to leave. They may not have time to knock on every door.
- Have a predetermined meeting place.
- Have several escape routes.

This project was supported by FY07 UASI funding awarded by the California Emergency Management Agency, through FEMA/DHS.



This information sheet is produced as part of the Emergency Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase home, neighborhood, business and school emergency preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles. The California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) and representatives from Contra Costa, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Marin, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura counties, Southern California Edison, the Southern California Earthquake Center and the American Red Cross assist in the development of campaign materials and coordination of the campaign.



Emergency Survival Program (ESP)

YOU CAN'T PREDICT. YOU CAN PREPARE!

Use the Emergency Survival Program's new list of actions as your guide for personal and community emergency preparedness.

January

Then and Now

In large regional earthquakes, such as the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, or the terrorism acts of September 11, 2001, emergency response agencies might be overwhelmed. You, your neighbors, co-workers and classmates may be forced to take actions on your own. Take time now to learn about what happened then and how it can prepare you for the safety actions to take now.

February

Make a Plan

Planning for an earthquake, terrorist attack, or other emergency is easier than you think. Make sure that your emergency plan includes evacuation and reunion plans; your out-of-state contact person's name and number; the location of your emergency supplies and other pertinent information. By planning now, you will be ready for the next emergency.

March

Make Disaster Kits

Everyone should have disaster supplies kits stored in accessible locations at home, at work and in your vehicle. Having emergency supplies readily available can reduce the impact of an earthquake, a terrorist incident or other emergency on you and your family. Your disaster supplies kits should include food, water, flashlights, portable radios, batteries, a first aid kit, cash, extra medications, a whistle, fire extinguisher, etc.

April

Floods

Storms can cause flash floods, create power outages and damage homes. Assemble emergency supplies to include sand bags; identify safe routes; and teach children to avoid areas of potential flooding. When flooding occurs, listen to the radio or watch television for information and instructions.

May

Terrorism

Fear is a major tactic used by terrorists to achieve political and social objectives. But the terrorists are not in charge. You can fight back by taking many of the same actions you would to prepare for earthquakes, fires, and other emergencies. Start by having a family emergency plan. Also assemble emergency supply kits at home, at work, and in your car.

June

Public Health Emergencies

Public Health Emergencies may be related to outbreaks of infectious diseases, food and waterborne illnesses, and other threats to the public's health and safety. Pandemic flu is of concern and health experts recommend the following to prevent the spread of flu: wash your hands with soap and water frequently; cover your cough and sneeze; stay home if you are sick. Stay away from others so they will not become sick. In autumn, get the flu shot!

July

Heat Wave

Although sun is necessary, exposure to ultraviolet radiation is potentially dangerous and can damage skin. Heat injuries that can occur include sunburn, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heatstroke. If your home is not air-conditioned, spend time in public facilities like public libraries, malls, and community centers that are air-conditioned. Never leave children or pets unattended in hot vehicles.

August

Drop, Cover, and Hold On!

Learn what to do during an earthquake, whether you're at home, at work, at school or just out and about. Taking the proper actions, such as "Drop, Cover, and Hold On", can save lives and reduce your risk of death or injury. During earthquakes, drop to the floor, take cover under a sturdy desk or table, and hold on to it firmly. Be prepared to move with it until the shaking stops. If you are at the beach, move to higher ground.

September

Back to School

Schools should have emergency plans to meet the threat of terrorism, earthquakes and other emergencies. They should be updated and exercised regularly. Emergency supplies, such as water, food and other basic items, are also an important part of school preparedness. If you are a parent or guardian, know your child's school emergency plan and make sure they have your updated emergency contact information.

October

Earthquakes

No one knows when the next earthquake will happen, but we can reduce its impact by being prepared. Identify hazards and remove or reduce them. Store emergency supplies and replenish them annually. Educate your family where to drop, cover, and hold on and take a first aid course. Conduct practice drills on a regular basis.

November

Fire and Ice

Preparedness is the key to surviving wildland fires and lethal winter storms. Timely preparation, including structural and non-structural measures to avoid the impacts of wildland fires and severe winter weather, can help reduce heavy repair expenditures following an event. Also remember to keep your car and other vehicles fueled and in good repair in case you are asked to evacuate. Have your emergency survival kit ready to go with you, just in case.

December

Landslides and Mudslides

Significant property damage can be caused by landslides and mudslides. Prepare an evacuation kit to include important documents and irreplaceable items such as photographs. When it rains, monitor the amount of rainfall and look for warning signs of landslides and mudslides such as new springs, tilted trees or new holes in hillsides.

Additional campaign materials are available through your local County Office of Emergency Management.

www.espfocus.org

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