

FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Ventura City Fire Department
Fire Hazard Reduction
P.O. Box 99 • Ventura, CA 93002-0099
(805) 654-7791
www.cityofventura.net/fire

The Ventura City Fire Department requests that property owners join forces to protect lives and structures from potential wildfire through participation in the ongoing Fire Hazard Reduction Program. **We also ask that you continue to maintain your property throughout the year and notify the assessors office of any address change.**

Clearance Requirements

1. On **vacant lots** all native brush, weeds, grass and hazardous vegetation shall be maintained at a height of not more than 3 inches above ground level. This does not apply to ornamental shrubbery, trees or ground cover.
2. On **developed lots**, all native brush, weeds, grass and hazardous vegetation within 100 ft. of any structure shall be maintained at a height of not more than 3 inches above ground level. You are responsible for clearance on your property only.

3. All native brush, weeds, grass and hazardous vegetation within 10 feet of any usable **road surface** shall be maintained at a height of not more than 3 inches.
4. All native brush, weeds, grass and hazardous vegetation within 10 feet of any **combustible fence** shall not exceed a maximum height of 3 inches.
5. All **rubbish, debris and resultant plant material** must be removed from site and legally disposed of, with the exception of finely mowed or chipped vegetation that will serve as mulch. For further guidance on fire-safe mulching, please contact Environmental Services at 805-652-4525.
6. **All vegetation**, native or otherwise shall be maintained so as not to constitute a fire hazard or public nuisance (shall not encroach on sidewalk and curb areas).
7. **Trees, shrubs, bushes**, or other vegetation adjacent to or overhanging any structure shall be maintained free of dead limbs and other combustible matter.
8. Trees shall be maintained so that no portion is closer than 5 feet from **roofline** and 10 feet from any **chimney** opening.
9. All **roof surfaces** shall be maintained free of substantial accumulations of needles, twigs, and any other combustible matter.
10. Grasses and other vegetation located more than 30 feet from any building and less than 18 inches in height may be retained where necessary to stabilize soil and prevent **erosion**.

Illegal dumping is a misdemeanor per Section 6.500.220 of the City of San Buenaventura Municipal Code. Information on disposal of vegetation is available through the Fire Department.

Exception

Specimen **native shrubs** can be retained throughout the 100 feet provided:

- a. They are spaced at a distance equal to three times their diameter, but in no event closer than 18 feet from other native shrubs, brush or structures.
- b. Specimen native shrubs shall be maintained free of dead wood and litter, trimmed up at least 2 feet from the ground or 1/3 of their height, whichever is less.

Ventura City Fire Department personnel may introduce greater protection levels in high danger areas. In cases where difficult terrain, danger or erosion or unusual circumstances make compliance impractical, they can suspend or adjust the requirements.

Enforcement

The goal of the Ventura City Fire Department is to establish a fire-safe community through voluntary compliance of informed property owners and residents. However, failure to comply with vegetation clearance requirements may result in the issuance of administrative citations (minimum \$400 fine for each day of violation).

Inspection and enforcement involves several steps. They are:

1. Notification

Each year the City of Ventura Fire Department mails notices and guidelines to property owners within the High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. **To address the peak fire season, June 1st is set as an annual vegetation clearance date.** However, property owners must comply with vegetation clearance requirements throughout the year due to the ongoing threat of wildfire.

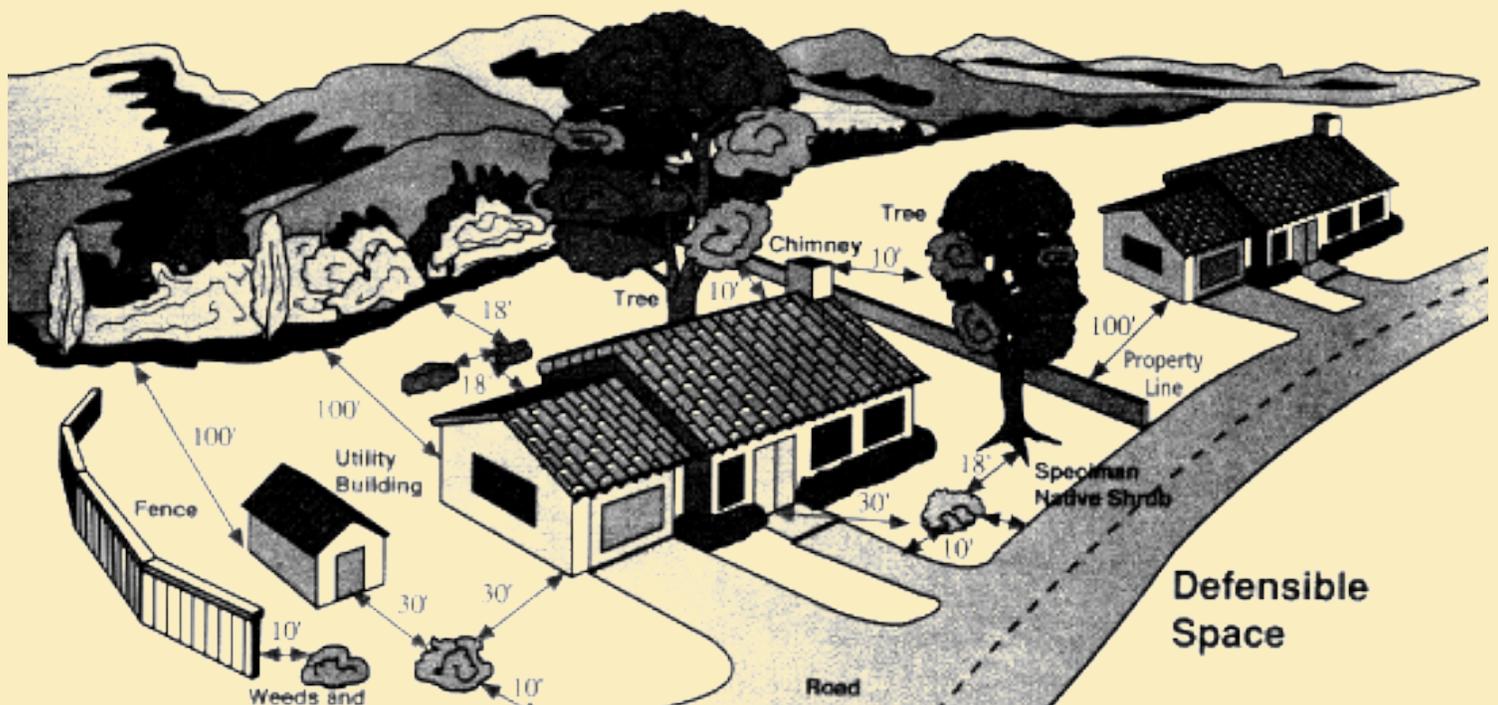
2. Inspection

Fire Department personnel conduct random inspections and respond to citizen complaints. If abatement has been completed no further action will be necessary. To request inspection of a property, please go to www.cityofventura.net and click on "My Ventura Access," or call 805-658-4717.

3. Abatement

If abatement has not been completed by the deadline set by the Fire Department, a contractor may be hired to abate the hazard. Costs for abatement and administrative fees per the Fire Department Fee Schedule will be confirmed by Council and forwarded to the County Tax Collector. Charges will be added to the property owner's tax bill.

Thank you for your cooperation.



Vegetation Management

Because weather, native vegetation and topography make certain areas prone to wildfires, it's important to be aware of what conditions you live in so you can take steps to protect yourself.

Vegetation management is a vital defense against wildfire and soil erosion for residences on hillsides in Southern California. Safety should be a primary component of any hillside landscape plan or maintenance practice. Selecting plants that are fire safe and control erosion can be challenging. Evaluate your specific conditions and choose plants that grow easily and abundantly, have a low fuel volume, require infrequent watering, retain moisture and have a strong, deep root system. If you need a professional opinion regarding steep slope stabilization, you may wish to contact a Soils Engineer (listed under Geologists in the yellow pages). Check your local nursery for specific plant information.

Suggested Reading

- **The Wildfire Survival Guide**
Maureen Gilmer
- **Trees and Shrubs for Dry California Landscapes: Plants for Water Conservation**
Bob Perry

Technical Bulletins

Request these City of Ventura Technical Bulletins by calling 805-654-7791.

- **What to Plant for Fire and Flood – A Landscape Guide for Hillside Residents**
- **You Can Be Ready When the Rains Come – A Guide for Hillside Residents**

“Defensible Space” Works!

Pictured below is an enhanced aerial photo of Aliso Street in Ventura. The arrow on this photo shows where the 1996 Poli Street fire **stopped** at the homeowner’s defensible space.

