

# READY! SET! GO!



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*Fifth District*

*Los Angeles County*  
**Fire Department**

**Brush Clearance Unit**

Phone: 626•969•2375

Fax: 626•969•4848

605 N. Angeleno Ave., Azusa CA 91702

**Fuel Modification Unit**

Phone: 626•969•5205

Fax: 626•969•4848

605 N. Angeleno Ave., Azusa CA 91702

<http://fire.lacounty.gov/forestry/>

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## WILDFIRE ACTION PLAN SUPPLEMENT



**Ornamental Vegetation Maintenance Requirements**

## Your Home is Your Castle!

The Los Angeles County Fire Department takes great measures in protecting you and your property from wildfire; yet we need your help in preparing your home and landscape to be wildfire ready.



Hardening your home and addressing ornamental vegetation adjacent to your structure, in conjunction with modifying native brush are critical elements in structure survivability.

Brush Clearance requirements are outlined in the Fire Code, yet there is more to defensible space than clearing or maintaining native brush. Many homeowners have increased their fire risk by planting or not maintaining their ornamental landscape. These ornamental problems are addressed in the Fire Code, "Maintain around and adjacent to such building, structure or apiary, an effective fire protection or fire break made by removing and clearing away, for not less than 30 feet on each side thereof, all flammable vegetation or combustible growth. This includes ornamental plants and trees known to be flammable, including but not limited to: Acacia, Cedar, Cypress, Eucalyptus, Juniper, Pine and Pampas grass." In Extra Hazard areas, the clearance/maintenance requirements may extend to 200' from the structure.

Preventing conditions where fire can travel from native brush, through an ornamental landscape to your structure, is the key to creating defensible space. Fire spreads through either convection, conduction, radiation or embers. Hardening your home reduces the risk of flying embers while proper maintenance of brush and ornamental fuels reduces fire intensity and duration of the flaming front. Reduced fire intensity through clearance and maintenance is what creates defensible space for firefighters to protect your home.

This supplement visually details the most critical landscape conditions and clarifies what should be done to prepare your home for the greatest chance of survival. If any of these conditions are impacting your home, follow these guidelines to properly prepare and pass your next wildfire safety inspection (Annual Brush Clearance Inspection).

### **Palm fronds.**

Remove any dead or dying palm fronds from trees.



### **Remove Junipers.**

Clear Junipers from within 10 feet of any structure.



### **Maintain ground cover.**

Ground covers must be maintained at a maximum height of 18 inches and be kept free of dead material.





### Trees along fire access streets or driveways.

Trees must be maintained to provide a minimum of 16 feet of vertical clearance. Oak trees may be maintained at 13 feet 6 inches.

### Maintain shrubs free of dead wood.

Remove all dead wood and provide a minimum space of 12 inches under windows. Prune trees to provide five feet of separation from the structure.



### Vegetation Conditions:

1. **Trees touching/overhanging structure:** Remove limbs within five feet of any structure, and within 10 feet from any chimney outlet. Limb trees up to six feet or one third their height.
2. **Vines and climbing plants:** Remove from combustible structures.
3. **Hedges and screens between homes:** Reduce and maintain to a height of no greater than eight feet.
4. Large shrubs under windows: Maintain 12" separation under windows.
5. Ground **cover:** Maintain at 18" maximum height.
6. **Dead Vegetation:** Remove all dead material within 200 feet of structures.

### Specific Plants:

1. **Italian Cypress:** Remove if center of trunk is within 10 feet of structure.
2. Junipers: Remove within 10 feet of structure.
3. Bougainvillea: Remove from combustible structures.
4. **Wisteria/Trumpet vines/Creeping fig, etc.:** Remove from combustible structures.
5. **Palms:** Maintain all palms free of dead or dying fronds.
6. **Pines:** Maintain all pines free of dead material. Recommended removal if within 20' of structure.

### Additional Resources:

#### Department Resources

##### Ready! Set! Go!

<http://www.fire.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/RSG-Booklet.pdf>

##### Fuel Modification Guidelines

<http://www.fire.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Fuel-Modification-Plan-Guidelines-9-10-11.pdf>

##### Brush Clearance Inspection Video

<http://www.fire.lacounty.gov/forestry-division/fire-hazard-reduction-programs/>

#### Additional Resources

##### Wildfire in the West Video

<http://www.denverpost.com/fireline/24031312/watch-fire-line/>  
<http://interactive.firewise.org/>  
[http://firecenter.berkeley.edu/focs/CE\\_homelandscaping.pdf](http://firecenter.berkeley.edu/focs/CE_homelandscaping.pdf)



### **Trees touching or overhanging structures.**

Trees must be pruned back to provide a five-foot minimum separation from the roof. Chimneys require a 10-foot separation.

### **Maintain all trees within 200 feet of structures.**

Remove all dead wood, especially from pine and eucalyptus trees. Remove any portion that is within five feet of any structure.



### **Vines and climbing plants.**

All plants must be removed from any structure.



### **Bougainvillea, Trumpet vines, Creeping Fig and Wisteria.**

Remove any plants that are attached to combustible structures.

### **Hedges and Screens.**

Reduce any hedges or screens to a maximum height of eight feet. A five-foot wide walking path must be provided around the entire structure.



### **Trees and shrubs between homes.**

Plants must be pruned back to prevent overhang onto any structure. Provide five-foot breaks in horizontal continuity where appropriate (near the end of structures).

