



Before you Buy Forestland



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Webinar Series

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Defensible Space



Defensible space is the buffer between a building and the grass, trees, shrubs, or wildland area that surround it.



Required by law (PRC 4291) for properties in State Responsibility Area (SRA) and Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) with Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (GOV 51182).



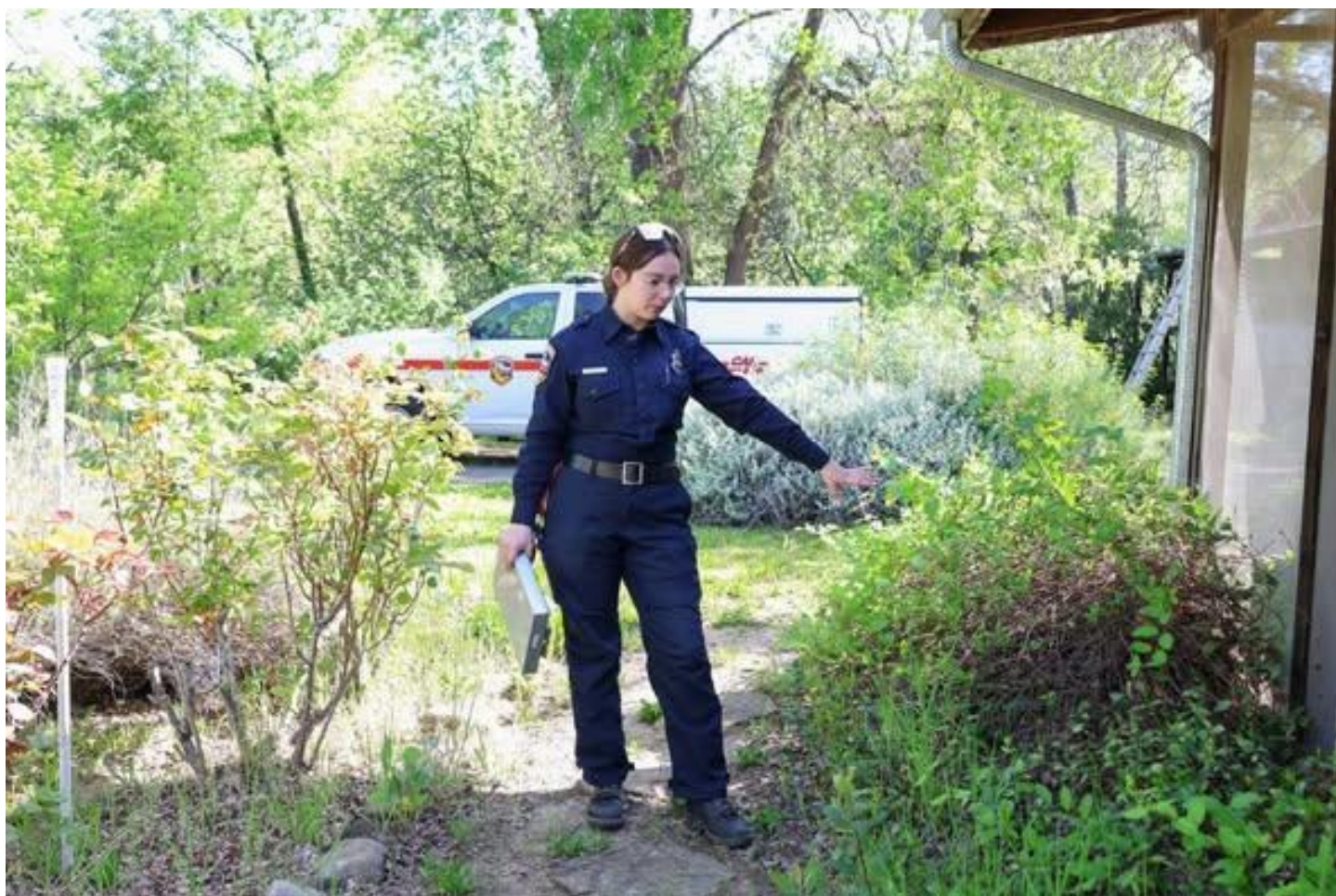
Zone 1 (0–30 feet): Remove dead vegetation, trim branches 10 ft from chimneys, clear roofs/gutters.



Zone 2 (30–100 feet): Create horizontal and vertical spacing between vegetation and remove ladder fuels.



Slows fire spread, protects structures, and provides safe access for firefighters.



CAL FIRE conducts inspections and issues notice of violation if needed.



For additional information, please visit fire.ca.gov or ReadyForWildfire.org, or scan the QR code.

- [DSpace](#)
- [Home Hardening](#)
- [Laws & Regulations](#)
- [Guides](#)
- [Research](#)
- [CAL FIRE Partners](#)
- [Self-Assessments](#)

CAL FIRE Real Estate Defensible Space Inspection

General Requirements

- Applies to properties in High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) in:
 - State Responsibility Area (SRA)
 - Local Responsibility Area (LRA)
 - * CAL FIRE does not have jurisdiction over Federal Responsibility Areas (FRA), so it does not map or perform inspections on those lands.
- Seller must provide documentation of compliance with:
 - PRC 4291 (for SRA properties)
 - Local vegetation management ordinance (for LRA or SRA with local ordinance)



What Qualifies

- Single-family residences if:
- The property contains 1–4 dwelling units (condos)
- Located in high or very high FHSZ
- Includes mobile/manufactured homes (even in parks)



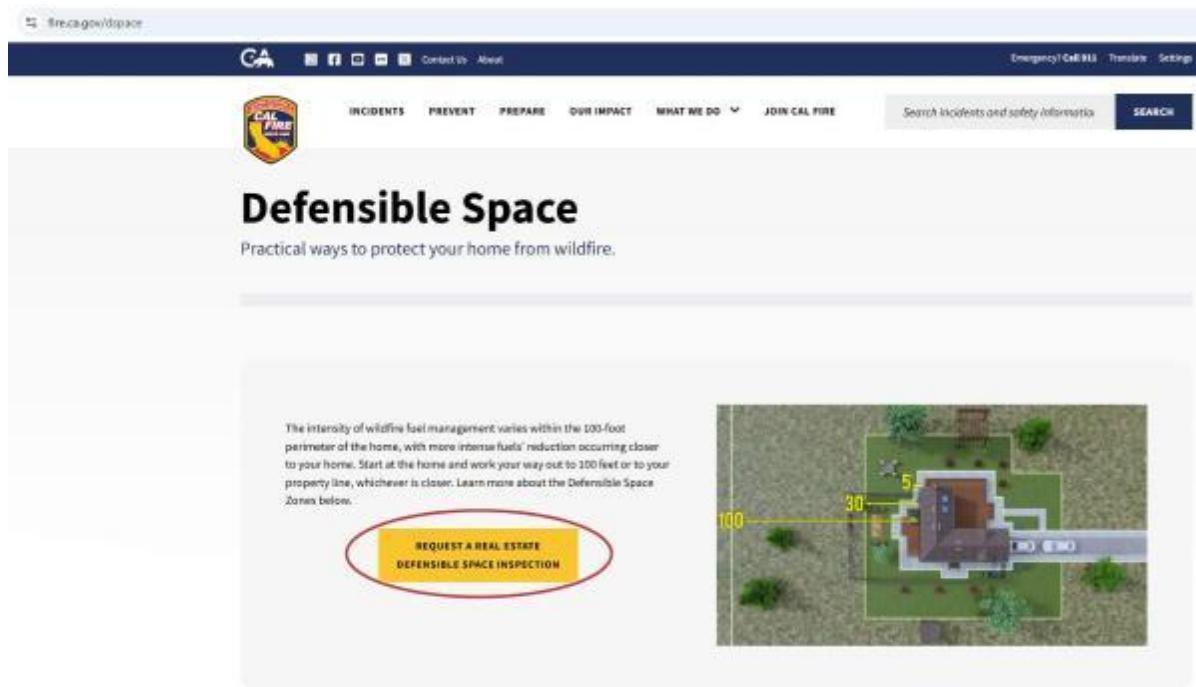
Inspection Request Responsibilities

LRA (High/Very High FHSZ)

- The seller, or the seller's agent, must request an inspection from the local agency.


SRA (High/Very High FHSZ)

- If a local ordinance exists, → Request an inspection from the local agency.
- If no local ordinance → Request inspection from CAL FIRE via:
<https://www.fire.ca.gov/dspace>



Inspection Documentation

- Must be dated within 6 months of entering into a sale agreement.
- CAL FIRE provides a Notice of Defensible Space Inspection (LE-100a) as proof of compliance.
- Property may be re-inspected if corrections are needed before escrow closes.



State of California, Natural Resources Agency
Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
21500 C. Delgado Avenue, Redlands
91066-0872

Inspection Date: _____

NOTICE OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE INSPECTION
A fire department representative has inspected your property for fire hazards.

COMPLAINT/TENANT: _____

INSPECTION ADDRESS: _____

INSPECTOR NAME: _____

CONTACT NUMBER: _____

Inspection No. [] [] []

No Violations Observed ☐

Zone 1 / Within 30 feet of all structures or to the property line (Refer to illustration below):

☐ A. Remove all branches within 10 feet of any chimney or stovepipe outlet.
☐ B. Remove leaves, needles or other vegetation on roofs, gutters, decks, porches, stairways, etc.
☐ C. Remove dead trees or shrub branches that overhang roofs, below or adjacent to windows, or which are adjacent to wall surfaces.
☐ D. Remove all dead and dying grass, plants, shrubs, trees, branches, leaves, weeds and needles.
☐ E. Remove or separate fuels to maintain spacing between vegetation to interrupt the fire's path. Prune limbs; separate plants and ground cover.
☐ F. Remove flammable vegetation and items that could catch fire which are adjacent to, or below, combustible decks, balconies, and stairs.
☐ G. Relocate exposed wood piles outside of Zone 1, unless completely covered in a fire-resistant material.

Zone 2 / Within 30-100 feet of all structures or to the property line:

☐ H. Cut annual grasses and forbs down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
☐ I. Remove fuels to create proper horizontal and vertical spacing among shrubs and trees, and remove lower tree limbs (see diagrams on back).
☐ J. All exposed wood piles must have a minimum of 10 feet clearance, down to bare mineral soil, in all directions.
☐ K. Remove all dead and dying trees, branches, shrubs, or other plants, and surface debris, loose surface litter, consisting of fallen leaves or needles, twigs, bark and cones, shall be permitted to a depth of 3 inches.

Other Requirements / Within 100 feet of all structures or to the property line:


☐ L. Logs or stumps embedded in the soil must be removed or isolated from other vegetation.
☐ M. Outbuildings and liquid Propane Gas (LPG) storage tanks shall have 10 feet of clearance to bare mineral soil and no flammable vegetation for an additional 10 feet around their exterior.
☐ N. Address numbers shall be displayed in contrasting colors (4" min. size) and readable from the street or access road.
☐ O. Equip chimney or stovepipe openings with a metal screen having openings between 3/8 inch and 1/2 inch.

IMPORTANT

If any of the boxes are checked above you are hereby notified to correct the violations indicated above. The owner/tenant's failure to correct these violations may result in a citation and fine.

COMMENTS: _____

REINSPECTION DATE ON OR AFTER: _____



KNOW THE LAW BE FIRE SMART
100 feet of Defensible Space is required by law. Regulations can be found in 14 CCR § 1509.03, PRC § 4291, BDF General Guidelines, CFC § 505.1, CFC § 2112.6.2. California Building Code Chapter 7A requires certain construction materials and methods for homes in wildland areas. Contact your local fire department for additional requirements to ensure your home is compliant with the law. For more information on laws and codes go to: READYFORWILDFIRE.ORG/THELAW
PRC § 4119. The department, or its duly authorized agent, shall enforce the state forest and fire laws. The department may inspect all properties, except the interior of dwellings, subject to the state forest and fire laws, for the purpose of ascertaining compliance with such laws.

Buyer-Seller Agreement

- If documentation is not available by the close of escrow, a written agreement must be provided stating that the buyer agrees to obtain compliance documentation within 1 year of the close of escrow.
- The agreement **does not limit enforcement** by CAL FIRE or local agencies.

Inspections

- CAL FIRE aims to schedule inspections within 10 business days of request.
- Seller or agent must be present.
- CAL FIRE does not charge a fee for inspections.

Zone 0

Zone 0 Regulation Summary (Draft – October 2025)

California Board of Forestry

What is Zone 0?



- The 0–5 feet area around buildings and structures (includes an attached deck).
- Most vulnerable to ember ignition during wildfires.
- Regulation aims to protect people, homes, communities, and firefighters.

Who Will Be Affected?

- All properties in:
 - State Responsibility Areas (SRA)
 - Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) in Local Responsibility Areas (LRA)

Key Requirements (Draft Rule Language)

- Keep Zone 0 clear of leaves, needles, and debris.
- Remove combustible items (e.g., firewood, mulch, flammable plants).
- **(Vegetation Options Under Consideration)**
- Trees allowed if branches are:
 - 5 ft. from walls/roof
 - 10 ft. from chimneys



- **(Local tree protections may apply)**
- Fences/gates attached to structures must be non-combustible for the first 5 feet.
- Outbuildings within 5 feet of the structure must be made of non-combustible materials.
- Applies immediately to new construction and is phased in over three years for existing homes.
- Local agencies may approve alternative compliance methods.
- Historic buildings may qualify for exemptions



Conclusion

Whether you're buying your first property or adding to your portfolio, understanding defensible space, real estate inspection requirements, and the upcoming Zone 0 regulations is essential. These measures not only protect your investment but also contribute to the community's overall wildfire resilience. CAL FIRE is here to support you every step of the way – through education, inspections, and guidance.



CAL FIRE DSpace Link Tree