

Monrovia Fire & Rescue

Defensible Space Annual Notice

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why am I receiving this notice?**

Your property is located within a very high fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ) identified by the Department of Forestry and CAL FIRE, or has been identified with a potential fire hazard by Monrovia Fire & Rescue Department.

- **What are the Very High, High and Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones and who determines these zones?**

FHSZs indicate the potential fire hazard on an area of land, based on several factors, including vegetation, topography, worst case weather conditions, fire history, predicted flame lengths, burn probability and ember cast. CAL FIRE is mandated to classify all lands within the state by California Public Resources Code 4201-4204.

- **Where does the Fire Department get the authority to conduct defensible space inspections?**

The [California Public Resources Code 4291](#) (PRC 4291) defines requirements for inspections as, "A person who owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains a building or structure in, upon, or adjoining a mountainous area, forest-covered lands, shrub-covered lands, grass-covered lands, or land that is covered with flammable material...".

- **There is no brush around my property, why am I being inspected?**

If your property is located within a designated FHSZ, an inspection is required. Due to ember cast, this includes structures inside developments without open land (native vegetation) immediately adjacent to the structure.

- **Why is this the first time I am receiving this notice?**

Available GIS technology and mapping programs allow the Fire Department to identify all parcels within FHSZs. Prior to integrating GIS technology within the inspection program, structures were identified through fire history and visual identification. The new technology allows greater accuracy and some structures have been identified for the first time.

- **When will my property be inspected?**

Inspections will start in June.

- **Do I need to be home when the inspection is conducted?**

You do not have to be home for the inspection to be completed.

- **If I have locked gates, how will the Fire Department complete the inspection?**

The inspector will only use unlocked gates and areas with reasonable access. If there are locked gates and the inspector must see behind them to complete the inspection, the inspector may come back later when someone is home or try to call/email the occupant to gain entry. If no contact was possible, the Fire Department may write an inspection warrant to gain entry and confirm defensible space compliance.

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- **Can I call someone if I need clarity on requirements?**

Yes, prior to your inspection, please call the Brush Line at (626) 256-8109.

- **Will I receive a report showing if my property is in compliance?**

Yes, you will receive a door hanger stating "Thank you, your property is in compliance. If an inspection report is generated, it will be emailed to the property owners showing you the violations that need to be corrected.

- **Do I need to remove trees?**

Trees shall be maintained free of dead and dying limbs at all times and shall be trimmed and maintained at least five feet above the ground at all times.

- **Have there been State law changes impacting the requirement to ensure defensible space?**

Yes, the State is very concerned with saving lives and property and has reviewed and verified fire science that indicates structure loss can be reduced when homeowners harden their home and reduce vegetation closest to the home. The legislature approved two critical laws to address structure loss: Assembly Bill 3074 and Assembly Bill 38.

- **What is Assembly Bill 3074 (AB 3074)?**

[AB 3074](#) introduced "Zone 0" as a 5 feet ember resistant zone. When officially adopted by the State Fire Marshal, this law will require a 5 feet ember resistant zone around all structures in a FHSZ.

- **When does AB 3074 take effect?**

AB 3074 enacted in 2024. However, it has not been enforced. Enforcement will occur when the State Fire Marshal approves vegetation clearance requirements. This is anticipated in 2025. Full enforcement on existing structures will not be required until one year after the State Fire Marshal approves final requirements. Full enforcement on new construction will take effect immediately upon approval of final clearance requirements.

- **What is Assembly Bill 38 (AB 38)?**

[AB 38](#) requires all real estate sellers with structures in a FHSZ to ensure compliance with defensible space requirements <https://www.fire.ca.gov/dspace>. This bill took effect on July 1, 2021.

- **Link to Monrovia Fire & Rescue Brush Clearance Program:**

<https://www.cityofmonrovia.org/your-government/fire-department/prevention-permits-codes>